



**DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**  
**INYUVESI YASETHEKWINI YEZOBUCHWEPHESHE**

**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE CHALLENGES FACED BY GRANDMOTHER-  
HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL NDWEDWE**

This work is submitted to fulfil the requirements for the Master's in Child and Youth Care degree, in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Durban University of Technology.

INAMANDLA SAPHIWOKUHLE GUMEDE

December 2024

Supervisor: Professor Raisuyah Bhagwan

## DECLARATION

I, Inamandla Gumede, declare that this dissertation originates from my work, except where otherwise referenced. All the sources used or quoted have been cited and acknowledged. This dissertation has not been previously submitted to any tertiary educational institution.

Inamandla Saphiwokuhle Gumede

Student number: 21512578

Date: 10/12/2024

Signature: I. S. Gumede

Approved for final submission by supervisor:

Professor R. Bhagwan (PhD)

Department of Community Health Studies

Child and Youth Care Program

Durban University of Technology

Signature: *RBhagwan*

27.02.25

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ABSTRACT**

In South African rural areas, many children are raised in grandmother-headed households due to various socio-economic challenges. These include the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which left a large number of children orphaned, the breakdown of traditional family structures, high rates of poverty and unemployment, and the migration of parents in search of economic opportunities, compelling their grandparents to take up their care. Grandmothers who have taken on the role of primary caregivers face unique challenges in providing emotional and physical care for their grandchildren. The physical, emotional, and financial strain of this responsibility can be overwhelming, as they navigate issues such as limited access to social services, inadequate healthcare, and societal biases against grandmother-headed households.

While substantial research has examined the experiences of grandmothers caring for their grandchildren in rural South African areas, there is limited exploration of the specific challenges and support needs these grandmothers face. This underscores the importance of the current study, which aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the psychosocial challenges and experiences faced by grandmothers and grandchildren living in these households. The goal was to understand their needs and inform the development of more effective support systems.

A qualitative research approach was used to gain insight into the perspectives of fourteen grandmothers of varying ages and socioeconomic backgrounds and eleven child and youth care workers working in the milieu of these families. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand the reasons for grandmothers taking on the parental role, the fears and anxieties they face, the support they receive from formal and informal sources, and the community strategies that can be put in place, to help support families living in grandmother-headed households.

Using thematic analysis, five key themes and nineteen sub-themes emerged from the data. The findings revealed that grandmothers were motivated by a strong desire to provide a stable, loving environment for their grandchildren. However, they faced numerous challenges, including financial strain, physical and emotional exhaustion, challenging behaviours displayed by their grandchildren, and difficulties navigating government bureaucracy. Child and youth care workers also reported struggling to

offer adequate support due to limited resources and societal biases against grandmother-headed households.

Throughout the study, participants emphasised the need for more comprehensive support systems, including increased access to social services, financial assistance, and community-based programs. Addressing these gaps would enable grandmothers to better focus on the needs of their grandchildren and foster stronger, more resilient families. The study underscores the importance of recognising and supporting the vital role grandmothers play, in caring for vulnerable children in South Africa.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am forever grateful for the grace of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the boundless love of God, and the steadfast fellowship of the Holy Spirit that has sustained me throughout this incredible journey. Your unwavering presence in my life has been a true blessing.

To my dear professor, Raisuyah Bhagwan, I am deeply grateful for the opportunities you presented and your invaluable contributions towards my growth as both a researcher and a person. I could not have completed this journey without your unwavering support. Thank you for investing in me, for your steadfast presence and your invaluable guidance throughout my research endeavour.

My dear mother, your unconditional love, unwavering support, and constant prayers have been the pillars that have kept me strong, even in the face of doubt. You have constantly encouraged and reassured me, for which I express my deepest, heartfelt gratitude. To my siblings, Zethe, Ntuthuko, Sandile, Spha, and my baby boy, Smanga, I am truly thankful for your unwavering support and endless contributions throughout this journey. To the rest of my family, my cherished friends, and my beloved church members, I truly appreciate each of you.

To Nokwanda Mthethwa, Noorain Khan, and Shannal Rowkith, your unwavering love, endless support, and invaluable contributions throughout my research journey will forever be etched in my heart. I am truly and deeply grateful for the selfless ways you have stood by me, encouraged me, and gone above and beyond to assist me in achieving this milestone. Your kindness, empathy, and belief in me have been an immeasurable source of strength, and I am forever indebted to you all.

The entire staff at the Tholimpilo organisation, my community partner and the Ndwedwe community at large, I extend my heartfelt appreciation for your support and collaboration. In the words of the wise, "It takes a village to raise a child", and you all have been that village for me.

I am also deeply grateful to the DUT Scholarship Scheme for the financial support you provided. This opportunity has been invaluable.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to all the rural families facing adverse circumstances, particularly the families of the Ndwedwe community, including the resilient grandmothers who raise their grandchildren, who have inspired me and ignited my passion to contribute to improving their quality of life.

I also dedicate this work to my beloved late father. Although you are no longer physically present, the indelible mark you have left on my life continues to guide and inspire me every step of the way. You were there at the beginning of this incredible journey, offering your unwavering support, wisdom, and unconditional love. The invaluable lessons you imparted and the unshakable foundation you helped build, were instrumental in bringing me to this pivotal moment. I am forever grateful for the profound impact you had in shaping the person I am today, and I know that your spirit lives on, walking beside me as I strive to honour your legacy. Your memory is a constant source of strength, and I am humbled to have been blessed with the privilege of calling you, my father.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION .....	i
ABSTRACT .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
DEDICATION .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	xii
LIST OF APPENDICES .....	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.2. THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY .....	2
1.3. A RURAL COMMUNITY CONTEXT .....	4
1.4. BRIEF HISTORY OF GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS .....	6
1.5. PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	8
1.6. AIM OF THE STUDY .....	10
1.7. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	10
1.8. RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	10
1.9. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	11
1.10. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS.....	11
1.10.1. Grandmother-Headed Household .....	12
1.10.2. Challenges .....	12
1.10.3 Rural Areas .....	12
1.10.4. Caregiver.....	12
1.10.5. Resources .....	13
1.10.6. Community Strategies .....	13
1.10.7. Family.....	13

1.11. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	13
1.11.1 Explanation of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory .....	14
1.12. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	15
1.13. STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT .....	16
1.14. CONCLUSION .....	16
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	18
2.1. INTRODUCTION .....	18
2.2. SOURCING OF LITERATURE .....	18
2.3. GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS: AN OVERVIEW .....	20
2.4. THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF GRANDMOTHERS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN .....	21
2.4.1. The advantages of grandmothers raising grandchildren .....	21
2.4.2. The disadvantages of grandmothers raising grandchildren.....	22
2.5. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO GRANDMOTHERS ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR GRANDCHILDREN.....	23
2.5.1. Poverty and economic hardships .....	23
2.5.2. Loss of a parent .....	25
2.5.3. Teenage pregnancy.....	26
2.5.4. Parental incarceration .....	27
2.5.5. Cultural factors .....	28
2.5.6. Parental drug and substance abuse.....	29
2.5.7. Employment .....	30
2.6. CHALLENGES CONFRONTING GRANDMOTHERS WHO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR GRANDCHILDREN.....	31
2.6.1. Health challenges.....	32
2.6.2. Emotional challenges .....	33
2.6.3. Psychological challenges .....	33

2.6.4. Anxiety and Stress .....	34
2.6.5. Loss and depression .....	35
2.6.6. Transformation of roles and adjustment of grandparents' attitudes .....	37
2.6.7. Financial challenges.....	37
2.6.8. Challenges related to social interactions .....	39
2.6.9. Insufficient housing .....	39
2.6.10. Inadequate support from the government .....	41
2.7. COPING TECHNIQUES USED BY GRANDMOTHERS CARING FOR THEIR GRANDCHILDREN. ....	42
2.7.1. Financial coping technique.....	42
2.7.2. Techniques for managing social and health challenges .....	45
2.7.3 The influence of grandmothers coping techniques on grandchildren .....	47
2.8. KINSHIP CARE IN GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS.....	48
2.8.1 Informal Kinship Care.....	49
2.8.2. Formal Kinship Care .....	49
2.8.3 Challenges faced by children growing up in kinship care arrangements in grandmother-headed households .....	51
2.9. LACK OF SUPPORT FOR GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS.....	52
2.9.1. The impact of inadequate support for grandmothers and their grandchildren .....	53
2.10. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKERS ASSISTING GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS.....	54
2.11. CONCLUSION .....	56
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	57
3.1. INTRODUCTION .....	57
3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN .....	57
3.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH .....	58

3.4. RESEARCHER'S ROLE AND REFLEXIVITY.....	59
3.4.1 The researcher in context.....	59
3.4.2. Reflecting through journaling.....	60
3.4.3. Reflecting on the research process.....	60
3.5. STUDY SETTING .....	61
3.6. STUDY POPULATION .....	62
3.7. STUDY SAMPLE .....	62
3.8. INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA FOR THE STUDY .....	63
3.9. SAMPLING PROCESS.....	64
3.9.1. Recruitment of participants.....	65
3.10. DATA COLLECTION TOOL.....	66
3.10.1. Pilot testing of data collection tools .....	67
3.11. DATA COLLECTION PROCESS .....	68
3.11.1 Semi-structured interviews .....	68
3.11.2. Focus group discussion.....	71
3.12. PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTING DATA .....	72
3.13. DATA CAPTURING AND ANALYSIS .....	75
3.14. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	77
3.14.1. Avoidance of harm.....	77
3.41.2. Informed consent .....	77
3.14.3. Confidentiality and Anonymity .....	78
3.14.4. Voluntary participation.....	78
3.15. RIGOUR AND TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH .....	78
3.15.1. Credibility .....	79
3.15.2. Transferability.....	79
3.15.3. Dependability .....	79
3.15.4. Confirmability .....	79

3.16. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	80
3.17. CONCLUSION.....	81
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....	82
4.1. INTRODUCTION .....	82
4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE.....	82
4.2.1. Summary of the demographic data .....	84
4.3. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.....	84
4.3.1 Theme 1: Factors influencing grandmothers caring for grandchildren .....	85
4.3.2 Theme 2: Challenges encountered by grandmothers .....	92
4.3.3 Theme 3: The Impact of Grandmother-Headed Households on Grandchildren's Well-Being.....	109
4.3.4 Theme 4: Coping mechanisms as a strategy for survival.....	115
4.3.5 Theme 5: Community-based strategies to assist grandmother-headed households in rural communities.....	121
4.4. CONCLUSION.....	127
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	128
5.1. INTRODUCTION .....	128
5.2. DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS .....	128
5.3. FACTORS THAT LED TO GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS .....	129
5.4. CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN GRANDMOTHER HEADED HOUSEHOLDS .....	130
5.5. THE COPING MECHANISMS THAT EMERGED TO ENHANCE THE FUNCTIONING OF GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS.....	132
5.6. COMMUNITY-BASED STRATEGIES TO ASSIST GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS .....	133
5.7. CONCLUSION.....	134
5.8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS .....	135

5.9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	137
5.10. CONCLUSION.....	138
REFERENCES.....	140

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: study sample

Table 2: The demographic profiles of participants in sample one

Table 3: The demographic profiles of participants in sample two

Table 4: Themes and sub-themes

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

- Appendix A (1): Interview guide for individual interviews
- Appendix A (2): Interview guide for individual interviews (IsiZulu version)
- Appendix B: Interview guide for focus group
- Appendix C (1): Gatekeeper letter requesting permission for individual interviews
- Appendix C (2): Gatekeeper letter requesting permission focus group discussion
- Appendix C (3): Signed gatekeeper approval for individual interviews
- Appendix C (4): Signed gatekeeper approval for focus group discussion
- Appendix D (1): Letter of information for individual interviews
- Appendix D (2): Letter of information for individual interviews (IsiZulu version)
- Appendix E: Letter of information (focus group)
- Appendix F (1): Letter of consent
- Appendix F (2): Letter of consent (isizulu version)
- Appendix G: Ethical clearance
- Appendix H: Turn it in report
- Appendix I: Editor certificate

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*“Grandmothers are the backbones of many families in rural South Africa, often heading households and caring for their grandchildren. They are pillars of strength and resilience, and play a vital role in these communities.”*

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Families are complex and multifaceted units. As life becomes more demanding, the benefits of living in a family become more important to its resilience and development. A solid family structure is essential in modern culture for protecting the health and well-being of all family members. A family can provide a sanctuary and safety to its members (Hayslip, Fruhauf and Dolbin-McNab 2019: 152; Martin *et al.* 2021: 166).

Peterson *et al.* (2019: 201) indicated that the spread of HIV/AIDS, and more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has radically transformed household structures in many African nations, with rural households enduring most of the impact. As a result, children became more vulnerable, and grandparents had to step in to play a substantial part in their upbringing. According to Hall and Sambu (2019: 216), grandmother-headed households are prevalent in South Africa, particularly in rural regions, where grandmothers and children living in these households, are at risk.

Mthembu, Myburgh and Poggenpoel (2020: 50) stated that due to the high prevalence of grandmother-headed households in rural South African areas, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, many factors have led to grandmothers heading households, to cater for the needs of the children (Stephens 2020: 420). Some households are headed by grandmothers who sometimes have the support of the residents from the surrounding areas while others do not have any support at all. According to Saunders and Mehanna (2019: 194), grandmothers in grandmother-headed households in the South African rural context are likely to be poorer and less healthy than grandmothers living in more affluent areas.

Rapoport *et al.* (2020: 4) asserted that grandmothers care for their grandchildren for several reasons. Many of these reasons represent difficulties faced by the grandchild's biological parents, which hinder them from caring for their children. Peterson *et al.* (2019: 201) further stated that with an upsurge in the rate of divorce, parental substance abuse, abuse and neglect, incarceration, physical or mental illness, child impairment, abandonment, unemployment, death of parents due to HIV and AIDS, teenage pregnancy, and the degree and severity of poverty in

South Africa, grandmothers are now stepping in to play an additional role as parents to their grandchildren. The following sub-sections: the background of the study, problem statement, the aim and objectives of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, definitions of concepts, theoretical framework, an overview of the research methodology, the structure of the dissertation and the conclusion.

## **1.2. THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Capous-Desyllas *et al.* (2020: 262), opined that South Africa's rural areas have experienced a significant rise in grandmother-headed households, driven by a complex interplay of societal and familial challenges. Choi, Sprang and Eslinger (2016: 120) reported that this phenomenon is particularly prevalent among low-income South African communities, where grandmothers have assumed the primary caregiver role for their grandchildren due to factors such as child maltreatment, parental substance abuse, and poverty. As this family structure becomes more commonplace, it is crucial to understand the experiences and stresses faced by these grandparent caregivers (Muruthi, Dolbin-MacNab, and Jarrott 2021: 1280)

Research by Dare *et al.* (2020: 104) on grandmother-headed families has found that children raised in this environment may be at greater risk for emotional, behavioural, and learning difficulties compared to those living with their biological parents. Qualitative research has explored the perspectives of both grandchildren and their grandparent caregivers, revealing adjustment issues related to family disruption and parental loss, and the unique challenges experienced by the grandmothers themselves (Aubel 2020: 3).

Makiwane *et al.* (2019: 53) stated that while grandmother-headed households occur across racial, gender, and socioeconomic lines, single, low-income grandmothers from rural settings are disproportionately represented within this family structure. Sharma, Chakrabarti and Grover (2016: 7) argued that the higher prevalence of this phenomenon amongst this demographic grouping, coupled with the relative lack of attention to their problems, has prompted focused research on the experiences of South African rural grandmother caregivers.

This exploratory study aims to shed light on the grandmothers' experiences in such households in Ndwedwe. It is a topic that has received limited scholarly attention. By exploring the factors that contribute to this family dynamic and the unique challenges faced by these grandparent caregivers, this research can inform the development of targeted support services and interventions to address the needs of such families.

Grandmothers over 60 years, the pension eligibility age, account for approximately 11% of South African households, or 1.5 million of households. Despite policymakers' dedication and attempts to address poverty, the national poverty rate in South Africa has remained unrelentingly high. Statistics South Africa data revealed that the number of impoverished people in 2020 was 30.3 million, up from 27.3 million in 2016. Poverty has been at the top of the agenda for a long time (since 1994) and still maintains apartheid characteristics (Dockery 2019: 5; Brunissen *et al.* 2020: 6; Keim, Parrott and Mason 2022: 8).

Chatterjee, Caffarelli and Ranawana (2022: 247) opined that most of the poor (regardless of the measure used) live in rural areas and dominate the historically disadvantaged population group of Black people. Recent estimates suggest that rural areas exhibit a high poverty headcount ratio in the region of about 81.3% compared to urban areas which is hovering at 40.7%. With the upsurge in inflation rates and an economy that makes everyday living difficult, grandmothers caring for their grandchildren suffer a deficit. Over 2.7 million grandmothers are responsible for one or more grandchildren under 18 years who reside with them (Lee and Blitz 2022: 774).

Dunfee, Brown and Schoenberg (2021: 1497) argued that this is a rapidly growing issue, and it is not only physically hard, but the financial load that grandmothers bear has increased as they must also cater to the necessities of their grandchildren as well as their own. Financial difficulties have been extensively reported, with many grandmothers unable to provide their grandchildren with necessities such as housing, food, clothing, and transportation. Kearabetswe and Grace (2019: 53) asserted that for many low-income families, the state pension is the only official and consistent source of income. This immediately elevates older women to head of household, as they are compelled to stretch their grants to meet the demands of their family members.

According to Burkholder (2019: 6), it is difficult for grandmothers to head households and children who live within these households, face obstacles. Young children in grandmother-headed households are frequently malnourished and suffer from starvation. Furthermore, they are less likely to receive necessary medical attention and healthcare. Poor development is also one of the obstacles children face and others are sexually exploited at a young age, making them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and abuse hazards due to a lack of parental guidance, education, and protection (Anakpo and Kollamparambil 2021: 58)

Mabalane *et al.* (2019: 156) stated that grandmothers are ill-equipped to respond to their grandchildren's concerns, especially in today's environment, because grandmothers' methods of raising children are no longer relevant. Lee and Blitz (2022: 778) added that grandmothers, particularly in rural regions, are not aware of effective and current parenting methods for childcare, child development, and child disorders. As a result, historical cultural and traditional methods of grandparenting have not been adapted to current child-rearing practices in rural areas.

These are some of the reasons that may contribute to grandmothers' distress, which form the context for the aim and objectives of the study. Ndwedwe Mission area, the location of this study is a disadvantaged community with a high number of grandmother-headed households, and research is required in this area to seek ways of assisting families living in grandmother-headed households.

### **1.3. A RURAL COMMUNITY CONTEXT**

A rural area is often defined as a geographic location outside cities or suburbs (Long, Delamater and Holmes 2021: 413). A rural area is distinguished by a small population, an agricultural economy, and restricted access to services and amenities such as healthcare, education, and transportation (Nelson *et al.* 2021: 351; Bennett *et al.* 2019: 1987). Cunha *et al.* (2020: 597) asserted that many rural families may encounter specific problems in accessing healthcare, social services, and financial resources. The pace of life in rural areas is often slower, and there is a stronger connection to nature and land (Chambers 2019: 398).

Rural communities often place high importance on traditional values and customs, with a focus on family and community connections. Rural housing is spread out with a mix of single-family residences, farms, and ranches (Cong and Gong 2021: 210). According to Bailey *et al.* (2019: 137) and Imiaso (2019: 7), families in rural areas benefit from the strong feeling of community and support networks, common in rural settings. However, recent statistics show that poverty rates are much greater in rural regions than in urban areas (Beasley *et al.* 2022: 119). The poverty rate in rural regions is 17.2%, whereas in cities it is 14.0%. This causes a significant strain on families residing within these rural regions (Sharaunga and Mudhara 2021: 127).

Furthermore, rural populations lack access to necessities like clean water and sanitary services. Approximately one in every four rural homes does not have access to basic sanitation facilities, rendering them more vulnerable to waterborne infections (Gorman 2017: 21).

Moreover, the unemployment rate in rural areas is 6.1%, compared to 4.7% in urban areas, emphasising the limited opportunities for employment in these locations (Bailey *et al.* 2019: 136).

In the context of poor rural South African areas, it is important to understand the distinct characteristics that contribute to the prevalence of poverty within these areas (Tesfaye and Getachew 2018: 6). These characteristics may include limited access to basic services such as education, inadequate infrastructure and transportation systems, low agricultural productivity, lack of employment opportunities, social isolation, and limited access to markets and resources (Mueller and Gasteyer 2023: 74). Additionally, poor rural South African areas often suffer from environmental degradation, natural disasters, and the effects of climate change, which further exacerbate their poverty and vulnerability (Mukti *et al.* 2021: 11).

According to Visagie and Turok (2021: 50), these characteristics create a cycle of poverty that is often hard to break. Limited access to healthcare means that preventable diseases go untreated, leading to further health complications and expenses (Skoufias 2023: 8; Lloyd *et al.* 2019: 28). In South African rural areas, education is also limited, which hinders the ability of rural residents to access higher-paying jobs (Skoufius 2023: 11). Inadequate infrastructure and transportation systems make it difficult for goods to be transported to markets, limiting the income potential for farmers and entrepreneurs in these areas (Lyu *et al.* 2020: 215).

Furthermore, Sumaryanto *et al.* (2021: 5) revealed that the impact of environmental degradation and climate change adds a layer of complexity to the situation. Rural areas are often disproportionately affected by these issues, leading to food insecurity, displacement, and loss of livelihoods (Madzivhandila and Niyimbanira 2020: 239). The unique vulnerabilities of these areas require targeted interventions and support to address the many interconnected challenges they face (Bird *et al.* 2021: 4).

The combination of limited access to healthcare and low agricultural productivity often leads to a situation where grandmothers are left to care for their families (Neema and Annet 2020: 3; Anand *et al.* 2020: 84; Chazan 2014: 164). With inadequate infrastructure and transportation systems, the younger working population may migrate to urban areas searching for better opportunities, leaving behind the elderly and children (Semenova, Afonin and Kuznetsova 2019: 126). The lack of opportunities for good education in these rural regions also contributes to this phenomenon, as younger adults may leave the rural areas in search of education

opportunities, leaving grandmothers to take care of the household (Tanle, Ogunleye-Adetona and Arthor 2020: 17).

Writers have argued that limited access to employment opportunities in rural areas has led to situations where older women are the primary caregivers for their families, similar to what occurs in such areas, around the world. These characteristics of rural areas often lead to a prevalence of grandmother-headed households and highlight the need for targeted interventions and support to uplift these communities and break the cycle of poverty (Kwan, Walsh and Donaldson 2018: 147; Makiwane *et al.* 2017: 49; Mtshali 2015: 75; Ntuli and Madiba 2019: 35).

Furthermore, environmental degradation and climate change disproportionately affect these households (Madzivhandila and Niyimbanira 2020: 242). In South African rural areas, natural disasters and the effects of climate change can lead to the loss of livelihoods for younger adults, forcing them to leave their families to seek work in other areas, thus leaving the elderly, particularly grandmothers, to head households and care for the remaining family members (Krichene *et al.* 2021: 105). The cycle of poverty is perpetuated as the elderly struggle to provide for their families in the face of these challenges (Bautista 2018: 183).

The characteristics of a rural community disproportionately affect elderly women in these communities, who often find themselves heading households without adequate support (Bernard: 2019: 29). The phenomenon of grandmother-headed households is a poignant example of how poverty, limited access to services, and environmental challenges intersect in rural areas (Alderete, Sonderegger and Pérez-Stable 2018: 3; Nelson *et al.* 2022: 205; Adetoro, Ngidi and Danso-Abbeam 2023: 134).

Overall, the unique characteristics of poverty in rural areas create an environment where grandmother-headed households become a common coping mechanism for the challenges they face (Isangula 2022: 96). Addressing the root causes of these characteristics is essential, in providing sustainable solutions for these households (Sartorius *et al.* 2014: 774; Schwartz 2019: 15).

#### **1.4. BRIEF HISTORY OF GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS**

Grandmother-headed households in rural South Africa have a long and complex history, influenced by various socioeconomic factors and cultural traditions. Throughout the years,

grandmother-headed households in rural South African areas have faced numerous challenges and triumphs, shaping the complex tapestry of their history (Vibert 2020: 460). Socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and limited access to education and healthcare, have played a significant role in the formation and evolution of these households (Totaforti 2021: 769). Cultural traditions, including the pivotal role of elders and the extended family system, have also contributed to the unique dynamics within these households.

The historical context of grandmother-headed households in rural South African areas is deeply intertwined with the country's history, marked by colonialism, apartheid, and post-apartheid transitions (Makiwane *et al.* 2017: 56). These larger societal forces have undoubtedly had a profound impact on the experiences and resilience of grandmothers and their families. Furthermore, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has had a particularly devastating effect on grandmother-headed households in rural South African areas (Carthron, Bailey and Anderson 2015: 710). The prevalence of HIV/AIDS has led to an increase in the number of orphaned grandchildren being taken care of by their grandmothers. As a result, grandmothers have often been thrust into the role of primary caregivers, facing numerous challenges in providing for and raising their grandchildren. (Tamasane and Head 2010: 9)

The intricate history of grandmother-headed households in rural South African areas cannot be fully understood without delving into the specific experiences and challenges experienced by these women and the children in their care. Each grandmother has a unique story shaped by the historical forces of colonialism, apartheid, and post-apartheid transitions. These larger systemic forces have shaped the economic and social landscape and have profoundly influenced the familial and cultural dynamics within these households (Toit 2018: 973; Healy-Clancy 2017: 843; Roman *et al.* 2016: 11).

Cox (2018: 484) highlighted that the role of grandmothers as caretakers is deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of South Africa. Traditionally, elders are revered and play a central role in imparting knowledge, values, and traditions to younger generations. This cultural ethos has provided a foundation for the resilience and fortitude displayed by grandmothers as they navigate the complexities of raising grandchildren in challenging circumstances (Hill 2016: 2). Additionally, the extended family system, with its emphasis on communal support and shared resources, has been both a source of strength and a coping mechanism for grandmother-headed households (Cox 2018: 486).

Furthermore, the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on these households cannot be overstated. The rapid increase in the number of orphaned grandchildren has placed immense strain on grandmothers, demanding that they not only provide emotional support but also navigate the complexities of caring for children whose parents have been tragically lost to the virus. This intersection of historical, cultural, and health-related challenges has further shaped the narrative of grandmother-headed households in rural South African areas (Roman *et al.* 2016; 303; Knight and Yamin 2015: 2; Manderson and Block 2016: 205).

### **1.5. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

South Africa faces a burgeoning crisis: a dramatic increase in grandmother-headed households, particularly in rural areas. This shift in family structure is not merely a demographic trend, it reflects deep-seated societal challenges, including poverty, HIV/AIDS, and migration, that disproportionately impact vulnerable communities. While research on grandmother-headed households is emerging globally, studies within the South African context, particularly in rural areas like Ndwedwe, remain scarce. Knowledge of the challenges faced by grandmother-headed households has been continuously disregarded, at the government and policy-making levels, which has led to policies and initiatives that lack a deeper understanding of grandmother-headed households and the challenges that are most prevalent within these households. This lack of localised research hinders the development of culturally relevant and effective interventions (Kang'ethe and Magedya 2022: 29; Pote, Swart and Carlese 2021: 5; Murimba 2020: 7).

Rural areas characterised by poverty, limited infrastructure, and a lack of access to quality healthcare and education make managing the challenges of grandmother-headed households even more difficult. Rural areas have experienced high levels of economic hardships, which may further exacerbate challenges faced by grandmother caregivers and limit their access to support services and resources. Grandmothers living in these rural areas who have been thrust into the primary caregiver role often face many challenges (Yang and Liu 2020: 105). They grapple with financial strain, limited access to resources, and the emotional burden of caring for grandchildren who may have experienced trauma or have special needs (Sharaunga and Mudhara 2021: 27). These stressors can negatively impact the well-being of grandmothers, potentially leading to depression, anxiety, and declining physical health. Furthermore, grandmothers may lack knowledge about child development and effective parenting strategies further exacerbating their difficulties (Yang and Liu 2020: 106).

Matsa and Matsa (2020: 79) reported that children raised in these households are also vulnerable. They may experience educational disadvantages, emotional and behavioural problems, and increased risk of poverty and social exclusion. According to Mota and Morojele (2022: 1028), the lack of support for grandmother-headed households perpetuates a cycle of intergenerational disadvantage, hindering children's rights to a safe and nurturing environment as enshrined in Section 28 of the South African Constitution.

Studies by Tang *et al.* (2022: 2) and Beasley *et al.* (2022: 119) have indicated that families in rural communities experience many psycho-social issues that impact grandmother-headed households more than any other community. This requires urgent intervention by all stakeholders. Therefore, there is a need to conduct research that explores the challenges faced by grandmother-headed households, and the strategies that can be put in place to assist families living within these households.

Moreover, at a policymaking level, there is an urgent need for the South African government to implement policies and interventions that will assist grandmother-headed families in rural areas. Additionally, collaboration among healthcare workers, child and youth care workers, and other stakeholders should be encouraged to ensure that grandmother-headed households are perceived as a safety net for grandmothers and their grandchildren.

Child and youth care is an emerging field, and child and youth care workers are uniquely positioned to disrupt this cycle and provide crucial support to these families. However, as an emerging profession, child and youth care has not made real progress concerning empirical research, particularly grandmother-headed households. This adds significant value to this study. This knowledge gap is however concerning, given the critical role these professionals can play in strengthening families and promoting child well-being.

There are, however, some other research studies on this topic. One such study is by Chazan (2014: 166), on the survival, support, and social change experienced by grandmothers caring for grandchildren in the era of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Another study looked at the experiences of African American grandmothers residing in rural communities caring for their grandchildren while suffering from chronic health issues (Woods 2021: 280). Gibbons and Jones (2003: 12) conducted a study on grandmother-headed households, focusing on the physical and emotional health of grandparents raising grandchildren. Solomon and Marx (1999: 17) explored the broader implications of this caregiving role on custodian grandparents.

This study aims to address this research gap by exploring the specific challenges encountered by grandmother-headed households in Ndwedwe. It will investigate the stressors experienced by both grandmothers and grandchildren, the existing support systems available, and the potential barriers to accessing these services. Furthermore, the study will identify and analyse effective strategies and interventions that child and youth care workers can implement to support these families.

By conducting this research in Ndwedwe, this study will also provide valuable insights into a critically understudied population. The findings will contribute to the development of culturally sensitive, and context-specific interventions, ultimately promoting the well-being of both grandmothers and their grandchildren. Moreover, this study will add to the growing body of knowledge in child and youth care, advocating for increased attention and resources directed towards supporting grandmother-headed households.

#### **1.6. AIM OF THE STUDY**

To understand the challenges faced by grandmother-headed households and to develop strategies that can be implemented to strengthen family life in these households.

#### **1.7. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To understand the factors that led to grandmothers heading households in Ndwedwe
2. To inquire what challenges are faced by grandmothers in these households.
3. To understand what coping mechanisms grandmothers require, to function better in their homes.
4. To inquire what community strategies must be in place to better support grandmother-headed households in Ndwedwe.

#### **1.8. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the factors that led to grandmothers heading households?
2. What challenges are faced by grandmothers in grandmother-headed households?
3. What coping mechanisms do grandmothers require to function better in their homes?
4. What community strategies must be put in place to better support grandmother-headed

households in Ndwedwe?

### **1.9. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

To best support families living in grandmother-headed households, understanding their experiences and needs is paramount (Nsibandze *et al.* 2020: 123). The significance of this study lies in its multifaceted exploration of a crucial, yet often overlooked demographic, grandmother-headed households in rural South Africa. There is a significant gap in understanding the unique challenges and needs of these families, Gibbons and Jones (2003: 12) conducted a study on grandmother-headed households, focusing on the physical and emotional health of grandparents raising grandchildren. Solomon and Marx (1999: 17) explored the broader implications of this caregiving role on custodian grandparents.

This study aims to address the research gap by exploring the specific challenges encountered by grandmother-headed households in Ndwedwe. It will investigate the stressors experienced by both grandmothers and grandchildren, the existing support systems available, and the potential barriers to accessing these services. Furthermore, the study will identify and analyze effective strategies and interventions that child and youth care workers can implement to support these families. Often overshadowed by broader discussions of poverty and inequality, this study delves into the social, economic, emotional, and healthcare-related challenges these families face, providing a nuanced understanding of their daily realities. The examination of the cultural, economic and familial dynamics interwoven with the historical context of colonialism, apartheid, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic, offers valuable insights into the complexities of their lives in Ndwedwe.

Moreover, the study moves beyond analysis to offer practical solutions and recommendations, making it a potentially powerful tool for social change. Its findings could inform more effective policies, support programs, and interventions developed to empower these families. By bridging the gap between academic research and real-world action, this research study could potentially improve the lives of grandmother-headed households, in rural South Africa and contribute to a more equitable and just society.

### **1.10. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

This section provides definitions and explanations of key terms and concepts related to grandmother-headed households in rural areas. It defines what a grandmother-headed

household is, the challenges these households face in rural areas, and the role of the caregiver (typically the grandmother) in meeting the needs of the family members. It also discusses the available resources and community strategies that can assist these households, and the broader meaning of "family" in this context.

#### **1.10.1. Grandmother-Headed Household**

Schrijner and Smits (2018: 69) defined a grandmother-headed household as a household where the grandmother assumes the pivotal role of the primary caregiver and head of the household, often due to the absence, incapacity, or unavailability of the parents to fulfil these critical responsibilities. Aibel (2021: 38) explained that in these households, the grandmother takes on the essential duties of providing care, support, and guidance and ensuring the physical, emotional, and practical needs of the children, grandchildren, or other dependents are met.

#### **1.10.2. Challenges**

According to Bennett (2019: 1985), a challenge is typically something new and difficult, which requires great effort and determination. Within the grandmother-headed household context, the term "challenges" is defined as the difficulties, obstacles, and stressors experienced by families living in these households, which may include economic, social, and health-related challenges (Tompkins and Vander Linden 2020: 1094).

#### **1.10.3 Rural Areas**

Bennett (2019: 1990) defined rural areas as sparsely populated regions outside of urban centres, where access to resources and services may be more limited due to greater distances, lack of infrastructure, and fewer available providers and support systems.

#### **1.10.4. Caregiver**

The grandmother typically is the individual responsible for providing care, support, and sustenance to the family members in a grandmother-headed household. This role often involves meeting the family members' physical, emotional, and practical needs, including children, grandchildren, or other dependents (Parker 2020: 857; Liu, Heffernan and Tan 2020: 438).

### **1.10.5. Resources**

Reidolf and Graffenberger (2019: 131) indicated that resources are the available services, infrastructure, and support systems that can assist grandmother-headed households in addressing their challenges. According to Sano and Mammen (2022: 227), these resources may include government social welfare programs, community-based organisations, religious institutions, and volunteer networks that provide financial assistance, healthcare services, childcare support, educational resources, and other forms of aid to help alleviate the burdens faced by these households in rural areas.

### **1.10.6. Community Strategies**

Within the context of grandmother-headed households, community strategies form a comprehensive and collaborative approach, undertaken by the local community, comprising individuals, organisations, and institutions, to offer a wide range of support, resources, and empowerment initiatives that address the diverse needs and challenges faced by grandmother-headed households in rural areas (Katz 2019: 553; Kusano, Ohno, and Kohtake 2014: 123; Crowther and Ford 2019: 553).

### **1.10.7. Family**

Dolbin-MacNab (2020: 479) and Parker (2020: 858) stated that a family can consist of the members of a grandmother-headed household, whether related by blood, adoption, or other kinship ties, who rely on the grandmother's care, support, and guidance to meet their physical, emotional, practical, and social needs. This family unit may include the grandmother's children, grandchildren, or other dependents who have come to reside in the household, all of whom the grandmother assumes responsibility for nurturing, supporting, and providing for. This definition of family guides the current study.

## **1.11. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

According to Lechtenberg (2013: 7) a theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a research study's theory. It presents and discusses the theory that explains the existence of the research problem being studied. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is one such framework that can be used to comprehend the experiences of grandmother-headed households in rural South Africa (Tudge *et. al.* 2009: 198; Peterson and Starks 2014: 179).

According to Zantsi and Bester (2020: 42), the ecological theory was created by Urie Bronfenbrenner and was a prominent framework for examining grandmother-headed households in rural South African communities. This theory studies the individual within their environment. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory perceives human development as being influenced by numerous systems in one's environment, such as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Crawford 2020: 170; Milan and Bridges 2019: 234).

According to Nozikova (2020: 1437), although the theory has historically concentrated on child development, its principles may be used effectively to examine the experiences of both the grandmothers who head these households and the children. This approach enables an in-depth understanding of the interplay of individual, familial, and social factors that shape their lives (Sadruddin *et al.* 2019: 136; Schrijner and Smits 2017: 78). This discussion will explore how each level of Bronfenbrenner's model applies to grandmothers, highlighting specifically the interconnectedness of their well-being and their capacity to provide care.

### 1.11.1 Explanation of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's theory organises environmental influences on development into five nested systems:

**Microsystem:** The microsystem is the individual's immediate environment, which includes direct interactions with individuals and institutions. In a grandmother-headed household, this includes her ties with her grandkids, other family members, and her intimate social network. Her physical and mental health, access to household resources (food, water, housing), and the emotional and practical support she receives within this system, all have a direct impact on her well-being and the ability to care for her grandchildren (Woods 2020: 281; Hayslip *et al.* 2017: 157).

**Mesosystem:** This system focuses on the interactions between the various microsystems (Vidal *et al.* 2018: 15). For the grandmother, this includes the relationship between her and her grandchildren's school, considering whether the school supports

her role and understands the challenges she faces. It also involves interactions with healthcare providers, examining their cultural sensitivity, accessibility, and affordability (Soganga and Kang'ethe 2023: 18). Connections with social service agencies are also crucial, considering

whether these agencies provide adequate support and resources. The quality of these interactions, whether it is supportive, collaborative, or strained, can significantly impact the grandmother's access to resources and her ability to provide effective care (Wittenberg-Lyles *et al.* 2013: 901).

**Exosystem:** This encompasses environments in which the individual does not actively engage, yet which affects their experiences (Allen, Henderson, and Murray 2019: 4). Examples of grandmother-headed households may include the availability of community resources for grandmothers, such as elder care centres or support groups, local employment opportunities, and access to affordable healthcare, particularly in rural areas where access may be limited (Pandialagappan and Ibrahim 2018: 101). According to Lee *et al.* (2018: 227) specific government programs, such as social grants, pension schemes and non-government organisations working with elderly populations in rural areas also fall within this system. These external factors can indirectly impact her well-being and capacity to provide care (Lee *et al.* 2018: 228).

**Macrosystem:** Delaplane (2023: 36) said that the macrosystem encompasses the broader cultural context, including societal attitudes, values, and beliefs. Pandialagappan and Ibrahim (2018: 104) added that this includes cultural norms and expectations regarding the role of grandmothers, as well as social policies related to pensions, healthcare, and childcare. These overarching cultural and societal factors can significantly influence the support grandmothers receive and the resources available to them.

**Chronosystem:** This system incorporates the dimension of time, recognising that individuals and environments change (Pitrone 2020: 52). This includes the grandmother's life stage and transitions, such as retirement or the onset of health issues, and broader societal changes, such as shifts in family structures due to migration or urbanisation, economic downturns, and the ongoing impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which has significantly affected family structures and increased the burden of care on grandmothers. These changes over time can

impact the grandmother's resources, support systems, and ability to provide care (Allen, Henderson and Murray 2019: 4).

## **1.12. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative research methodology with an exploratory design was utilised to guide the current

study. Gatekeeper permission was obtained from the Tholimpilo organisation's project manager and the councillor of the Ndwedwe mission area. The non-probability method of purposive sampling was used to recruit participants.

An initial sample of fourteen grandmothers and eleven child and youth care workers who live in the Ndwedwe Mission area were recruited to participate. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, using an interview schedule as the data collection instrument. Face-to-face interviews were conducted, in a private room at the Tholimpilo organisation in Ndwedwe which was the location of the study. The data collected was analysed using thematic analysis. Ethical considerations were upheld, and ethical clearance was obtained.

### **1.13. STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

**Chapter 1: Introduction.** The context and background of the study are discussed. The research problem, aim and objectives are also listed.

**Chapter 2: Literature Review.** An overview of the literature on the topic is presented.

**Chapter 3: Research Methodology.** This chapter examines the research design, population, sample, data collection process and analysis, rigour and trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and the study limitations.

**Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings.** This chapter outlines the findings derived from the collected data

and provides an analysis of these results.

**Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations.** The final chapter provides the major findings, conclusions reached, findings in connection to the literature review, and recommendations.

### **1.14. CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a broad overview of the present research study. The background of the study and the problem statement which formed the basis and context of this study were detailed. The background of the study and problem statement revealed the gap and the crucial need for conducting this research. The significance and a brief understanding of grandmother-headed households were explicated, and the guiding theoretical framework was described.

Lastly, an overview of the research methodology and the structure of the research report were presented. The following chapter will provide an overview of existing literature on grandmother-headed households within local and international contexts.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

*"Despite the challenges they face, grandmothers in rural areas are the unsung heroes, navigating through adversity as they become the sole providers for their families. Their unwavering love and dedication shine through, as they create nurturing and stable environments for their grandchildren in isolated settings."*

– (Smith 2012: 14)

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Rosalina, Dupre and Wang (2021: 134) defined a literature review as a critical examination and synthesis of existing research on a particular subject. The process entails analysing various sources, including books, scholarly articles, and other publications, to present a comprehensive understanding of the existing knowledge and theories of the subject (Randolph 2019: 13; Xiao and Watson 2019: 94). In addition to providing a summary of the body of knowledge, a well-conducted literature review also points out gaps, contradictions, and areas that need further investigation (Snyder 2019: 333). A literature review offers a solid basis for understanding the present state of knowledge in a specific field and is a crucial element of research and academic endeavours (Milian, Spinola and de Carvalho 2019: 20)

This chapter will focus on literature conveying an in-depth understanding of grandmother-headed households, including their advantages and disadvantages, as well as the factors leading to the emergence of such households. It will also address the challenges of grandmothers and children in these families, the coping mechanisms of grandmothers, and the support and community strategies needed to assist them.

### 2.2. SOURCING OF LITERATURE

The aim, objectives and research questions of this study served as fundamental tools for effectively sourcing literature on grandmother-headed households in rural areas. To efficiently source the literature, the researcher reviewed various sources and selected the most relevant ones, including academic libraries, educational websites, government publications, and community resources

A thorough investigation and reading of the literature revealed a scarcity of published works on grandmother-headed households in rural areas. Therefore, the researcher searched various databases such as PubMed, Scopus, ProQuest, Springer Link, Wiley Online Library, EBSCOhost, Taylor and Francis Online, JSTOR Journals and Web of Science to find pertinent

literature. that pertains to grandmother-headed households in rural areas. A search of grey literature was also conducted to ensure no valuable sources were overlooked.

The researcher also utilised reference lists and citations from selected articles to discover additional relevant literature. Furthermore, the researcher engaged with a community partner in rural Ndwedwe, who played a vital role in highlighting the most prevalent issues in grandmother-headed households. This collaboration helped the researcher develop relevant keywords in various databases to source literature on grandmother-headed households. These sources provided information on parenting, caregiving and kinship care, health and wellness, financial literacy, and psychosocial challenges grandmothers face.

Using Google Scholar and Summons (Durban University of Technology's library) proved valuable for sourcing literature on topics relevant to grandmother-headed households in rural areas. When utilising academic libraries and conducting library research, it was essential for the researcher to use several search methods to ensure comprehensive coverage. This included keyword searches, subject browsing, and consulting with research librarians knowledgeable in child and youth care. In addition to academic libraries, educational websites offered a wealth of information, including scholarly articles, research reports, and educational materials tailored to the specific needs of grandmother-headed households in rural areas.

When sourcing literature, the following phrases and keywords were utilised in different combinations: grandmother-headed households, multigenerational households, intergenerational caregiving, grandmothers as primary carers, grandmothers raising grandchildren, rural areas, grandmothers in rural areas, grandmothers' support systems, grandparenting difficulties, grandmother support, rural poverty, challenges in rural areas, and family dynamics. The researcher also utilised government publications and reports to gather information on policies, programs, and services available for grandmothers in rural areas. These sources helped provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and resources available for grandmother-headed households in rural areas.

Government publications were another valuable source of literature, providing access to policy papers, statistical data, and reports on programs and initiatives targeted at grandmothers raising grandchildren in rural settings. Additionally, community resources, such as "grandmother raising grandchildren" support groups, offered the researcher firsthand accounts, personal narratives, and practical insights that were not readily available through traditional academic sources or government publications.

In summary, sourcing literature for grandmother-headed households in rural areas involved utilising academic libraries, conducting library research, reaching out to community support groups, accessing government publications and reports, exploring community resources, and considering the diverse needs and challenges faced by grandmothers.

### **2.3. GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS: AN OVERVIEW**

Xu *et al.* (2020: 104), defined "grandmother-headed household" as a household where children are nurtured by grandmothers without biological parents. The grandmother is considered the primary decision-maker, the owner of the household, and the primary provider of financial support (Rapoprt *et al.* 2020: 5). Based on research findings, more than 40% of South African children in the care of grandmothers are there as a result of one or both parents abusing drugs (Xu *et al.* 2022: 12). Of the children raised by their grandmothers, 28% experienced parental abuse, abandonment, or neglect, resulting in some now being in the alternate care of their grandmothers (Sadruddin 2019: 112).

McCarthy (2021: 295) further stated that the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa has caused a rise in death rates among those aged 25-49, which led to a substantial number of parental deaths. McCarthy (2021: 296) contended that as a result, a small percentage (1-3%) of children in South Africa, particularly in the rural regions, are left without parents, while their grandmothers frequently take on the role of their main caretakers. Aubel (2021: 380) further asserted that around 60% of orphaned children reside in families headed by their grandmothers, acknowledged as their primary financial caretakers.

Anakpo and Kollamparambil (2023: 57) reported a significant rise in the prevalence of grandmothers assuming the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren in rural parts of South Africa. Sadruddin *et al.* (2019: 114) suggested that this trend is often a result of several obstacles, including poverty, disease outbreaks, and migration. When parents are unwilling or unable to care for their children, grandparents assume that role (Odimegwu 2020: 14).

Given the high rates of parental death and the growing number of families in which both parents are employed in rural areas, parents are becoming more disengaged from their children's lives, hence, the burden of grandmothers carrying out these support responsibilities has grown (Dolbin-MacNab and O'Connell 2018: 207). While studies on this topic have grown globally, in South Africa there are few studies on this topic especially in the rural districts of KwaZulu-Natal

(KZN). Hence, a need for empirical research related to grandmothers who head these households (Danielsbacka, Křenková and Tanskanen 2022: 9).

## **2.4. THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF GRANDMOTHERS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN**

According to Dicks *et al.* (2022: 76) in Western society, the ideal image of grandmothers is often socially constructed to depict them as individuals who engage in activities such as baking cookies and bouncing their knees, while also having many wrinkles. Mlambo and Peltzer (2020: 9) argued that while this may be true for grandmothers in Western society, it is not so for grandmothers raising grandchildren in South African rural areas. Studies indicate that while there are difficulties in raising grandchildren in impoverished areas, there are some benefits as well. The advantages and disadvantages of grandmothers raising grandchildren are described in the sub-sections that follow:

### **2.4.1. The advantages of grandmothers raising grandchildren**

Several grandmothers see the responsibility of raising their grandchildren as a blessing and an opportunity to rectify the errors they made during their parenting years (Soganga and Kang'ethe 2023: 99; Sari 2023: 160). Some grandmothers choose to focus only on the good aspects of this situation. For them, taking care of their grandchildren, offers them a heightened sense of fulfilment in life, as it allows them to impact the younger members of their family (Hossain 2018: 13).

Generally, many grandmothers find being a grandparent an important and mentally satisfying job (Schrijner and Smits 2018: 65). It gives them a sense of personal and family revival, something fun to do, and proof that they have lived a long time. One benefit of this circumstance is that families can remain reasonably intact (Del Boca, Piazzalunga and Pronzato 2018: 477).

The adversity and anxiety that numerous children residing in grandmother-headed households endure, due to parental absence are challenging. However, according to Vasileva and Petermann (2018: 443), being placed in foster care with unfamiliar individuals could exacerbate the children's problems, making it more beneficial for them to be raised by their grandmothers. It is equally beneficial for the grandmothers, as their stress levels significantly decrease when they know their grandchildren are not in foster care (Dubois-Comtois *et al.* 2021: 106).

Kropf and Burnette (2018: 367) contended that grandmothers significantly contribute to their families, communities, and society. Moreover, Butts and Bodiford (2018: 172) asserted that grandmothers caring for grandchildren help and support parents that may be having problems or challenges as parents, this makes the family better and more stable.

#### **2.4.2. The disadvantages of grandmothers raising grandchildren**

Dolbin-MacNab and Yancura (2018: 3) stated that although choosing to raise one's grandchildren as their "parents" might be fulfilling, obstacles come with it. Being carer grandparents increases one's physical, emotional, and financial vulnerability, as reported by Huo (2018: 1006). Hayslip Jr and Fruhauf (2019: 159) opined that many grandmothers who find themselves raising their grandchildren often feel resentment and endure significant stress. Woods (2021: 1429) added they may believe that their role as parents is finished, leading to confusion about their responsibilities. This situation is often uncertain, as many grandmothers wish they could easily visit their grandchildren and still be able to continue with their own lives (Kelley, Whitley and Damato 2022: 3).

Dolbin-MacNab and Yancura (2018: 3) further stated that the other disadvantages of this family structure frequently encompass financial difficulties, mental and physical health issues, social isolation challenges, as well as exposure to the emotional and behavioural problems experienced by their children, both within the household and at school. Fauziningtyas *et al.* (2019: 7) expressed that grandmothers are incapable of addressing or ill-prepared to handle these cases. According to Kropf and Burnette (2003: 361), there are various stressful elements to grandparenting. Kornhaber and Woodward (2019: 28) argue that grandparenting can be stressful for several reasons, including fatigue, managing the legal system, balancing numerous responsibilities, and limited support from the healthcare system

Additionally, raising grandchildren can be physically strenuous, and the responsibilities associated with this role may contribute to the development or worsening of pre-existing health or functional issues (Kropf and Burnette 2003: 362; Huo 2018: 1006; Minkler and Fuller-Thompson *et al.* 2023: 277).

## **2.5. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO GRANDMOTHERS ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR GRANDCHILDREN**

Since their children are unable to fulfil their parenting responsibilities, some grandmothers have found that their role becomes more significant as they have to serve as replacement parents for their grandchildren (du Preez, Richmond and Marquis 2017: 142). According to Minkler and Roe (2017: 85), this may be due to a variety of factors, including death, AIDS, divorce, drug misuse, mental health problems, or any number of other circumstances that put grandmothers in a situation where they must take care of their grandchildren.

Ingersoll-Dayton, Tangchonlatip and Punpuing (2020: 135) indicated that grandmothers play a crucial role in maintaining discipline, and the circumstances that impact the decisions they make to care for their grandchildren are multifaceted. According to Li *et al.* (2019: 135), a significant number of grandmothers in South Africa have taken on the role of full-time carers for their grandchildren. Thomason (2021: 76) asserted that this responsibility has posed considerable emotional and financial difficulties for the majority of grandmothers.

"Grandmothers taking on the duty of parenting their grandchildren often arises from crises that make it impossible for birth parents to adequately care for their children," (Conway, Jones and Speakes-Lewis 2011: 113). When attempting to elucidate the factors contributing to grandmothers who assume the task of caring for their grandchildren, several factors should be considered. These include the following that are discussed in the subsections that follow:

### **2.5.1. Poverty and economic hardships**

Ngumbela (2021: 114) indicated that many rural areas in South Africa face high levels of poverty and limited job opportunities. Francis and Webster (2019: 788) wrote that this economic hardship can make it difficult for parents to provide for their children, leading to an increase in grandmother-headed households. Poverty refers to the condition or reality of experiencing great poverty. Poverty in rural regions can be described as a shortage of essential resources like food, safe drinking water, medical care, and education (Baker and Mutchler 2010: 947; Xu *et al.* 2021: 105). Similarly, Ijadunola *et al.* (2017: 62) contended that it is commonly identified by insufficient infrastructure, restricted job prospects, and an absence of community support.

Freeman, Elton and Lambert South (2023: 268) identified many levels of poverty, including financial as well as moral and spiritual aspects. Financial poverty refers to having insufficient

funds to afford essential goods and services, such as food and other necessities. A lack of physical well-being, energy, and a lack of time and power is moral poverty (Hayslip and Fruhauf 2019: 301). Conversely, spiritual poverty is the absence of significance or hope in the face of adversity (Simpson *et al.* 2017: 5).

Parental duties in a poverty-stricken family may prevent parents from feeding their children nutritious meals, and individuals sometimes have to go a great distance to access water that is at times contaminated, which increases their susceptibility to illness. This is particularly true for grandmothers in rural areas (Prokos and Keene 2018: 592). Moreover, Phillips and Alexander-Eitzman 2016: 3) stated that the effects of poverty extend beyond the physical realm and can include negative effects such as social and economic values. Akinyele, Oloba and Mah (2023: 166) further declared that in many regions of sub-Saharan Africa, the unemployment rate reaches up to 70%, which makes individuals feel imprisoned in an unending cycle of despair.

Van Schalkwyk (2021: 19) contended that individuals living in poverty often resort to alcohol and drug misuse, as well as engage in promiscuous behaviour, as a means to escape their dull lives. As a result of poverty, evidence of sexual abuse and domestic violence has also been found in certain family contexts. According to Freeman, Elton and Lambert South (2023: 270) these incidents have the potential to cause a spouse's death, leaving children in the care of the elderly. Poverty, maltreatment, and domestic violence have the most negative influence on children. As a result, it is not unusual for grandmothers to encounter the problems of increased poverty and its associated risks (Capous-Desyllas *et al.* 262).

According to Allen, Henderson and Murray (2019: 4) the responsibility of raising a child is challenging, especially for an elderly grandmother, due to the numerous requirements and needs that must be fulfilled. Pittman (2016: 78) who undertook a research study in Ghana found that young children were not getting enough food because their extended families were unable to feed all of them. As a result of poverty, there are various instances where biological parents often lack the fundamental supplies needed to care for their children. Therefore, grandmothers step in to play the parental role for their grandchildren (Allen, Henderson and Murray 2019: 6)

Additionally, Boyden (2018: 26) indicated that parents in South African rural areas who have children infected by HIV/AIDS reported a lack of food and a daily challenge in obtaining enough food to feed their families. Consequently, they migrate to other cities to seek employment and leave their children in the care of their grandmothers who then become responsible for raising

their grandchildren. Biyase and Zwane 2018: 115) argued that the HIV and AIDS epidemic has greatly increased the distress experienced by impoverished children, resulting in their placement under the guardianship of older women. According to Boyden (2018: 29) although extended family members may provide care for one orphan, taking on multiple orphans might negatively impact the nutritional health of all the children in the home.

Research conducted by Pecora *et al.* (2018: 7) and (Hossain. 2018: 87) found that around 50% of carers had challenges in fulfilling the requirements of children, therefore, a larger number of children will be deprived of sufficient nutrition required for their proper development and growth. Hall and Richter (2018: 90) wrote that the expenses associated with providing food, clothes, and educational costs s have emerged as a significant worry for grandmothers raising grandchildren across the continent.

Profe and Wild (2017: 776) revealed that due to financial difficulties, many grandmothers make sacrifices to raise their children and keep their fragile family together so that it might serve as a haven for orphans. Grandmothers either cease employment or persist in working beyond retirement to provide financial assistance for their extended family (Park 2018: 297).

### **2.5.2. Loss of a parent**

Grandmothers often step in to raise their grandchildren when both parents are unable to do so, which may be caused by several factors such as the spread of diseases like COVID-19 or even intentional neglect (Buchanan and Rotkirch 2018: 131; Rogers, Bell and Mehta 2019: 300). In light of the recent COVID-19 outbreaks that have claimed numerous lives among young adults, a considerable number of grandmothers have assumed the responsibility of being the primary carers for their grandchildren, with 60% of orphans in South Africa living in families led by grandmothers (Jongenelis *et al.* 2019; 79).

According to Tamasane and Head (2010: 25) some grandmothers are obliged to provide full-time care rather than having the choice to do so. In Sub-Saharan Africa, HIV/AIDS continues to be a significant worldwide public health issue, and the transmission of the virus has played a significant role in the rise of grandmother-caregivers (Hayslip, Fruhauf and Dolbin-MacNab 2019: 152). Hatcher *et al.* (2018: 40) stated that between 2000 and 2022, South Africa had the world's highest HIV prevalence. Despite intensified attempts to battle the HIV and AIDS pandemic, there is still an ongoing concern, i.e., new cases of infection, especially among young African adults." According to Doucette (2014: 3), South Africa has a high number of people

affected by HIV compared to other countries worldwide. KwaZulu-Natal has been identified as the region with the highest HIV prevalence among adolescent girls and young women.

Challacombe (2020: 16) wrote that most communities with people living with HIV are situated in nations with low and intermediate incomes. Moreover, Maurice (2014: 1535) further stated that it is estimated that sixty-six per cent of these communities are located in East and Southern Africa. Although there has been significant progress in addressing the HIV and AIDS pandemic, South Africa continues to face the weight of this public health crisis. Kalomo and Taukeni (2022: 1388) asserted that the death of a parent or child due to HIV/AIDS has resulted in South Africa's grandmother-headed households becoming the primary social safety net for children who have lost their parents. This pattern is consistent with other regions in sub-Saharan Africa.

Tanga, Khumalo and Gutura (2017: 23) revealed that the impact of HIV/AIDS has caused immense destruction amongst South African families and communities, and this has resulted in a significant number of children being orphaned. Oduaran and Oduaran (2018: 203) stated that based on the data provided by Statistics South Africa, deaths resulting from natural causes were over 80% of the total number of fatalities recorded from 1997 to 2020. However, many untimely deaths are associated with environmental factors or individual choices, such as smoking cigarettes, unhealthy eating habits, a lack of exercise, and excessive alcohol use, leading to accidents (Selamu and Singhe 2017: 4).

While a majority of young adults die as a consequence of the circumstances listed above, children end up without parents (Hlophe and Jooste 2023: 71). Consequently, grandmothers assume the burden for bereaved and vulnerable children. Grandmothers become responsible for providing a support system for their young grandchildren (Huo *et al.* 2018: 1006).

### **2.5.3. Teenage pregnancy**

Teenage pregnancy has been identified as a major government health and socioeconomic concern in many African countries, particularly South Africa. Transitioning into motherhood is a major life event for anyone, but it takes on greater significance for young people when it happens early (Isworo and Mardiansjah 2020: 126; Metsa-Simola *et al.* 2024: 4).

Duby *et al.* (2021: 344) stated that one unique thing about how teenage girls reproduce in South Africa is that almost all of them do it outside of a legal marriage union. This is supported by a research study conducted by Jochim, Groves and Cluver (2020: 850) which found that

adolescent women were still attending school at the time of their first childbirth. Their plans did not include becoming mothers, and they were not prepared for it. Hence, they become reliant on their mothers or grandmothers for help.

Researchers have stated that although teenage moms may get help from other extended family members, they mostly rely on their mothers for support (Ardiningrum *et al.* 2021: 65; Ali and Aun 2022: 87; Pinzon *et al.* 2012: 1743). This argument is reinforced by the research conducted by DUBY *et al.* (2021: 349) who said that young women in their study expressed a desire to take on financial responsibility for their children but encountered challenges. Hence, they relied on their mothers to raise their children for them.

Ali and Aun (2022: 89) stated that many teenage mothers encountered a multitude of challenges because they were no longer in a committed relationship with the father of their child, and hence, relied on their parents for support. Powers (2021: 19) contended that this evolving viewpoint on parenting encompasses an awareness of the importance of motherhood and "self-nurturing" (which the mother of the child herself must attend to). "However, the teenage mother needs assistance from the relative who cares for her children so she may carry out her responsibilities of nurturing herself."

Essentially, teenage mothers need their child's kinship care to participate in things that will help them improve as a person and as parents. Thomson (2016: 1) found that teenage pregnancy is indeed what gives rise to grandmother-headed households and the presence of the grandmother at home, is what has significantly influenced the likelihood of South African girls returning to school after pregnancy. This coheres with the prevailing childcare patterns in South Africa, where grandmothers are often responsible for looking after the children of young women (Ali and Aun 2022: 90).

#### **2.5.4. Parental incarceration**

Parental incarceration is when a parent or guardian is imprisoned (Harris and Boudin 2019: 10). Parental incarceration is considered another factor that contributes to the prevalence of grandmother-headed households. There is a considerable number of effects of parental incarceration which may include emotional and psychological pain, financial hardship, altered family relations, and a higher risk of delinquency or engagement in the criminal justice system (Miller *et al.* 2013: 584; Guastaferrro, Guastaferrro and Stuart 2015: 137). For many families,

having a parent in jail can mean that the grandmothers take over as the main carer for the children (Ruiz and Kopak 2014: 9).

Foster and Hagan (2013: 650) revealed that statistics on parental imprisonment and grandmother-headed families are scarce, but existing data indicate a significant correlation between the two. According to a National Research Council survey, about 1.5 million children in South Africa have had their parents incarcerated at some time in their lives (Billings 2018: 91; Kahya and Ekinci 2018: 165). The research also discovered that grandmothers are more likely to be the main carers in families where a parent has been jailed, with estimates indicating that more than half of children with an incarcerated parent are cared for by a grandparent, usually the grandmother (Foster and Hagan 2013: 653).

In South African rural communities, the impact of parental imprisonment and the prevalence of grandmother-headed homes may be much more pronounced (Damian 2017: 61). Rural areas of South Africa may experience an increase in the prevalence of parental incarceration and a heightened dependence on grandmother-headed households as a result of various challenges including elevated levels of unemployment, poverty, and restricted availability of resources and support services. In these contexts, the impact of parental imprisonment on grandmother-headed families might be exacerbated (Zelalem, Gebremariam Kotecho and Adamek 2021: 215; Clark, Henderson and Kabiru 2024: 74)

This transition can place additional strain on grandmothers, given that they may have to navigate the difficulties of raising children at an older age, dealing with financial insecurity, and meeting the emotional requirements of both the children and themselves (Leeson 2020: 15). Furthermore, research indicates that children in grandmother-headed families may have greater rates of educational difficulties, behavioural issues, and restricted access to resources and support services (Rapoport *et al.* 2020: 355). Overall, parental imprisonment may have a major and long-term effect on both children and families, including consequences for grandmother-headed households (Motsa and Morojele 2022: 1024).

#### **2.5.5. Cultural factors**

Ntuli and Madiba (2019: 31) believed that the involvement of grandmothers in rearing their grandchildren is influenced by ethnicity, with black African women frequently providing higher levels of support to their daughters. In several Black African communities in South Africa, it is customary for the maternal grandmother to be very involved in the upbringing of

their grandchildren. In Africa, it is traditional for families to take care of their elderly relatives, which brings generations together in a community (Mefteh and Shenkute 2022: 247). The elder generations are held in high esteem and are seen as sources of knowledge and wisdom. They serve as exemplary figures to be admired in one's own life and aspirations (Burke 2017: 12).

In the past, elders were praised as "transmitters of culture," "Guardians of the mysteries of life," or "the Wise," and people went to them for help with things like keeping the peace in the family, in society, and in oneself (Ntuli and Madiba 2019: 36).

Because they know the most about traditional ideals, they are considered to be the best people to teach and care for their children's children (Mtshali 2015: 77). Furthermore, it was observed that black grandmothers in African countries are more often engaged in the upbringing of young children. This provides insight into why Black grandparents sometimes do not regard raising grandchildren as difficult (Duuki 2023: 56).

#### **2.5.6. Parental drug and substance abuse**

In the context of substance abuse, the term "abuse" refers to the harmful or potentially hazardous use of psychoactive substances, such as alcohol and illegal narcotics (Neelam *et al.* 2019: 8). A growing phenomenon in rural areas is the increase of grandmother-headed households, which have been attributed to substance and drug misuse in these rural communities (Hansen *et al.* 2022: 39). Researchers have found that drug and alcohol abuse by parents in rural areas produces an increase in the number of homes led by grandmothers. Several factors contribute to this. According to Xu (2019: 109) to have a comprehensive understanding of this matter, it is crucial to define the key elements that contribute to drug and substance misuse in rural communities.

Firstly, factors such as limited availability of mental health services, financial difficulties, and social seclusion may all contribute to the high occurrence of drug and substance misuse in these areas (Alhammad *et al.* 2022: 10; Dolbin-MacNab and O'Connell 2021: 207; Lightfoot *et al.* 2018: 228). This trend is concerning as it has significant implications for the well-being and stability of these households led by grandmothers. In South African rural areas, drug and substance abuse often results in parental neglect or abandonment, as people grappling with addiction may prioritise acquiring and using drugs above their duties as parents (Brooks *et al.* 2017: 24; Somani and Meghani 2016: 2; Layman *et al.* 2022: 307).

According to Vanderminden *et al.* (2019: 256) this negligence or abandonment of the children results in their grandparents assuming responsibility for their care, as they can provide them with stability and support (Gordon 2017: 39). Additionally, drug and substance misuse may have detrimental repercussions on people, such as causing mental health disorders and financial instability (Verhaeghe *et al.* 2017: 295).

Consequently, parents may lack the ability to sufficiently attend to the needs of their children, leading to grandparents assuming the role of main carers. Moreover, the high incidence of drug and substance misuse in rural regions could also contribute to the lack of accessible services and support networks for families impacted by addiction. As a result, grandparents who are already experiencing financial and emotional difficulties are left with the responsibility of parenting their grandchildren in these situations (Dolbin-Macnab and O'Connell 2021: 207; Woods 2021: 273; Teaster 2018: 608; Davis *et al.* 2020: 295).

Furthermore, studies indicate that children who are brought up in houses led by their grandmothers due to drug and substance addiction may have a higher likelihood of encountering emotional and behavioural issues, as well as developmental difficulties. These obstacles may include attachment disorders, trauma, and academic difficulties (Goulette, Evans, and King 2019: 349; Hansen *et al.* 2022: 42).

Hence, it is important to tackle drug and substance misuse in rural areas, as it directly impacts the welfare of individuals grappling with addiction but also for the prevention of the rise of grandmother-headed households and the overall health of children in these communities. Overall, the detrimental effects of addiction and parental neglect or abandonment may result in a high percentage of grandmother-headed homes in rural regions due to drug and substance misuse (Yuliana 2021: 44; Shergill 2018: 12).

### **2.5.7. Employment**

Employment significantly influences the prevalence of grandmother-headed families in rural regions (Zamarro 2020: 287). When jobs are limited in rural regions, younger adults often relocate to cities or other nations in pursuit of better employment possibilities (Statti and Torres 2020: 173). Middle-generation migration, specifically cross-border or internal migration, may result in grandmothers acting as substitute carers for their grandchildren. This phenomenon happens due to a variety of employment-related circumstances such as:

Lack of work possibilities in rural locations, poor earnings, and unpredictable or seasonal employment make it difficult for young people to support their families (Dunifon and Bajracharya 2012: 1168). Moreover, shocks or crises, such as sickness or divorce, might further jeopardise employment and income stability within rural families. These factors contribute to the rising number of grandmother-headed families in rural regions, as grandmothers step in to care for and support their grandchildren (Purcal *et al.* 2019: 47).

Zhu *et al.* (2020: 100) stated that when their adult children go away to pursue work, grandmothers in rural places take on the role of main carers. They take on the duty of parenting their grandkids, ensuring that they are safe and have a secure home life. This caring position has social implications and may have positive and negative effects. On the one hand, grandmothers feel satisfaction in meeting the physical and educational needs of grandchildren and take pleasure in being a part of their cultural heritage. However, grandmothers may find the duty of grandparenting to be emotionally and physically taxing (Chen *et al.* 2022: 98; Sun and Dutta 2022: 604).

Grandmothers in South African rural areas take up the duty of full-time carers for their grandchildren when parents cannot do so because of work obligations. Similarly, the majority of grandmothers in Taiwan raise their grandchildren because the child's or children's parents work full-time, or because the grandmothers do not want their grandchildren to receive care from anyone else and want to support them financially (Mattsson *et al.* 2022: 76; Sun and Mulvaney 2021: 40; Tai and Tu 2021: 465)

## **2.6. CHALLENGES CONFRONTING GRANDMOTHERS WHO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR GRANDCHILDREN**

Grandmothers face various challenges when they assume the role of caring for their grandchildren. A shift in the grandmother's position from parent to grandparent might affect the family in several ways, including making the grandmother feel excluded, undervalued, misinterpreted, and alone in society. It results in physical, mental, social, and economic challenges, as well as a shift in attitude, all of which have an impact on the overall quality of life (Hunt 2018: 175: 123; Makiwane, Gumede and Makiwane 2017: 12). Other challenges faced by grandmothers in rural areas are described in the subsections that follow:

### **2.6.1. Health challenges**

Health is defined as a state of full mental, social, and physical well-being, rather than only the absence of sickness or disability (Carthron, and Busam 2016: 34). The conversation around health in this study will revolve around the effects on the social and physical well-being of grandmothers who are responsible for the care of their grandchildren.

According to Hong, Xu and Zhao (2023: 104) when it comes to living a long and fulfilling life, nothing is more important than one's physical health. An individual's daily activities, such as washing, eating, and dressing, are greatly influenced by one's overall health. Carthron and Busam (2016: 41) stated it has an impact on social relationships and financial stability. Mayfield, Whitley and Kelley (2019: 655) found that out of 504 African American caregiving grandmothers, slightly over 25% had diabetes, around 60% had hypertension, and nearly 90 per cent were either overweight or obese based on their body mass index (BMI).

These findings are in line with Mtshali's (2016: 369) findings and those in several other studies that also reported that hypertension and diabetes are part of the physical health issues that grandparents as caregivers face. Thus, a grandmother's capacity to care for her grandchildren is hindered by health problems. In a research study by Schatz and Ogunmefun (2007: 1390), grandmothers reported experiencing a lesser ability to manage their difficulties as a result of health problems. Furthermore, they indicated that the inappropriate behaviour of their grandchildren had adverse effects on both their physical well-being and financial status (Billings 2018: 91).

According to Makiwane, Gumede and Makiwane (2017: 8), elderly grandmothers who attempt to deal with family stress may be more susceptible to certain diseases. Grandmothers are often susceptible to life-threatening illnesses such as arthritis, elevated blood pressure, and heart and respiratory disorders. Additionally, if their situation is not properly managed, they may also have poor health (Whitley and Fuller-Thomson 2015: 632).

These disorders have the potential to make existing health problems much worse and impair their coping abilities. While it is expected that grandmothers would have poor health, there is an increased risk of life-threatening illnesses among them (Whitley and Fuller-Thomson 2017: 634). The severity of rheumatism, arthritis, and other cardiovascular and pulmonary disorders may range from moderate to severe, and the socioeconomic status of grandmothers in the past may have an impact on the severity of these conditions. Moreover, grandmothers face a

multitude of psycho-emotional challenges as they strive to manage the responsibilities of caring for their grandchildren (Mtshali 2016: 375).

### **2.6.2. Emotional challenges**

In the context of grandmother-headed families, emotional challenges constitute the numerous psychological and emotional barriers that grandmothers may experience daily. These difficulties may manifest in several forms, including stress, anxiety, sadness, depression, and mood swings. They may stem from a variety of reasons, including the stress of parenting grandchildren, personal relationships, traumatic events, and internal conflicts. Several scholars have said that emotional challenges may have a significant influence on a grandmother's mental health and capacity to perform efficiently (Riem *et al.* 2023: 25; Schatz and Ogunmefun 2007: 1394; Pearson *et al.* 2019: 7).

Heckman *et al.* (2013: 203) suggested that the emotional well-being of grandmothers providing care to their grandchildren may be impacted by the health challenges they face. Several authors revealed that anxiety about not being able to provide the necessary level of care, burnout and physical strain from daily and parental responsibilities, lack of suitable social support, and/or grief over adult children lost to illness, migration, or incarceration appear to be the main causes of emotional distress amongst grandmothers (Dombrowski *et al.* 2016: 24; Smalls *et al.* 2020: 243). Furthermore, grandmothers might be too weak to provide childcare and they might be ill or exhausted, which are other factors that affect their emotional well-being (Williams 2011: 948). As a result, grandmothers may experience chronic stress, which might increase their susceptibility to diseases such as influenza, depression, and even dementia. In addition, Yancura (2013: 475) said that the grandmothers may experience emotional difficulties as they make difficult decisions to manage limited financial resources.

### **2.6.3. Psychological challenges**

Most research on the psychological challenges of grandmothers looks at stress and depression from a psychological standpoint (Kim, Spangler and Gutter 2016: 105). The stress of raising grandchildren has been linked to a decline in grandmothers' perceptions of their mental health (Damian, Mashau and Tugli 2019: 139). Psychological challenges such as stress are linked to a variety of negative health outcomes in the general population, which may have an impact on the level of care that is given to grandchildren. Psychological challenges may be prevalent for grandmothers raising grandchildren because grandmothers do not know how long they will be

able to care for their grandchildren full-time, and many are afraid of giving the child back to an unsuitable parent (Kelly, Mrengqwa and Geffen 2019: 8).

Dolbin-MacNab and Yancura (2018: 12) revealed that in South Africa, studies on the psychological well-being of grandmothers have consistently demonstrated that grandmothers who are carers tend to experience elevated levels of depression. Moreover, grandmothers who are married and older have a lower mental burden than grandmothers who are single or younger (Kim, Kang and Johnson-Motoyama 2017: 118). A study of grandparents in the United States who take care of their grandchildren revealed that they have significantly higher levels of depression compared to grandmothers who do not provide care to their grandchildren (Musil *et al.* 2019: 86).

#### **2.6.4. Anxiety and Stress**

Hansen *et al.* (2022: 46) stated that grandmothers often complain about issues such as anxiety, guilt, helplessness, sadness, stress, and exhaustion, as well as feelings of inadequacy and a lack of confidence. To save their loved ones from suffering, grandmothers may also deny their health issues and possibly their difficult circumstances (Luna, Ramos and Rivera 2016: 90). If the parent passed away from an AIDS-related disease, they may be afraid that their grandchildren will also pass away. Ntuli and Madiba (2019: 41) shared that they may live an extremely stressful life in an attempt to seem strong for their grandchildren

(Harris, Boggiano and Nguyen 2016: 520) asserted that stress arises whenever the personal and situational requirements, exceed resources. There are two types of stressors: physical stressors (environmental conditions) and psychosocial stressors (for example, social and psychological factors that could potentially be harmful to oneself). While grandmothers may gain happiness from grandchildren, research studies have consistently shown that grandmothers face social isolation and physical and mental difficulties (Whitley, Fuller-Thomson and Brennenstuhl 2015: 639; Musil *et al.* 2019: 86).

Jennings, Farrell and Kobayashi (2021: 661) revealed that anxiety and stress may have a big influence on grandmothers raising their grandchildren in remote settings. When there is restricted access to resources and support networks, and the burden of meeting their grandchildren's physical, emotional, and educational requirements, grandmothers may feel more anxious and stressed, which may impact their general well-being (Smalls *et al.* 2020: 241). The challenges and stresses grandmothers confront while raising grandchildren in remote

settings may exacerbate their existing anxieties and contribute to elevated stress levels. Furthermore, the absence of social support and resources in rural areas might lead to feelings of loneliness and overwhelm these grandmothers (Woods 2020: 1135).

The combination of stress and anxiety may have a wide range of effects for both grandparents and grandchildren. Stress and anxiety may present themselves in physical and medical issues such as high blood pressure, heart problems, and sleep disruptions in grandmothers (Dunifon and Bajracharya 2022: 1171). It may also result in mental health problems such as depression and an increased chance of acquiring anxiety disorders. Additionally, grandmothers' anxieties and stress may interfere with their capacity to provide consistent and high-quality care to their grandchildren (Condon, Luszcz and McKee 2019: 336).

This is especially difficult when it comes to supporting the educational requirements of grandchildren, as grandmothers may lack access to proper resources and support networks to assist with their grandchildren's education. Consequently, grandchildren may face educational gaps and challenges in their academic growth. Furthermore, several writers stated that the anxiety and stress that grandmothers face might have a significant influence on their emotional health (Riem *et al.* 2023: 40; Harris and Boudin 2019: 12).

They may have less emotional capacity to provide the affection, care and support that grandchildren need, resulting in a strained relationship. Furthermore, the anxiety and stress experienced by grandmothers might lead to a cycle of stress and mental health difficulties that passes down through generations. This may have a lasting effect on the grandchildren's general well-being and resilience in the face of hardship. Overall, anxiety and stress may be major issues for grandmothers raising grandchildren in rural regions (Keller, Bi and Schoenberg 2019: 269).

#### **2.6.5. Loss and depression**

Kim, Kang and Johnson-Motoyama (2017: 118) argued that loss and depression are considered problems encountered by grandmothers, resulting in symptoms such as decreased energy, diminished self-esteem, and loss of hope. They added that depression is characterised by feelings of sadness, despair, hopelessness, low self-esteem, helplessness, and a lack of interest in life. It was suggested by Blustein, Chan and Guanais (2004: 1671) that the concept of 'loss' is prevalent in the lives of elderly people. This includes the loss of an individual's health, independence, status, family roles, money, friends, and spouse, among other things.

Bailey, Haynes and Letiecq (2013: 671) stated that loss and depression present major challenges for grandmothers raising grandchildren in rural regions. These challenges might be worsened by the lack of access to mental health services and support networks, which are often restricted in rural regions (Kaufman *et al.* 2006: 349). Furthermore, the death of a spouse or other close family members may lead to emotions of loneliness and isolation, as well as grief, which can influence one's mental health and general well-being (Peterson and Starks 2014: 175).

According to Smalls *et al.* (2020: 243) the loss and depression that grandmothers endure when raising grandchildren in rural locations may have far-reaching consequences for their mental and emotional health. Harris and Boudin (2019: 11) contended that these difficulties are especially severe in remote areas when access to mental health treatments and support networks is restricted. As they navigate through the complexity of grief and loss, grandmothers may experience emotions of loneliness and isolation, heightening the challenges of parenting their grandchildren (Kaufman *et al.* 2006: 350).

Zhao *et al.* (2021: 13) stated that the impact of loss and depression on grandmothers in rural regions might also affect the grandchildren they are raising. Children may be affected by their grandmother's grief and depression, resulting in emotional and behavioural issues. These challenges might include difficulty in building bonds, disturbances in routine and stability, and seeing their grandmother's emotional distress (Ntuli and Madiba 2019: 42; Heckman *et al.* 2013: 203).

These behaviours may be particularly difficult for grandmothers to manage in rural areas because of a lack of mental health facilities and support networks (Mtshali 2015: 80). Without easily accessible professional treatment, grandmothers may feel overwhelmed, having to cope with their grief and depression on their own. Furthermore, the stigma associated with mental health in rural areas might make it much more difficult for grandmothers to seek support and assistance. The additional responsibility of parenting grandchildren, particularly if they are suffering from their own emotional and behavioural issues, may put a strain on grandmothers' mental and emotional health (Bailey, Haynes and Letiecq 2013: 674).

### **2.6.6. Transformation of roles and adjustment of grandparents' attitudes**

Zhao *et al.* (2021: 13) asserted that grandmothers often anticipate their older years as a period of delighting in the joys of spending time with grandchildren without any obligations. However, when circumstances prevent this, there may be a few adjustments needed to embrace the new responsibilities of caring for grandchildren. In addition to this, it may include a great deal of financial, professional, relocation, and lifestyle modifications, as well as other life-planning adjustments (Pearson *et al.* 2019: 8).

Furthermore, numerous grandmothers experience conflicting or mixed feelings about assuming the role of "parents" once again. They feel content to be able to care for their grandchildren, yet they also feel resentful for being compelled to assume complete responsibility for raising another child (Randolph 2019: 14). However, Xiao and Watson (2019: 95) affirmed that grandmothers seem to be returning to previous behaviours that are intended to improve their own and their grandchildren's lifestyles after the period of adjusting for their present role has ended.

### **2.6.7. Financial challenges**

Unemployment is a key issue that contributes to financial stress for women, and grandmothers often carry the brunt of the economic burden. It often happens when employers see grandmothers as excessively old or without the necessary qualifications to work in modern infrastructures or industries. As a result, older grandmothers are more vulnerable to age discrimination, which affects their ability to find employment (Amorim 2019: 132; Ge and Adesman 2017: 379)

Research indicated that despite many financial challenges, limited resources, and economic strain, a significant number of grandmothers are dedicated to completing their responsibility of raising their grandchildren (Chen *et al.* 2022: 98). Moreover, Sun and Dutta (2022: 603) stated that child welfare organisations often provide less financial support to grandmothers raising grandchildren as reported by many carers.

Even though private and employment pensions are available for those who have worked in the formal sector, about seventy per cent of South Africans above the age of sixty depend on a government-sponsored old-age grant that is subject to a means test as their primary source of

income (Odimegwu 2020: 14). A substantial number of elderly individuals in South Africa may meet the criteria for the old age payment, although only a small minority get it (Qatarh 2022: 5).

Zhao *et al.* (2021: 14) revealed that the main issue is that grants are conditional upon strict qualifying conditions. Research has indicated that a majority of grandmothers face difficulties due to the requirement of submitting their pension application in person (or through a designated family member with proper documentation) at a South African Home Affairs office. These offices are typically situated in urban areas, requiring travel and possibly multiple trips before pension collection becomes possible (Amorim 2019: 134). After receiving clearance, a grandmother is required to personally visit a pension pay station in their village on a certain day every month to collect their pension payments. While the pension pay stations are situated in villages, it is not possible to submit applications at these locations (Danielsbacka, Křenková and Tanskanen 2022: 10).

According to a report published by the Social Development and Grants Programme, the South African government has committed to constructing homes that are accessible to the poor, combating poverty, identifying a strategy to encourage environmentally sustainable growth, utilising social grants, and initiating a programme that provides food assistance to economically disadvantaged (Huo *et al.* 2018: 1007; Oduaran and Oduaran 2018: 204).

Nevertheless, these obligations have not fully materialised for the elderly. Grandmothers in several impoverished nations are among the most susceptible and marginalised individuals in their respective societies (Silus *et al.* 2022: 37). According to Sellers *et al.* (2020: 137), grandmothers who take care of children orphaned by AIDS confront the additional responsibility of parenting traumatised children and teens in destitute settings. Furthermore, in certain cases, inadequate career opportunities and unequal inheritance and property rules compel many women to labour until they are old (Berrick and Hernández 2016: 26).

After the deaths of their spouses, grandmothers can sustain themselves by working in physically demanding tasks in the informal sector for low salaries (Rocha and Arcinas 2020: 174). An example of this may be seen in Zambia, where it was revealed that widows were dedicating an additional two to four hours per day to compensate for the decrease in income resulting from the loss of their spouses (Kelly *et al.* 2022: 20).

Keim, Parrott and Mason (2022: 8) suggested that it is not unexpected for older grandmothers raising grandchildren to experience poverty and be among the most economically disadvantaged populations in Africa. Despite the difficulties and obstacles, grandmothers continue to feel obligated to financially support their grandchildren, as this has become their lifelong duty.

#### **2.6.8. Challenges related to social interactions**

According to Dockery (2019: 6), the majority of grandmothers who were responsible for taking care of younger children feel more restricted, resulting in a decline in their social activities. Such responsibility has been found to lead to their exclusion from their social group. Additionally, grandmothers at all levels of caregiving are reported to have a decline in personal time and freedom. In a study conducted in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape, many grandmothers expressed disappointment that their hopes for an empty nest and retirement plans had to be postponed (Brunissen *et al.* 2020: 7).

The social isolation experienced by grandmothers might make it difficult and harmful to cope with their physical and emotional issues (Keim, Parrott and Mason (2022: 9). Irrespective of the specific challenges that grandmothers encounter, the health of grandmothers is negatively impacted, especially those who provide care, especially when they have to postpone or disregard their healthcare needs to attend to the more urgent needs of their grandchild/children (Yalcin *et al.* 2018:112).

It is important to acknowledge that any delay in addressing or managing a medical condition that may arise from the care provided by grandmothers might worsen the symptoms associated with existing chronic conditions, potentially leading to rapid physical deterioration. The declining health of a grandmother may therefore hinder her ability to complete her parental duties towards her grandchild/children in her care (Whitley and Fuller-Thomson 2015: 630; Rapoport *et al.* 2020: 7).

#### **2.6.9. Insufficient housing**

The issue of insufficient housing is another significant obstacle that grandmothers living with grandchildren encounter. Grandmothers sometimes live in inadequate housing with their grandchildren (Kolomer and Lynch (2007: 65). In South Africa, the lack of proper housing and the prevalence of mud homes in rural regions may be attributed to the historical impact of the

apartheid government's housing policy, which failed to adequately supply housing (Nkosi 2020: 49; Mohale 2013: 89).

Mthembu, Myburgh and Poggenpoel (2020: 20) wrote that mud homes are now a prevalent characteristic of African rural life in the industrial heartland of South Africa. Certain grandmothers have difficulty accommodating one or more children who have been left without parents in their government-supported accommodation, namely the houses supplied by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Pearson *et al.* 2019: 10; Hayslip *et al.* 2017: 157). As the children become older and want their own space and privacy, this creates a challenge for the family.

Scholars have said that certain grandmothers living in rural areas on the outer reaches of towns inhabit mud homes and shacks that lack essential urban amenities such as electricity, running water, and a sewage system, which is necessary for basic existence (Mthembu, Myburgh and Poggenpoel 2020: 19; Nkosi 2020: 49; Brunissen *et al.* 2020: 7). Numerous grandmothers found themselves living in these settlements as a result of repressive laws that compelled them to either live with their family or be placed in institutional care after the passing of their husband (Huot *et al.* 2019: 158).

(Bauer *et al.* 2021: 341) highlighted that insufficient housing in rural regions has been shown to have a detrimental impact not, only on grandmothers, but also on children living in grandmother-headed households. Children in these homes often experience poor living conditions, such as overcrowding or poor-quality housing, which may impact their general well-being and development (Tang *et al.* 2022: 2).

A study by Matsa and Matsa (2020: 79) found that children in grandmother-headed homes in rural regions are more vulnerable to the impacts of inadequate housing. Overcrowding can lead to greater stress and anxiety, affecting the children's mental health and ability to focus on their studies. Furthermore, substandard housing could expose children to health hazards such as respiratory issues caused by mould and dampness. Grandmothers in these households may not be able to handle how insufficient housing affects the children in their care, and as a result, this may further increase their stress levels (Southwick *et al.* 2016: 77; Toit 2018: 973).

### **2.6.10. Inadequate support from the government**

Due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic in South Africa, there are millions of orphans. These orphans are either adopted by their extended relatives or put into institutions, and many of them often need to relocate to other residences and communities (Clark *et al.* 2024: 421; Kim, Spangler and Gutter 2016: 104). The responsibility of providing care falls mostly on the extended family homes and siblings, with a particular emphasis on grandmothers who are often poor (Dockery 2019: 7).

Isangula (2022: 96) highlighted that government agencies often lack the necessary resources and skills to effectively support older people in managing the additional challenges they face, and South Africa is not exempt from this pattern. Based on the research conducted by Sartorius *et al.* (2014: 776), Schwartz (2019: 17) and Murimba (2020: 7), it is evident that a considerable number of elderly individuals in South Africa have not been able to enjoy a peaceful retirement. Instead, they have been burdened with the responsibility of taking care of their grandchildren who have been left orphaned due to AIDS and government agencies doing little to assist them. According to researchers, grandmothers in South Africa are experiencing a disproportionate impact from the lasting effects of apartheid due to ongoing discrimination by the government and its institutions (Isangula 2022: 99).

(Clark *et al.* 2024: 425) indicated that grandmothers have ongoing challenges in accessing government-promised support services, including disability payments, child support grants, and pension funds. Tang *et al.* (2022: 4) and Beasley *et al.* (2022: 123) argued that the issue experienced by grandmothers in South Africa is also present in nearby nations.

In a study conducted by Chazan (2014: 168), it was found that grandmothers have difficulties accessing medical care at clinics and public hospitals due to the need to travel significant distances to seek medical services for both themselves as well as the grandchildren they care for. A few research studies concluded that if grandmothers quit providing care for these children, there would be a large number of orphans who are homeless and in homes for children (Carthron, Bailey and Anderson 2015: 710; Kim, Spangler and Gutter 2016: 104).

(Tamasane and Head 2010: 11) proposed that there is little support for grandmothers who provide care for AIDS orphans. Thus, grandchildren choose not to attend school to provide for themselves and their grandmothers. Grandmothers also have challenges obtaining access to

restricted resources, which are often inaccessible at times of greatest need (Manderson and Block 2016: 205).

Rutigliano (2020: 1393) stated that grandmothers have to care for and provide for orphans with little resources or assistance from the government, resulting in them being the most impoverished demographic in any African community. An investigation was conducted to examine the existing data about disadvantaged and vulnerable grandmothers in South Africa. The survey revealed that 64% of those aged 60 years and beyond were living below the poverty threshold, and 29 years into its democracy, Metsa-Simola *et al.* (2024: 4) argued that there are grandmothers in rural South Africa, who are still grappling to support their families, even with a fully functioning government.

## **2.7. COPING TECHNIQUES USED BY GRANDMOTHERS CARING FOR THEIR GRANDCHILDREN.**

Heckman *et al.* (2013: 203) defined coping techniques as the mechanisms one uses to response to stress. Moreover, it includes the actions, emotions, and beliefs individuals use to develop competence, endure, or successfully minimise the negative consequences of difficult circumstances. Hadfield (2014: 32) shared that stress occurs when an individual's demands surpass their ability to adapt. Coping refers to the set of behaviours that an individual develops to adjust to the non-specific physiological response of the body to any kind of demand (Park 2006: 266; Meyer and Kandic 2017: 9)

Given their advanced age and increased risk of health problems, grandmothers' inability to handle any difficult care-related situation may be a reflection of stress symptoms (Thomson 2016: 1) Grandmothers who raise or care for their grandchildren often face significant challenges that can cause them a great deal of stress, ultimately affecting their ability to cope (Tamasane and Head 2010: 11). The specific challenges faced by grandmothers in raising their grandchildren and the strategies they employ to cope with the challenges are reflected in the subsections below.

### **2.7.1. Financial coping technique**

According to Brown (2018: 31) in rural regions, grandmothers often play a critical role in caring for their family. These grandmothers depend on a variety of financial coping techniques to meet

their caregiving duties and maintain the well-being of their family. Some of these coping methods are:

- **Pooling resources with other family members:** Grandmothers in rural regions often depend on the assistance and financial contributions of their adult children and other members of their family (Alhammad *et al.* 2022: 12; Lightfoot *et al.* 2018: 238). This pooling of resources alleviates some of the grandmother's financial load while also ensuring that there is enough money to cover the requirements of the whole family.
- **Engaging in income-generating activities:** Grandmothers increase their income by engaging in activities such as farming, handicrafts, or running small companies (Davis *et al.* 2010: 48; Carletto 2008: 146).
- **Seeking financial assistance from government programmes:** Grandmothers apply for government programmes and initiatives that help individuals and families with low incomes. For example, to reduce financial burden, grandmothers apply for social security payments, food stamps, or housing assistance (Izenstark *et al.* 2016: 134).
- **Participating in community-based initiatives:** Grandmothers join community-based projects that provide financial assistance and resources. These efforts usually include microfinance programmes, women's cooperatives, or community savings organisations (Meyer and Kandic 2017: 9).
- **Using community resources:** Grandmothers benefit from community resources and services including community gardens, food banks, and local support programmes, which can supply them with basic requirements while reducing their financial burden (Harris 2021: 169).
- **Borrowing money from loan sharks:** Woods (2020: 283) conducted research which found that grandmothers who qualify for pension grants resort to borrowing money from loan sharks to support their families. This is because the payments only provide enough funds to cover their basic needs for two weeks.

Thompson *et al.* (2023: 279) stated that grandmothers often rely on a combination of these coping techniques to support themselves and their grandchildren. Cox (2018: 487) revealed that while sharing resources with relatives and engaging in income-generating activities may

provide immediate financial relief, requesting government assistance and participating in community-based projects can provide long-term stability, although not always sufficient.

The financial coping techniques used by grandmothers in rural regions can positively impact them and their grandchildren. By combining resources with other family members, grandmothers may guarantee that enough money is available to support the needs of the whole family, including the grandchildren. This provides a more stable and secure environment for the grandchildren, promoting their well-being and growth (Kornhaber and Woodward 2019: 19; Martin *et al.* 2021: 168).

Engaging in income-generating activities supplements the grandmother's income but also gives financial assistance to their grandchildren (Jarrott 2021: 1281). According to Aubel (2020: 5) this could improve their education, healthcare, and general quality of life. Moreover, seeking financial assistance through government programmes has a direct impact on the grandchildren's well-being. Access to programmes such as social security payments, food stamps, and housing assistance may ease the financial burden on the whole home, allowing grandchildren to live a better life (Sharma, Chakrabarti and Grover 2016: 7).

Additionally, Noreiga *et al.* (2022: 15) indicated that participating in community-based activities and using community resources may also help build a support network for grandmothers and their grandchildren. Community services such as food banks and local support programmes may have a direct influence on the grandchildren by supplying them with basic requirements while also lowering the grandmother's financial burden (Lee and Blitz 2022: 773). Overall, the financial coping techniques used by grandmothers in rural regions have a direct and substantial impact on the well-being and prospects of their grandchildren (Kearabetswe and Grace 2019: 57).

While it is true that grandmothers in rural regions often use different financial coping techniques to assist their families, there are some possible disadvantages and constraints to consider (Sun and Dutta 2021: 602). Pooling resources with other family members may bring temporary comfort, but it may also lead to dependency and pressure on those who contribute. In certain circumstances, pooling resources may not be viable in the long term, perhaps leading to family discord (Kim, Spangler and Gutter 2016: 104).

Engaging in income-generating activities such as farming or running a small business may be physically hard for grandmothers, particularly as they become older (Chung *et al.* 2020: 181). This may influence their overall health and well-being, possibly leading to burnout and exhaustion (Yalcin *et al.* 2018: 112). Furthermore, the funds earned through these activities may not always be adequate to cover the family's complex demands, such as educational and medical expenses (Mabalane *et al.* 2019: 159).

While obtaining financial assistance from government programmes could offer stability, the application procedure and qualifying requirements for these programmes may be difficult for grandmothers in rural regions to understand. This might lead to delays or even denial of help, leaving the family vulnerable (Sano and Mammen 2022: 235; Smalls *et al.* 2020: 238).

Whilst participating in community-based activities and using community resources may bring temporary relief, these resources are frequently limited and may not always be accessible when required (Huot *et al.* 2019: 157). Furthermore, relying on these programmes may unintentionally prolong the cycle of poverty in the community, rather than addressing the underlying reasons of financial instability (Bauer *et al.* 2021: 340).

Moreover, borrowing money from loan sharks may pose a danger to the grandmothers and the children in their care because most of the time, these grandmothers fail to repay the loan sharks. If they cannot, they are left with no money to feed themselves and their grandchildren, which may hurt their lives and overall well-being (Woods 2020: 1128).

Given these potential challenges, it is critical to recognise that, although financial coping methods are necessary for grandmothers in rural regions, they have inherent limits that may influence both grandmothers and their grandchildren's overall well-being. Finding sustainable, long-term solutions to support these grandmothers and their families is critical to breaking the cycle of poverty and ensuring the well-being of future generations (Minkler, Berrick and Needell 2014: 45).

### **2.7.2. Techniques for managing social and health challenges**

Cunha *et al.* (2020: 597) stated that grandmothers parenting their grandchildren encounter unique social and health issues. Grandmothers may use a variety of techniques to address these challenges:

- **Seeking support and resources:** According to reports, the grandmothers approach local community organisations, support groups, or social workers for assistance in accessing services, including healthcare, counselling, or financial aid (Dolbin-MacNab 2020: 479).
- **Building resilience:** Grandmothers often demonstrate extraordinary resilience in the face of hardship. They use their life experiences and expertise to handle the social and physical problems that arise while parenting grandchildren (Okidegbe 2021: 2)
- **Practicing self-care:** Grandmothers prioritise their well-being through relaxation and hobbies. This enables them to better assist their grandchildren by prioritising their physical and emotional health. In addition to seeking support and developing resilience, grandmothers in grandmother-headed families participate in several self-care activities to preserve their well-being (Tesfaye and Getachew 2018: 9).
- **Employing domestic staff:** Several grandmothers have resorted to employing full-time domestic staff to engage in social interactions with their peers in churches or luncheon clubs, thereby minimising the negative effects of caring on grandmothers (Park 2018: 312). However, it is noted that grandmothers residing in rural regions face different circumstances. They do not have the financial means to employ domestic staff to manage their social and health challenges (Huot *et al.* 2019: 160).

Many grandmothers find comfort in hobbies such as gardening, knitting, reading, and cooking. These activities provide them with a feeling of fulfilment and delight and also help them relax and relieve stress. Furthermore, some grandmothers prioritise their physical health by engaging in moderate activities such as walking. These activities enable grandmothers to retain their strength and flexibility, which improves their general health (Campbell, Burn and Szoeka 2016: 130).

Sun, Zhang and Hu (2019: 813) stated that in terms of self-care, grandmothers set aside time for meditation, mindfulness exercises, or other relaxing approaches. This devoted time for self-care allowed grandmothers to refuel and address any emotional or mental issues they may be experiencing (Jin and Kim 2015: 72). Furthermore, some grandmothers joined support groups suited to their individual needs, where they found solidarity and participated in conversations that validated their roles as main carers for their grandchildren (Riem *et al.* 2023: 32).

Overall, these self-care activities and hobbies assisted grandmothers in grandmother-headed families to maintain their physical, emotional, and mental well-being as they navigated the social and health issues that come with their job. However, this is not always the case for grandmothers in rural areas as they have never been exposed to such activities and have no knowledge of them (Stephens 2020: 417) Smalls *et al.* 2020: 233; Hatcher *et al.* 2018: 47).

While finding support, developing resilience, and participating in self-care are all essential strategies for many grandmothers raising grandchildren, it is also necessary to understand the potential downsides of these approaches. Some may claim that relying excessively on community organisations or support groups fosters dependency and a lack of self-sufficiency. Additionally, although resilience is a desirable attribute, grandmothers may feel obliged to demonstrate strength and optimism, possibly disregarding their own emotional needs in the process (Lo and Chan 2023: 114; Southwick *et al.* 2016: 77; Mhaka-Mutepfa, Mpofu and Cumming 2014: 454).

Furthermore, while self-care activities and hobbies can provide valuable relaxation and stress relief, there is concern that grandmothers may become overly focused on self-care, neglecting their responsibilities or struggling to strike a balance between caring for themselves and their grandchildren. Critics may also suggest that by focusing on personal interests and activities, grandmothers may likely avoid the challenges of parenting their grandchildren rather than properly facing and confronting those issues. It is critical to consider the possible downsides of these techniques while also acknowledging the benefits they may provide to grandchildren in grandmother-headed families (Park 2018: 301).

### **2.7.3 The influence of grandmothers coping techniques on grandchildren**

Riem *et al.* (2023: 29) argued that the coping techniques employed by grandmothers have a profound impact on the overall well-being and development of the grandchildren in their care. According to research on attachment theory and child development, the coping techniques used by grandmothers can impact the emotional, social, and cognitive development of their grandchildren (Schatz and Ogunmefun 2007 1398). These techniques can help children develop resilience, problem-solving skills, and emotional regulation. Grandmothers who use adaptive coping techniques, such as seeking social support, engaging in self-care activities, and fostering a positive mindset, are more likely to create a nurturing and stable environment for their grandchildren (Pearson *et al.* 2019: 8).

When grandmothers establish methods of coping that help them deal with the obstacles in their lives, the grandchildren in their care develop a profound sense of family connection and closeness. Furthermore, since these techniques may positively impact the grandmother's overall development, the grandchildren often benefit from a strong intergenerational connection, gaining a unique perspective on life and a deep awareness of their family (Miller *et al.* 2013: 589; Guastaferro, Guastaferro and Stuart 2015: 140).

Moreover, Ruiz and Kopak (2014: 13) contended that these grandchildren may also have access to life lessons and knowledge handed down by their grandmothers, which may help them grow personally and emotionally. Furthermore, the stability and consistency provided by their grandmothers' care create a safe and caring environment for the grandchildren, setting a strong foundation for their general well-being and growth (Gorman 2017: 25). On the other hand, Skoufus (2023: 11) argued that the coping techniques used by grandmothers may not always have a positive impact on their grandchildren. It's important to consider that not all coping techniques employed by grandmothers are adaptive and beneficial for the grandchildren (Nazari and Azizi 2016: 99). Some grandmothers may resort to maladaptive coping strategies such as excessive use of alcohol or isolation, which can negatively affect the grandchildren's well-being (Zelalem, Gebremariam Kotecho and Adamek 2021: 219; Clark, Henderson and Kabiru 2024: 80)

Damian (2017: 61) indicated that research has shown that grandchildren who are exposed to maladaptive coping techniques by their grandmothers may experience higher levels of behavioural challenges and may struggle with emotional regulation and social interactions. Additionally, the use of maladaptive coping techniques by grandmothers may contribute to a less stable and nurturing environment for the grandchildren, ultimately impacting their overall development negatively (Bautista 2018: 188). It is crucial to recognise that while adaptive coping techniques can have a positive impact, the use of maladaptive coping strategies by grandmothers can also significantly influence the well-being and development of their grandchildren detrimentally (Motsa and Morojele 2022: 1029).

## **2.8. KINSHIP CARE IN GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS**

Kinship care is an alternative to traditional foster care whereby children are placed with family members or close friends (Ariyo, Mortelmans and Wouters 2019: 178). This arrangement allows children to stay in their normal social group and keep contact with their original family, which

can have a positive impact on their general well-being (DiGiacomo *et al.* 2017: 1). Kinship care may offer children a feeling of security and continuity after experiencing turmoil and trauma, as well as the opportunity to receive care from people with whom they already have a bond. This form of care is frequently perceived as a more culturally sensitive and community-based approach to assisting children in need (Sellers *et al.* 2020: 136).

Kinship care is important in giving stability and a sense of familiarity to children who are unable to live with their birth parents. It provides a distinct type of support by allowing children to live with relatives or close family friends, preserving their connections with their birth family while remaining within their familiar social group. Scholars have described this approach as a compassionate and community-based technique to ensure the well-being of underprivileged children (Rocha and Arcinas 2020: 173; Forber-Pratt *et al.* 2018: 57; Berrick and Hernández 2016: 25). Several forms of kinship care arrangements address the diverse needs of children and their families. These arrangements may vary from informal caregiving within the extended family to formal legal custody or guardianship (Mugedy, Kang'ethe and Nomngcoyiya 2020: 528).

### **2.8.1 Informal Kinship Care**

Informal kinship care refers to children living with relatives or close family friends without the participation of child welfare or legal systems. This sort of arrangement is frequently used in response to a family crisis or emergency circumstance, in which the child's carers step in to assist without the need for formal legal proceedings (Hill, Gilligan and Connelly 2020: 104; Rajpoot and Chaudhry 2020: 269; MacDonald, Hayes and Houston 2018: 71)

### **2.8.2. Formal Kinship Care**

Sadrudin *et al.* (2019: 270) stated that formal kinship care, on the other hand, refers to legal arrangements that offer relatives or close family friends custody rights and responsibility for the children's care. This may entail getting formal guardianship or foster care licencing to provide the children with a more organised and supportive environment. Understanding the differences between different sorts of kinship care may shed light on the various types of support accessible to children and carers through their familial and social networks (Rajpoot and Chaudhry 2020: 270; Blythe, Wilkes and Halcomb 2014: 21; Falconnier *et al.* 2019: 415).

In South Africa, kinship care is essential, especially in rural regions. It was discovered that grandmothers in rural South Africa frequently take on the primary caring role for their grandchildren due to a variety of factors, including a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other socioeconomic issues. Kinship care is significant in creating a caring and stable environment for children in grandmother-headed households (Soganga and Kang'ethe 2023: 108).

In the context of kinship care in grandmother-headed homes in rural areas, grandmothers play an important role in caring for and supporting their grandchildren (Sadruddin *et al.* 2019: 331). Through kinship care, grandmothers in rural communities take on the caregiving role, providing a stable and supportive environment for their grandchildren (Du, Dong and Zhang 2019: 347). This is especially crucial in rural regions where access to alternative forms of childcare may be limited. Furthermore, kinship care in grandmother-headed rural homes contributes to the preservation of cultural values and customs. These grandmothers frequently pass down cultural knowledge, traditions, and values to their grandchildren, ensuring that cultural heritage is preserved within the family (Neema and Annet 2020: 8).

Another study by Soganga and Kang'ethe (2023: 106) looked at the experiences of grandmothers who provide kinship care in rural South Africa. The findings from these studies reflect that the grandmothers experienced several challenges, including a lack of financial and social assistance. They overcame these challenges by relying on their strong sense of familial obligation and cultural values to ensure the well-being of their grandchildren. Overall, these studies emphasise the importance of kinship care in grandmother-headed households in rural South Africa (Mabetha, Wet and Odimegwu 2021: 486; De Wet 2019: 79).

Manyuma *et al.* (2023: 440) indicated that kinship care in grandmother-headed households provides an important support structure for grandchildren and grandmothers alike. Kinship care provides emotional and practical support, strengthening familial relationships and social cohesiveness. Krichene *et al.* (2021: 107) argued that while kinship care fosters positive development for children living in kinship care arrangements in grandmother-headed households, they are however reported to face a variety of challenges.

### 2.8.3 Challenges faced by children growing up in kinship care arrangements in grandmother-headed households

According to Nelson *et al.* (2021: 355) children growing up in kinship care arrangements in grandmother-headed households in rural areas may face several challenges. These challenges include:

- **Limited financial resources:** Grandmothers in remote locations may struggle to meet their grandchildren's fundamental needs due to inadequate funds or resources (Crowther, Ford and Peterson 2014: 241). Limited financial means can have an impact on the general well-being of children in kinship care arrangements, potentially limiting access to proper nourishment, healthcare, education, and other vital resources for their growth (Cudjoe, Abdullah and Chiu 2021: 741). Furthermore, inadequate financial resources may limit opportunities for extracurricular activities, socialisation, and other experiences that promote a well-rounded upbringing (Haft and Hoeft 2017: 69). Moreover, these challenges may impede the children's growth and development as they may have limited access to opportunities and resources as their peers (Yilmaz and Soyer 2018: 89).
- **Social and emotional challenges:** Children in kinship care could experience emotional and social difficulties, as there are few opportunities for socialisation. These children may have fewer opportunities for interaction with peers and social activities because they live in rural places. This limited socialisation can result in feelings of isolation and loneliness, as well as a lack of exposure to a wide range of social situations. Furthermore, the lack of community resources and support networks in remote places may exacerbate the children's social and emotional difficulties (Kiraly, Green and Hamilton 2020: 97; Manyuma *et al.* 2023: 440; Shang, Saldov and Fisher 2010: 103).
- **Loss of parental support:** Children in kinship care arrangements in grandmother-headed households also feel the absence of their biological parents, leading to feelings of grief and longing for parental assistance. This absence may also lead to emotional difficulties such as confusion, insecurity, and uncertainty. While grandmothers provide love and care, the children may still miss the presence of their biological parents, which can affect their emotional well-being (Youngblut *et al.* 2015: 956; McLaughlin, Ryder and Taylor 2017: 509; Riem *et al.* 2023: 29).

- **Loss of parental connection:** Growing up in a kinship care arrangement implies that these children may have been separated from their biological parents. The absence of parental connection can have serious consequences for these children's emotional and social well-being (Kahn and Denov 2022: 727; Ntuli, Sebola and Madiba 2020: 259).
- **Educational and health needs:** Studies have found that children in kinship care, particularly those in grandmother-headed households, often have significant health and educational challenges. Compared to children in the general population, they have higher rates of mental health problems and lower academic achievement (Bennett *et al.* 2019: 1989).
- **Lack of parental involvement:** In kinship care arrangements, biological parents may not be actively involved in their children's upbringing. This lack of involvement with parents can leave children feeling abandoned and isolated (Waddoups, Yoshikawa and Strouf 2019: 387).
- **Loss of identity:** In kinship care arrangements, children may battle comprehending their sense of identity and belonging. They may grapple with questions about their biological family, cultural heritage, and where they belong. (DiGiacomo *et al.* 2017: 9).

## 2.9. LACK OF SUPPORT FOR GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

The lack of support for grandmother-headed households is a critical issue that must be addressed. This lack of support could be attributed to several reasons, including limited funding for community programmes, inadequate knowledge of the special requirements of grandmother-headed households, and a lack of political will to prioritise this demographic. Furthermore, social stereotypes and prejudices regarding ageing and gender roles may contribute to the lack of assistance for these homes. It is critical to go deeper into the root causes to build effective solutions to this problem (Patterson, Proft and Maxwell 2019: 50; Kelly, Mrengqwa and Geffen 2019: 2; Kumar and Bhakat 2020: 522).

One of the major difficulties in rural areas is a shortage of qualified professionals who can help change the narrative for families headed by grandmothers Cunha *et al.* (2020: 597). Caring professionals, such as nurses, social workers, child and youth care workers, doctors, and other health and welfare professionals, play an important role in providing healthcare to people living in rural areas (Hatcher *et al.* 2018: 45; Skoufalos *et al.* 2017: 1; Peterson and Starks 2014: 175).

However, it was found that these caring professionals tend to quit their jobs, and there are various reasons attributed to this. One aspect is that there are few prospects for job

advancement in rural areas (Khalil and Alameddine 2020: 192). These professionals struggle to advance or access continuing education and professional development opportunities, resulting in stagnation and dissatisfaction with their career choices. As a result, grandmother-headed families have inadequate support structures (Dong 2023: 117; Gqeba and Gqeba 2020: 45; Hayslip *et al.* 2018: 422).

Additionally, in rural areas, the isolation and limited social and recreational opportunities also contribute to professionals feeling disconnected and unsupported (Woods 2020: 1142). This lack of community and social infrastructure can lead to feelings of loneliness and make it challenging for professionals to establish a fulfilling work-life balance. Additionally, these regions may have limited access to professional development resources (Kutoane, Brysiewicz and Scott 2021: 361).

Furthermore, several studies have found that professionals in this field do not prefer working in rural areas due to geographical limitations. As a result, many professionals living in rural areas end up relocating or changing careers because of issues such as low salaries (Douthit *et al.* 2015: 611). This situation further impacts grandmother-headed families by leaving them with insufficient support and increasing the challenges they face daily (Zhang *et al.* 2020: 1701).

Grandmother-headed households encounter distinct challenges that necessitate specialised support from the community. However, little action is being taken to address this issue (Gasa 2012: 203). Collaborating with local organizations, policymakers, and community members to raise awareness and advocate for the specific needs of these households is essential; yet lack of government support hinders these efforts, especially in rural areas. By engaging in grassroots initiatives and advocating for increased funding for programs targeting this demographic, progress can be made towards creating a more supportive environment for these households (Mbemba, Gagnon and Hamelin-Brabant 2016: 80).

### **2.9.1. The impact of inadequate support for grandmothers and their grandchildren**

Pandey *et al.* (2019: 269) stated that insufficient assistance for households led by grandmothers significantly impacts both the grandmothers themselves and their grandchildren. According to Kornhaber and Woodward (2019: 8), without effective community strategies and resources, grandmothers may experience increased stress, financial difficulties, and social isolation. They often lack the necessary support systems and may have trouble accessing essential services such as healthcare and education for their grandchildren (Zhou *et al.* 2017: 612).

Additionally, Yalcin *et al.* (2018: 13) revealed that the grandchildren living in these households may encounter various developmental, emotional, and educational challenges due to the absence of comprehensive support systems. These difficulties can have long-term effects on their well-being and prospects (Di Gessa, Zaninotto and Glaser 2020: 1545).

The current lack of support worsens the vulnerabilities of grandmother-headed households, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage for both grandmothers and their grandchildren. Addressing this issue is crucial from a social justice perspective and for ensuring the overall well-being of these families and the communities they are part of. Efforts to close the gaps in support and resources for grandmother-headed households should be given priority at both local and national levels (Montoro-Rodriguez *et al.* 2021: 647; Mendoza, Fruhauf and MacPhee 2020: 3; Chan *et al.* 2019: 607).

## **2.10. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKERS ASSISTING GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS**

Garfat *et al.* (2019: 7) stated that child and youth care is an emerging profession and there is little research done in this field. Furthermore, there is little literature that specifically covers how child and youth care workers can be used to assist families living in grandmother-headed households (Anglin and Brendtro 2017: 3). A Child and Youth Care Worker (CYCW) is a professional in the field of social services who is officially recognised and licenced by the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP) (Clark 2017: 74).

According to Freeman, Elton and Lambert South (2023: 271), child and youth care work uses a comprehensive approach that involves working within a family's environment to enhance the family's well-being and support the child's connection to the family. Additionally, Chazan (2014: 166) noted that it involves using the family's living place and shared times to find ways to help solve problems that the family is having.

Briggs (2020: 4) indicated that in South Africa, Child and Youth Care Workers (CYCWs) have traditionally focused on providing care in residential settings. However, their role has expanded to working within communities, particularly to address the issue of inadequate parenting skills in families headed by children or grandparents. This requires their ability to address the different needs of children and youth in various environments (Capous-Desyllas *et al.* 2020: 265; Noreiga *et al.* 2022: 17; Muggedya, Kang'ethe and Nomngcoyiya 2020: 525).

As it has been established, grandmother-headed households have become increasingly common in society and there is a growing recognition of the importance of child and youth care workers in assisting these families. These households often face unique challenges and require specialised support, as grandmothers may take on parenting roles at an older age and may have limited access to resources and support networks (Polvere, Barnes and Lee 2018: 552).

Child and youth care workers need to comprehend the specific requirements of households led by grandmothers and deliver customised assistance that tackles the difficulties encountered by these families (Muruthi, Dolbin-MacNab and Jarrott 2021: 1280). Child and youth care workers play a crucial part in enhancing the well-being of both the grandmothers and the children in these households by providing practical help, and emotional encouragement, and linking them with community resources (Blanckstein *et al.* 2022: 34). Moreover, acknowledging and affirming the experiences of grandmothers who have assumed parental roles can positively influence their overall mental and emotional well-being. Through commitment and specialised care, child and youth care workers significantly impact grandmother-headed households' lives (Pedersen *et al.* 2019: 2036).

Child and youth care workers are uniquely positioned to offer personalised care and support to grandmother-headed households (Soganga and Kang'ethe 2023: 101). By developing close relationships with these families, workers can grasp these families' special needs and issues (Powers *et al.* 2021: 17). This allows them to provide targeted assistance that addresses the complex dynamics of these households.

Several scholars expressed that child and youth care workers are essential for supporting grandmother-headed households in rural areas, however, the shortage of these professionals in rural areas is a growing issue (Dare *et al.* 2020: 108; D'Amore and Chawla 2020: 801). In rural communities, the shortage of child and youth care workers presents significant challenges for grandmother-headed households by limiting access to specialised support and resources. Without dedicated professionals in these areas, grandmothers and their grandchildren may not receive the targeted assistance they need to address their unique challenges (Aubel 2020: 5).

According to Bauer *et al.* (2021: 343), the scarcity of child and youth care workers in rural areas also emphasises disparities in access to care between urban and rural communities. Many rural areas struggle to attract and retain qualified professionals, further widening the gap in support services for grandmother-headed households. Efforts must be made to address this shortage by encouraging professionals to work in rural communities as well as developing outreach

programs that can bridge the gap between urban and rural area care services (Minkler, Berrick and Needell 2014: 46; Foster and Hagan 2013: 653; Billings 2018: 91).

Ultimately, the supportive role played by child and youth care workers significantly contributes to promoting the overall well-being of grandmother-headed households regardless of their location or circumstance (Kalomo and Taukeni 2022: 1390).

## **2.11. CONCLUSION**

As the study discovered, grandmother-headed households in rural regions confront several obstacles, including restricted access to resources, a lack of support structures, and insufficient financial support (Kim, Kang and Johnson-Motoyama 2017: 119). These concerns not only affect the grandmothers themselves but also have a significant impact on the health of their grandchildren (Lee and Blitz 2022: 775). Governments, policymakers and community leaders must take proactive actions to address these issues and offer the necessary assistance and resources to grandmother-headed households (Oduaran and Oduaran 2018: 203). Targeted interventions, such as access to education, healthcare, and social assistance programmes, can help to alleviate the pressures on these resilient women and provide a brighter future for their families (Kalomo and Taukeni 2022: 1392).

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

This study used a qualitative research approach as it sought to investigate and produce a complex and comprehensive understanding of a type of social phenomenon (Teherani 2015: 669; Tuffour 2017: 52). This study looked specifically at the challenges faced by grandmothers who head households in rural Ndwedwe. A qualitative research design that was both exploratory and descriptive enabled a richer understanding of the experiences of the participants. Data was gathered from fourteen grandmothers, who participated in one-to-one, semi-structured interviews, and eleven child and youth care workers who participated in a focus group discussion. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the participants' thoughts, opinions, experiences, and event descriptions (Alase 2017: 9; Yates and Leggett 2016: 225).

This chapter discusses the research design, sample and sampling processes and data collection methods. Other subsections detail the data analysis steps, the researcher's role and reflexivity, ethical issues, and the study's limitations.

### 3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Bloomfield and Fisher (2019: 27) stated that a research design is, in essence, the blueprint or structure for a study which serves as a roadmap for collecting, measuring, gathering and analysing data. It is a process undertaken to complete a research study. This was supported by other authors who stated that it is a map typically created to direct the investigation. Other researchers have characterised the research design as the organisation of variables for data collection and analysis, intending to generalise the sample's findings to the broader population (Dannels 2018: 402; Asenahabi 2019: 76; Abutabenjeh and Juradat 2018: 23).

This study was conducted using an exploratory qualitative research approach. Thompson *et al.* (2023: 273) stated that qualitative research is a naturalistic enquiry that aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of social phenomena within their natural context. Rather than focusing on the "what," it emphasises the "why" behind social phenomena, drawing insights from observations of how people construct meaning in their everyday lives. The qualitative approach was considered to be the most appropriate one, as the researcher wanted to understand the grandmothers' personal feelings and experiences related to what they experienced raising their grandchildren (DuBois, Strait, and Walsh 2018: 380; Collingridge and Gantt 2019: 439).

It can be considered an exploratory, descriptive study as it seeks to explore and understand the challenges faced by grandmothers (Swedberg 2020: 17). Exploratory research designs focus on investigating a given phenomenon (Nakash, Baruchson and Bouhnik 2022: 24). This study was exploratory in that it aimed to obtain a description of events, perspectives, and experiences of children and grandparents living in grandmother-headed households. It was descriptive as it described the experiences and difficulties experienced by grandmothers within these types of households (Swedberg 2020: 21).

### **3.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Astin and Long (2014: 93) argued that qualitative research methodology has many characteristics. The first relates to research being done in a real-world setting. According to Yates and Leggett (2016: 227), a real-world setting means conducting research in the natural environment of the participants. In this study, the researcher endeavoured to build rapport with participants in their real-world setting, through conducting her research within the homes of grandmothers in grandmother-headed households. Data was also collected by constantly engaging with child and youth care workers who work actively within the life space of the grandmothers. Although data was collected in one focus group with the child and youth care workers, the researcher had spent a significant time within the community and had engaged with the community-based child and youth care workers.

Kim, Sefcik and Bradway (2017: 23) highlighted that another salient characteristic of qualitative research was that it used different research methods and techniques such as observational methods, ethnographic studies, focus group discussions, and individual interviews. The present study focused on using individual interviews and a focus group discussion, to gather data.

Nassaji (2020: 429) opined that participants play a crucial role in qualitative research. Therefore, in addition to the participant's role, the researcher in the present study concentrated on trying to understand the meaning of what that the participants brought to the research. According to Chesebro and Borisoff (2007: 3), this is known as participant meaning, which is another crucial characteristic of qualitative research. Kim, Sefcik and Bradway (2017: 24) stated that the purpose of conducting qualitative research is to paint a larger picture of the issue at hand. Nassaji (2020: 427) further highlighted that in qualitative research, participants are carefully selected from a carefully chosen segment of potential participants.

An exploratory research design was selected, another fundamental characteristic of qualitative

research. As the term suggests, exploratory research deals with exploring a given phenomenon in-depth (Nattrass 2020: 3). According to Pantano and Vannucci (2019: 297), exploratory research delves into a problem that is not well-defined. The researcher chose this design to acquire a better understanding of the existing problem but not to provide conclusive results.

According to Nattrass (2020: 6) various characteristics of exploratory research include the fact that it is affordable, interactive, unrestricted and flexible. Hence in this study, the researcher used an unstructured type of research, and it permitted the researcher to answer all questions, such as why, how, and what. It also helped the researcher to understand the overall purpose of the research. As a result, no standard format was utilised to conduct exploratory research. It was flexible, scattered, and broad.

### **3.4. RESEARCHER'S ROLE AND REFLEXIVITY**

Reflexivity, which is defined as the awareness of the researcher's position and its impact on the research, is essential within qualitative research and can provide valuable insights into the context and dynamics of a study (Palaganas *et al.* 2017: 6; Reid *et al.* 2018: 69; Dodgson 2019: 220). Qualitative researchers must recognise their beliefs, assumptions, and relationships related to a research topic and participants, as these factors can significantly shape the research process and outcomes (Olmos-Vega *et al.* 2023: 241). According to Reid *et al.* (2018: 670), by engaging in reflexivity, researchers can improve the quality and rigour of their research and ensure that the findings appropriately reflect the participants' experiences and perspectives. In this study, the researcher needed to acknowledge her role in the research process and the potential biases that may have influenced the interpretation of the findings.

This section will outline three key aspects of the researcher's reflexivity in this study. Firstly, it will provide context on the researcher's background and personal connection to the topic of this research which motivated her for undertaking it. Secondly, it will describe the specific steps taken by the researcher to engage in reflexive practices throughout the research process. Thirdly, it will reflect on how the researcher's involvement and decision-making influenced the research outcomes.

#### **3.4.1 The researcher in context**

The researcher was raised in a household that faced many challenges, which led to her deep passion since her early teenage years for assisting children and families living in adverse situations. She was raised by her grandmother in the KwaMaphumulo rural area in KwaZulu-

Natal, South Africa. Although both her birth parents were alive, they migrated to Newcastle in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, to seek employment as a result of poverty. This led to her being raised by her grandmother and she had a greater awareness of the struggles her grandmother endured while raising her. This led her to pursue research in this field and to explore possible strategies that communities could implement to support families living in such households. The researcher acknowledges that her upbringing influenced her pursuit of the current study. The researcher's undergraduate education in Child and Youth Care further fostered a keen interest in understanding how vulnerable children and youth were cared for in grandmother-headed households, particularly in underserved communities. The combination of her personal experience and academic background enabled valuable insights into the study.

### **3.4.2. Reflecting through journaling**

Throughout the research process, the researcher kept a detailed journal to record her reflections and the new ideas that emerged. The journal documented the researcher's personal experiences and difficulties she encountered during the research process. This enabled her to engage in a continuous process of self-examination, acknowledging how her own biases, preconceptions, and lived experiences shaped the research at various stages. For instance, the researcher initially believed that grandmother-headed families emerged largely due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which resulted in the premature deaths of parents. However, after reviewing the literature and conducting some preliminary interviews, the researcher realised that other factors like economic migration, domestic abuse, and the historical effects of apartheid had led to the breakdown of families and grandmothers consequently caring for their grandchildren.

Similarly, the researcher was aware of the possible power dynamics and sensitivities that emerged from conducting research with vulnerable groups, such as grandmothers and their grandchildren. The researcher's journal entries documented their efforts to build trust, ensure informed consent, and create a safe and supportive environment for participants to share their stories. By maintaining this reflexive practice, the researcher continuously assessed the impact of her positionality and adjusted her approach, accordingly, ultimately striving for a more rigorous, ethical, and meaningful research process.

### **3.4.3. Reflecting on the research process**

To further enhance the reflexivity of the study, the researcher engaged in a process of critical reflection on the research process itself. This included an examination of the methodological

choices, the challenges encountered, and how the researcher's involvement may have influenced the research outcomes. For instance, the researcher initially planned to conduct a focus group discussion with grandmothers and in-depth individual interviews with child and youth care workers, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences.

However, as the researcher began engaging with a few community members, she realised that grandmothers often felt more comfortable and empowered to share their stories during individual interviews, rather than in a group setting. This allowed the grandmothers to openly express their experiences without needing validation from others. In contrast, the child and youth care workers, who were more comfortable within group discussions, provided richer insights when data was gathered in a focus group format.

This reflection on the research process enabled the researcher to make more informed decisions about the most appropriate data collection methods, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of the experiences of grandmother-headed households in the rural South African context.

### **3.5. STUDY SETTING**

According to Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018: 381), the term "study setting" describes the particular setting or circumstance in which the research study is carried out. The research process and results are significantly influenced by the study setting (Munien 2016: 2). The study was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, specifically in the Ndwedwe mission area. Munien, Phungula and Bob (2018: 4) stated that Ndwedwe is a traditional rural community, with a rich cultural heritage and deeply ingrained Zulu customs, beliefs and practices. The study location was both convenient and easily accessible to the researcher, which made data collection easier.

Ndwedwe is a remote and sparsely populated region in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. iLembe District in KwaZulu-Natal Province is in the Ndwedwe municipality and is classified as a Category B municipality. According to recent data, the area covers approximately 1,200 square kilometres and has a population of around 150,000 people, with an average household size of 5 individuals. The population is predominantly Black, with over 90% of residents identifying as members of the Zulu ethnic group.

According to recent data by Munien, Phungula and Bob (2018: 6) it was revealed that:

- The population by age was divided into approximately 40% (under the age of 15), 5% (aged 65 or older), and 55% (between the ages of 15 and 64).
- 96% of the languages spoken were isiZulu, 2% unknown, 1% were isiXhosa, and 1% were English.
- Men made up 45% of household heads, while 55% were headed by women. There were 333 homes headed by children under the age of 18.
- About 20% of households were headed by grandmothers
- The average household income was R15,000 per annum, and 14.1% of people were employed.

In addition to the overall population statistics, recent data emphasised that the Ndwedwe rural area has 20% of vulnerable families living in grandmother-headed households. These grandmother-headed households tend to have higher levels of poverty, unemployment and limited access to resources and infrastructure, making them particularly vulnerable (Mkhwanazi and Mpanza 2020: 424)

The region is characterised by rugged terrain, with rolling hills. The majority of the population in this area relies on subsistence farming and livestock rearing as their primary economic activities. Access to basic services, such as healthcare and education, is typically challenging for the residents of Ndwedwe due to the region's isolation and lack of developed transportation networks (Stats SA 2016; Municipality and BAG 2016).

### **3.6. STUDY POPULATION**

According to Willie (2022: 521) a population is any individual who satisfies the requirements for a research study. The researcher further affirms that a population pertains to the subsection of the population from which one intends to conclude, thus making it a portion of the population whose characteristics are of interest to the researcher. The population for this study consisted of grandmothers living in grandmother-headed households in Ndwedwe, KwaZulu Natal and child and youth care practitioners from the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) in the iLembe district.

### **3.7. STUDY SAMPLE**

Hennink, Kaiser and Weber (2019: 14) described sampling as "selecting a representative sample from a larger population to study the characteristics and draw conclusions about the

whole group". The study sample comprised two groups, of fourteen grandmothers-headed households and eleven child and youth care workers. The grandmother group was selected to represent the larger population of grandmother-headed households, and the child and youth care workers were included to provide an understanding of the challenges facing this population and what strategies could be levelled to support them. Both samples were assigned pseudonyms to ensure they were anonymised and the confidentiality of the data gathered. The researcher initially chose a smaller sample size of grandmothers and child and youth care workers to gain rich, in-depth information on the challenges the grandmothers faced and the impact the challenges had on them. The following two samples tabulated below were recruited for this study:

Table 1: study sample

<b>Sample Number</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Data Collection Method</b>
Sample 1	Grandmothers raising their grandchildren in grandmother-headed households	14	In-depth Interviews
Sample 2	Community-based child and youth care workers	11	Focus group

### **3.8. INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA FOR THE STUDY**

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings, the study adopted a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria for the participants. Patino and Ferreira (2018: 84) defined the inclusion criteria as a set of characteristics that individuals must possess to be eligible for participation in the study. Exclusion criteria, on the other hand, refer to the characteristics that would disqualify an individual from participating in the study (Patino and Ferreira 2018: 84). The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were used concerning both samples as follows:

#### **Sample 1:**

##### **Inclusion**

- Grandmothers residing in the Ndwedwe rural area of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa;

- Grandmothers raising at least two or more children under the age of 18;
- Grandmothers who are the primary caregivers;
- Grandmothers without significant health issues.

#### **Exclusion**

- Grandmothers not located in the Ndwedwe rural area;
- Grandmothers who are not the primary caregiver;
- Grandmothers without any grandchildren under the age of 18;
- Grandmothers with significant health issues; and
- Grandmothers who were not able to provide informed consent

#### **Sample 2:**

##### **Inclusion**

- Child and youth care workers working in Ndwedwe;
- Child and youth care workers who provide direct care and support to grandmother-headed households;
- Child and youth care workers who had been working in the community for at least 2 years.

##### **Exclusion**

- Child and youth care workers not working in the Ndwedwe rural area.
- Child and youth care workers who do not provide direct care to grandmother-headed households.
- Child and youth care workers with less than 2 years of experience working in the community.

### **3.9. SAMPLING PROCESS**

A non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling, was used to select the participants. Rahman (2023: 42) described purposive sampling as a method, where researchers intentionally select participants based on their ability to provide information relevant to the research question. Buelens, Burger and van den Brakel (2018: 322) stated that non-probability sampling refers to a sampling technique where the probability of each element being selected is not known or cannot be predetermined, unlike in probability sampling where the

chance of selection is known. This type of sampling is often used in qualitative research, where the goal is to obtain in-depth, rich information rather than statistical representation (Berndt 2020: 224; Sharma 2017: 749).

Participants who met the criteria were purposively selected for this study, as the researcher sought to conduct interviews with grandmothers living in grandmother-headed households, as well as child and youth care workers who have had firsthand experiences of working with children and grandmothers living in grandmother-headed households. This sampling approach was in line with Etikan and Bala's (2017: 149) views, that a sample is purposive if it serves a specific purpose related to the study. The purposive selection of participants allowed the researcher to gather comprehensive and detailed information highly relevant to the research objectives. By intentionally choosing participants who could provide valuable insights, the researcher was able to obtain rich, in-depth data that helped address the research questions effectively.

### **3.9.1. Recruitment of participants**

#### **3.9.1.1. Sample 1:**

Participants from sample 1, were recruited by the ward councillor of the Ndwedwe Mission area. Following ethical approval from the Durban University of Technology (See Appendix G), the ward councillor was contacted. The researcher sent a message asking permission to call him to discuss the research. Following discussions, with him, he agreed to receive the gatekeeper letter and research proposal. The gatekeeper letter (See Appendix C1) and the research proposal were hand-delivered to the ward councillor. The gatekeeper's letter requested permission for the researcher to conduct interviews with grandmothers raising grandchildren in Ndwedwe. The gatekeeper agreed, and a formal signed letter of permission was sent back to the researcher (see Appendix C3). This was after the study received full ethical approval from the University (Ethics Number 191/23).

Upon securing the gatekeeper's permission from the ward councillor, the ward councillor identified and recruited grandmothers living in grandmother-headed households in Ndwedwe. Before the interviews, the researcher handed out the consent forms to the ward councillor, to give to the respective participants (see appendix F1) along with the letter of information (see appendix D1 and D2). The researcher's contact information was provided so those willing to be interviewed could contact her via cell phone to get further clarity or set up an interview. Once

the ward councillor had successfully recruited potential participants, a list of grandmothers who would participate was emailed to the researcher from the councillor. Following this, the researcher reached out to set up interviews with the respective grandmothers. Those willing to participate in the study were screened according to the criteria and, if they met them, were purposively selected to participate.

### **3.9.1.2. Sample 2:**

Participants for sample 2 were recruited by the project manager of the Tholimpilo organisation in Ndwedwe. Upon receiving ethical approval from the Durban University of Technology (See Appendix H), the researcher requested a face-to-face meeting with the project manager to discuss the research. On the day of the meeting, the project manager agreed to receive the gatekeeper letter (See Appendix C2) and research proposal. After a few days, the project manager sent back a letter confirming support of the study, and that he would assist with the recruitment of participants (See Appendix C4).

The project manager then identified and recruited the child and youth care workers who worked in the Tholimpilo organisation in Ndwedwe. He handed the research proposal, interview guide (see Appendix B) and consent forms (see Appendix F) to the prospective participants. Once the child and youth care workers agreed to participate, the list containing the names of these practitioners was emailed to the researcher. Following this then only the researcher reached out to these child and youth care practitioners, to set up interviews with the respective practitioners. Hence, no coercion was used.

## **3.10. DATA COLLECTION TOOL**

There were two interview schedules because this study used two samples. The researcher used an interview schedule as the data collection instrument for both samples. A set of questions were therefore developed in advance as part of the interview agenda. This was the most suitable approach, as the set of predetermined open-ended questions helped to guide the interviews, while still allowing the researcher to ask additional questions during the interview process. Additionally, it contained the best questions that address the study's objectives (Mazhar *et al.* 2021: 6). The participants for sample 1 were recruited to participate in an individual interview guided by an interview schedule. The interview schedule for the individual interviews is attached (see Appendix A1). One of the benefits of individual interviews is that it allows participants to be more open and honest in their responses, without the influence of

others. Moreover, individual interviews enable the researcher to obtain more in-depth and personalised insights from each participant (Gundumogula 2020: 5). Through one-on-one discussions, the researcher was able to delve deeper into each participant's perspectives and experiences. This personalised approach allows the researcher to gather rich, detailed insights that may not emerge in a group setting (Guest *et al.* 2017: 698).

The interview questions for sample 1 were aimed at determining the problems and challenges faced by grandmother-headed households, and the overall psycho-social problems that children face living in these households. It also aimed to address how the community space can be reconstructed to help families living in grandmother-headed households cope with their adversities

Data was gathered from participants in sample 2, using an interview schedule in a focus group discussion. The interview schedule for the focus group discussion is attached (see Appendix A2). Gundumogula (2020: 7) stated that one of the benefits of a focus group discussion is that people are more inclined to be honest in their comments. Moreover, a focus group helps determine needs, because through facilitated discussion, participants can build on one another's ideas. Since focus groups are qualitative, researchers can learn or validate the meaning behind the data by going beyond the information that may be obtained from group conversations (Guest *et al.* 2017: 699). The interview questions for sample 2 aimed at obtaining a thorough understanding of what challenges the children and grandmothers living in grandmother-headed households faced daily. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim.

### **3.10.1. Pilot testing of data collection tools**

Before data collection, the researcher pilot-tested both the interview and focus group guide. Pearson *et al.* (2020: 4) stated that pilot testing occurs before conducting a real experiment, meaning that a small study is undertaken to test and refine processes. For sample 1, the researcher went through the interview questions with a group of grandmothers who head households. These grandmothers were excluded from the researcher's sample. For sample 2, the researcher pilot-tested the focus group guide, with other child and youth care workers, who were not part of the study. The purpose was for the researcher to gauge whether the questions were concise, clear and unambiguous, and to ascertain if there was a need for the researcher to add further questions. After pilot testing the necessary changes were made to both the guides.

### **3.11. DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

Two data collection methods were employed in this study. As discussed, semi-structured interviews were used for sample one and a focus group discussion for sample two. They are discussed in detail below:

#### **3.11.1 Semi-structured interviews**

Given that the qualitative research method aims to gain a detailed picture of beliefs, perceptions or accounts of a particular topic, using semi-structured interviews with the grandmothers was deemed the most suitable approach to gather data as it enabled an understanding of the challenges that those in grandmother-headed households faced.

According to Magaldi and Berler (2020: 25), a semi-structured interview is a data collection strategy that involves asking participants open-ended questions and then probing to delve deeper into their responses and the topic of interest. Adams (2015: 494) asserted that semi-structured interviews in qualitative research combine elements of unstructured and structured interviews, with some questions having predetermined answers and others, not. Semi-structured interviews, as stated by Devotta *et al.* (2016: 661), then allow a researcher to discuss relevant topics that may emerge during the interview while also keeping them focused on the subject at hand. Qualitative researchers employ semi-structured interviews to secure new information and explore participants' opinions and attitudes on a topic (Low 2019: 123).

In this study, the grandmothers were the primary knowledge source required for this research. Hence the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews (see Appendix A1 and A2), with grandmothers as this was the most effective way to let the researcher understand and connect with grandmothers in these households.

##### **3.11.1.1 Advantages of semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews offered several advantages when exploring the challenges faced by grandmothers in the study. They allowed for a balance of structure and flexibility, enabling researchers to gather rich, in-depth qualitative data while addressing key research questions. An outline of the advantages of semi-structured interviews is as follows:

###### **1. Flexibility and Depth of Information:**

Adams (2015: 492) stated that semi-structured interviews utilise an interview guide with pre-determined topics and open-ended questions, allowing researchers to explore participant

responses in detail. In this study, this flexibility was crucial for uncovering the nuanced realities of grandmother-headed households, as each family's situation was unique. The researcher used probing questions to explore the specific challenges, prompting participants to elaborate on their experiences, feelings, and coping strategies. DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019: 1) indicated that this depth of information is difficult to achieve with more structured methods, like surveys.

## **2. Building Rapport and Trust:**

The conversational nature of semi-structured interviews also fosters rapport and trust between the interviewer and participant (DeJonckheere and Vaughn 2019: 5; Devotta *et al.* 2016: 661). This was particularly important for the researcher, especially when discussing sensitive topics like family dynamics, financial struggles, and emotional well-being, which were often central to the challenges faced by grandmother-headed households. Building a trusting relationship encouraged open and honest communication, which led to richer, more meaningful data.

## **3. Adaptability to Different Contexts:**

Semi-structured interviews can be adapted to various research settings and populations (DeJonckheere and Vaughn 2019: 6). This adaptability was valuable when working with diverse grandmother-headed households in rural Ndwedwe, with varying levels of access to technology or transportation. As an underdeveloped community, grandmothers in rural Ndwedwe could only participate in face-to-face interviews and not online interviews. As a result, using this type of interview enabled the researcher to conduct the interviews in person for the convenience of the participants.

## **4. Capturing Complexity and Context:**

Lobe, Morgan and Hoffman (2022: 160) argued that semi-structured interviews, allowed researchers to explore the complex interplay of factors contributing to the challenges faced by grandmother-headed households. In this study, the researcher investigated how financial strain, limited access to resources in Ndwedwe, social stigma, and the emotional toll of caregiving intersected and influenced the overall well-being of grandmothers and grandchildren.

## **5. Uncovering Unforeseen Insights:**

The open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews allows for the emergence of unexpected themes and insights (Adams 2015: 499). In this research study, while the interview guide

provided a framework, participants were free to share information that the researcher may not have anticipated. This led to new avenues of inquiry and a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by grandmother-headed households.

### **3.11.1.2. Disadvantages of semi-structured interviews**

While semi-structured interviews offer many advantages for researching complex social phenomena, they also have some disadvantages:

#### **1. Time and Resource Intensive:**

According to Lobe, Morgan and Hoffman (2022: 160), semi-structured interviews are time-consuming, from planning and conducting the interviews to transcribing and analysing the data. This was uncovered in this study, as after data had been collected, transcription was a lengthy process, which required careful attention to detail. The open-ended nature of the responses also meant that analysis was more complex and time-consuming, compared to analysing quantitative data.

#### **2. Interviewer Bias:**

Moore *et al.* (2021: 2) asserted that the flexible nature of semi-structured interviews can introduce interviewer bias. An interviewer's personal beliefs, attitudes, or even subtle cues can influence participant responses (Packer 2017: 1). Hence the researcher had to be aware of this bias.

#### **3. Participant Burden:**

Indah (2022: 23) mentioned that participating in a semi-structured interview can be emotionally demanding for participants, especially when discussing sensitive or traumatic experiences. The researcher was sensitive to this burden and took steps to minimise participant distress. As a qualified social service practitioner, the researcher provided support whenever needed.

#### **4. Logistical Challenges:**

According to Nili *et al.* (2017: 4), scheduling and conducting interviews can present logistical challenges, particularly in rural areas. Participants may have limited access to transportation or technology. As a result, this required that the researcher be flexible and creative in arranging the interview locations. Packer (2017: 1) argued that despite these disadvantages, the rich in-depth data generated by semi-structured interviews provided valuable insights that are difficult to obtain through other research methods.

### 3.11.2. Focus group discussion

A focus group discussion was held with sample two. Ogunbameru (2003: 1) stated that a focus group discussion is a qualitative research method, that gathers data from a small group of participants through interactive discussion. It involves a carefully planned discussion, guided by a researcher, designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. The researcher uses open-ended questions to encourage participants to share their experiences, perspectives, and beliefs on a specific topic (Nyumba *et al.* 2018: 20). The interaction between participants is a key element of focus groups, as it allows for diverse viewpoints to be shared and explored, and for a deeper understanding of the topic to emerge through the shared experience (Nili *et al.* 2017: 6; Guest *et al.* 2017: 698).

In this study, a focus group discussion was conducted with Child and Youth Care Workers (see Appendix B) because they possessed valuable insights into the challenges faced by grandmother-headed households in rural Ndwedwe. These professionals worked directly with families in the community and have firsthand knowledge of the issues they face. The focus group provided a platform for the child and youth care workers to share their collective experiences and perspectives, offering a richer and more detailed understanding of challenges, that the grandmothers faced.

The interactive nature of the discussion allowed child and youth care workers to build on each other's ideas, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of the situation. Furthermore, the focus group format allowed the researcher to explore the topic in a more flexible and adaptable way, pursuing emergent themes and probing deeper into specific issues as they arose. This approach was particularly useful given the sensitive nature of the topic and the potential for diverse experiences among the families involved.

#### 3.11.2.1. Advantages of Focus Group Discussions

The advantages of the focus group discussion, are elucidated as follows:

1. **Rich Data Collection:** Focus groups allow for in-depth exploration of complex issues, generating rich qualitative data that goes beyond superficial answers (Akyildiz and Ahmed 2021: 1). In the current study, the interactive nature of the discussions allowed for participants to build on each other's ideas, which led to a deeper understanding of the topic.
2. **Diverse Perspectives:** Nyumba *et al.* (2018: 20) wrote that focus groups bring together individuals with different backgrounds and experiences, providing a platform for diverse

perspectives and viewpoints to be shared. In this study, the child and youth care workers expressed the diverse nature of grandmother-headed households which revealed the different challenges these households faced. As a result, this led to a more comprehensive understanding of the issue being explored.

3. **Flexibility and Adaptability:** The semi-structured nature of focus groups also allows for flexibility and adaptability (Barrett and Twycross 2018: 63). As a result, the researcher in this study adjusted the interview guide based on the flow of the conversation and emergent themes, which allowed for unexpected insights to be explored.
4. **Cost-Effectiveness:** Gammie, Hamilton and Gilchrist (2017: 372) opined that compared to individual interviews, focus groups can be a more cost-effective way to gather data from multiple participants. This is particularly relevant when resources are limited.

#### **3.11.2.2. Disadvantages of Focus Group Discussions**

1. **Dominant Voices:** According to Sim and Waterfield (2019: 2003), certain individuals might dominate the conversation, preventing others from expressing their opinions. The researcher in the current study facilitated the discussion in a way that allowed all participants to voice different perspectives on the research topic. To maintain equal participation and manage group dynamics, the researcher allowed all participants to voice themselves.
2. **Groupthink:** The desire for a common view within a group can lead to groupthink, where participants conform to the majority opinion, rather than expressing their unique perspectives (Brown 2018: 95). In the current study, this emerged as a disadvantage as the researchers had to continually probe the participants to get different perspectives, which resulted in a prolonged focus group discussion.

### **3.12. PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTING DATA**

#### **3.12.1. Individual interviews**

At the beginning of data collection, the researcher contacted the prospective participants to schedule interviews for a mutually convenient date and time (Rowley 2012: 260). Before the scheduled interviews, the researcher informed the participants that should they wish to participate, they had to return the signed consent forms.

The researcher proposed an interview location, and the participants agreed, stating that it was suitable and convenient for them. The interviews were conducted at the Tholimpilo organisation,

a convenient, noise-free community venue. When selecting the interview venue, the researcher considered factors like privacy, comfort, air circulation, accessibility, and an environment that would encourage involvement and interaction, without disrupting the interview process (McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl 2018: 2001; Castillo-Montoya 2016: 1).

The researcher informed the grandmothers that the estimated interview duration would be no more than 45 minutes, but additional time could be scheduled if needed. Before the interview commenced, the participants signed the letter of consent.

On the day of the interviews, refreshments were made available at the agreed venue for the grandmothers. Since the data was collected in person, the researcher ensured that she had a recording device and a portable power source, both fully charged. The necessary writing materials for field notes were also accessible. The recorder and field notes were crucial for accurately capturing all the information. Permission to record the interviews was obtained before the start of the same. Using a recorder allowed the researcher to focus on the grandmothers' responses rather than trying to write everything down. The researcher had the freedom to make notes, record thoughts, and document their experiences during the interview process.

Castillo-Montoya (2016: 3) stated the notes were a written record of what the researcher heard, saw and experienced during the interviews. These proved valuable during the data analysis phase. The researcher began the interview with an introduction, reiterating the purpose of the study. Specific interview questions were asked to gain insight into the grandmothers' experiences and challenges. The researcher then probed for additional details, allowing the grandmothers to share their perspectives.

Throughout the interviews the researcher remained attentive and engaged, maintaining eye contact and using active listening techniques to encourage the grandmothers to share their stories. To build rapport and trust, the researcher shared personal narratives and engaged in casual conversation before starting the formal interview (Rowley 2012: 261). As the interview progressed, the researcher was mindful of the time and made relevant adjustments to the interview schedule, as needed.

Data collection for the individual interviews ended when it was established that similar themes, variations, and experiences emerged throughout the interviews when saturation was reached.

This meant that data collection ended when the researcher had gathered sufficient and rich data to address the study questions (Mwita 2022: 414). Data saturation was therefore reached.

The acquired data was written down, translated and transcribed so that the researcher would be able to access it later if necessary. The researcher explained that pseudonyms would be used while reporting and that no personal identifying information about participants would be published. Only the researcher would have access to their names.

### **3.12.2 Focus group discussion**

The beginning stages of data collection for a focus group discussion were similar to the ones for the individual interviews. The researcher contacted the prospective participants to schedule interviews for a mutually convenient date and time, where the researcher informed them of the study and the process of signing the consent forms.

The focus group discussion with the Child and Youth Care Workers took place in a quiet, private room at the Tholimpilo organisation in the Ndwedwe Mission area. The researcher began by welcoming the eleven participants and thanked them for their time and willingness to share their experiences. She explained the purpose of the study, emphasising its focus on understanding the challenges and support needs of grandmother-headed households in rural Ndwedwe. The researcher asked for permission to record the interviews, using a recorder. All the participants agreed to it. The researcher also reiterated the confidentiality of the discussion and assured participants that their identities would remain anonymous.

After the initial introductions and explanations, the researcher initiated the discussion by posing open-ended questions about the child and youth care workers' experiences working with grandmother-headed households. For instance, she asked about the common challenges that these families faced, the type of support they typically required, and the existing resources available in the community. As the discussion progressed, the child and youth care workers shared their perspectives, offering rich insights and examples from their professional experiences. They discussed their financial struggles, lack of access to healthcare, educational challenges for the grandchildren, and the emotional toll on the grandmothers.

During the focus group, the researcher utilised a semi-structured interview guide to facilitate the discussion. The guide included open-ended questions that allowed the participants to share their experiences and insights on the topic. Moreover, the researcher used probing questions to delve deeper into specific issues and clarify any uncertainties. For example, when a

participant mentioned difficulties which grandmothers faced accessing social grants, the researcher followed up by asking about the specific barriers they encountered and the potential solutions they envisioned.

Throughout the discussion, the researcher maintained a neutral and respectful stance, actively listening to the child and youth care workers' perspectives without judgment or interruption. The researcher took detailed field notes, capturing key themes, insightful quotes, and the overall dynamics of the group interaction. The discussion was meant to last for approximately 1.5 hours, however, it went on for 2 hours, as the participants were eager to share their perspectives. This prompted the researcher to schedule a follow-up session to continue the discussion and gather additional insights as data collection was still incomplete.

A new date and time were set, and the follow-up focus group was held a week later. Before the follow-up session, the researcher reviewed the notes from the previous discussion to identify any gaps or areas that needed further exploration. This allowed the researcher to refine the interview guide and ensure that the subsequent discussion would provide more in-depth and comprehensive data. Refreshments were provided, and the researcher reiterated the purpose of the study and thanked the participants for their continued engagement.

Participants were also informed that they would receive a copy of the study findings once the research was complete. Participants were also provided with the researcher's contact information in case they had any further questions they wanted to share. The entire discussion was audio-recorded, with the participants' prior consent, to ensure accurate transcription and analysis of the data.

### **3.13. DATA CAPTURING AND ANALYSIS**

Thematic analysis was used to analyse and interpret the data collected in this study. According to Swain (2018: 15) thematic data analysis is a form of qualitative data analysis that entails looking over a collection of data (such as transcripts from in-depth interviews or focus groups) and recognising patterns in meaning across the data. During the data analysis phase, key themes were summarised.

The researcher logged the data obtained in the interview, word for word. Data was transcribed and read repeatedly. Codes were created, and information was organised using the codes until patterns were recognised. Data analysis was carried out using semi-structured interviews that were recorded. Data analysis was completed by transcribing word-for- word what the

participants said. The taped interviews were analysed by the researcher to make sense of the researcher finding similarities. Once this had been completed, themes were identified. To give a broader understanding, data was analysed using the following 6 stages (Braun and Clarke (2019: 89):

### **Stage 1: Familiarisation**

According to Braun and Clarke (2019: 89), in this step the researcher takes a comprehensive, high-level view of their data, examining it extensively and noting their initial observations. This usually entails reading the captured data and other documents several times, transcribing audio recordings, and noting any patterns that emerge. To ensure that the researcher has a firm understanding of all her data, she read through and re-read the data in its entirety numerous times during this stage.

### **Stage 2: Generating Initial Codes**

After becoming familiar with one's data, the next step was to code significant aspects of the data. This required highlighting specific sections of the text and marking them with codes that define their content (Tery and Hayfield 2021: 18). Therefore, once the data was thoroughly reviewed, the researcher collated the data into groups according to their code.

### **Stage 3: Generating themes.**

Byrne (2022: 11) stated that once the codes are generated, the researcher can analyse them, recognise patterns within them, and generate themes. Multiple codes were then bundled into a single theme.

### **Stage 4: Reviewing themes.**

Kiger and Varpio (2020: 84) stated that this is the phase where the researcher verifies that the themes have been produced accurately and aptly convey the data on which they are based. The researcher went through a back-and-forth process, which included assessment, appraisal, evaluation, and inquiry. The analysis was strengthened by asking the following question: have any details been missed?

### **Stage 5: Defining and naming themes.**

Sundler *et al.* (2019: 73) argued that with the researcher's final list of themes, the next stage was to name and define them. In identifying them, the researcher sought to identify the

significance of each theme and, more crucially, how it assisted her in making sense of the data. Once the researcher had identified her themes, she gave each one a clear and straightforward name.

### **Stage 6: Report writing.**

According to Neuendorf (2018: 211), the final step in data interpretation is writing the report. The researcher must fully consider the topics to reflect that the analysis is valid. An introduction, a methodology section, results and findings, and a conclusion is what one may typically find in a thematic analysis report. As a result, the researcher included enough details in her report for the reader to evaluate her findings. To pique the reader's curiosity in the methods and reasoning used by the researcher to analyse the data, the researcher made use of "what," "how," "why," "who," and "when."

## **3.14. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Bartneck and Lutge (2021: 5) defined ethics as beliefs and rules about right or wrong. Being ethical also includes virtues of honesty, compassion, and loyalty. Ethical values and principles can be utilised to guide the research project in acknowledging the initial and ongoing issues, to meet the research goals while also protecting the research participants' rights. To ensure that this research was carried out ethically, the researcher took the following ethical values into account:

### **3.14.1. Avoidance of harm**

According to Dixon and Quirke (2018: 13), the researcher has a moral responsibility to refrain from harming others. Participants may experience a variety of harms, including physical harm, which is uncommon, and psychological stress or pain, which is more typical (Goodwin *et al.* 2020: 31). During the course of this study, the researcher ensured that no harm was experienced by the participants. The researcher ensured that the interview process did not have questions that provoked emotional distress. Additionally, the researcher ensured that all the participants signed a consent form and ensured that they were informed of potential possible risks that may have risen during the study. Moreover, participants were informed about the right to withdraw from the interview if they felt pressure or discomfort.

### **3.41.2. Informed consent**

According to Manti (2018: 146), informed consent involves clearly explaining the study's purpose and procedures, identifying any experimental or untried elements, and informing

participants about potential discomfort, risks, or power dynamics they may encounter during the study. Informed consent also meant allowing participants to decide whether they wished to participate, without coercion.

In addition to this, Goodrich and Luke (2017: 108) stated that it includes describing any benefits or changes that may be expected in individuals or organisations, providing clear answers, when being asked about the procedure, and lastly, assuring participants that they had the right to withdraw their consent or participation in the study without any penalty. During this study, the researcher ensured that participants were aware and fully informed of the study, as well as the consent required from them. Because some participants had trouble reading and understanding the consent form, the researcher read through it explaining what it entailed and ensured that participants were not coerced into signing it.

### **3.14.3. Confidentiality and Anonymity**

According to Goodwin *et al.* (2020: 30), confidentiality is the agreement reached between the researcher and the participants, obtained by their informed consent, regarding the handling, management, and dissemination of their private information. To maintain confidentiality the researcher kept all the information safely. Assurance was also given to the participants that their details would not be revealed during the reporting, as their identifying details were anonymised.

### **3.14.4. Voluntary participation**

According to Neuert *et al.* (2021: 2), voluntary participation refers to being given full power, to agree to participate in research activities. Manti (2018: 147) mentioned that the principle of voluntary participation states that the people interviewed should be fully willing to participate, without intervention of force deception, fraud, violence, or any form of control in participation. In this study, the researcher ensured that she did not conduct research without voluntary participation from the participants. The researcher ensured that participants were aware that should they wish to withdraw from this study, they were welcome to do so at any time.

## **3.15. RIGOUR AND TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Trustworthiness is the degree of confidence used by qualitative researchers, to ensure that the study is a true reflection of human experiences (DeJonckheere and Vaughn 2019: 8). The following criteria were used to ensure trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

### **3.15.1. Credibility**

Nassaji (2020: 427) established that by understanding the participants' experiences, credibility makes it possible for other people to recognise the events that are studied. Maxwell (2021: 111) stated that a researcher must look at each participant's transcript to establish trustworthiness while looking for patterns among and between all participants. To establish credibility, the researcher looked at each participant's transcript individually, while looking for patterns among and between all participants. Nassaji (2020: 428) further stated that examples of credibility strategies include reflexivity, member checking (also known as informant feedback), peer assessment, peer debriefing, extensive periods spent with participants, and including the participants' words in the final report. In this study, the researcher used reflexivity as one of the strategies to ensure credibility. After the data was transcribed and logged word for word, the researcher presented the data to the participants who confirmed that the information was reported accurately.

### **3.15.2. Transferability**

Carminati (2018: 2094) defined transferability as the extent to which qualitative research findings can be used in multiple contexts or settings with different participants. In this study, the researcher established transferability by providing a thorough description of the population studied, including demographics and geographic restrictions.

### **3.15.3. Dependability**

Dependability is the capacity to observe, review, and comment on the research process. Additionally, it relates to the accuracy and dependability of the research results and the degree to which research methods are documented

The researcher established dependability by having peers participate in the analysis process. Additionally, the researcher provided a detailed description of the research method and repeated the study step by step to identify similarities in results and to improve findings.

### **3.15.4. Confirmability**

Amin *et al.* (2020: 147) stated that after credibility, transferability, and reliability were established, confirmability occurs. Reflection is required in qualitative research, as well as an understanding of and openness to the study and its findings. The researcher must be critical of himself or herself, examining how his or her preconceptions influence the investigation. The researcher in this study employed confirmability techniques, by writing notes about personal

emotions, biases, and insights after an interview. FitzPatrick (2019: 211) stated that reflective research produces new insights, leading individuals reading it to trust the reliability of the findings and the study's significance.

### **3.16. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault (2015: 6) defined study limitations as the inherent weaknesses or constraints in research design, that may impact the validity, generalizability, or reliability of the findings. It is potential flaws or shortcomings that can affect the interpretation and application of the research results. There were limitations to this study and in the subsections below, a breakdown of the limitations the researcher encountered, is explained.

#### **1. Limited reach:**

- **Small Sample Size:** The study involved a small number of grandmothers and child and youth care workers. While this is common in qualitative research, it means the findings may not always apply to other grandmothers, child and youth care workers, or contexts. For example, the experiences of grandmothers in the Ndwedwe region may have been different, from those in other areas due to variations in cultural norms, available resources, or socioeconomic factors. Similarly, the perspectives of the child and youth care workers that were interviewed did not represent the views of all professionals in this field.
- **Specific Geographic Region:** The study focused on a particular geographic area, the findings could not be transferable to other regions. Different locations have unique characteristics, such as access to services, community support systems, and cultural practices, that can significantly influence the experiences of grandmother-headed households and the professionals who work with them.

#### **2. Information from participants:**

- **Participant Recall:** The study depended on people remembering and sharing past experiences. Memories can be fuzzy, and sometimes participants said what they thought was expected of them, rather than what truly happened. This sometimes led to inaccuracies in the data. For instance, some grandmothers could not accurately recall the specific timing or sequence of events related to assuming caregiving responsibilities.
- **Social Desirability Bias:** In this study, some participants answered questions in a way they perceived as socially acceptable or that they believed the researcher wanted to hear. This

can lead to an inaccurate representation of their true experiences or perspectives. For example, grandmothers downplayed the challenges they faced to avoid appearing as though they were struggling or to protect their grandchildren's image.

### **3.17. CONCLUSION**

This study explored the experiences of grandmothers raising grandchildren in Ndwedwe and the perspectives of Child and Youth Care Workers who support them. Utilising semi-structured interviews with grandmothers and focus group discussions with child and youth care workers, the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges and support needs within this context. The chosen methodology allowed for rich data collection, capturing the nuances and complexities of the participants' experiences. The flexible nature of the interviews and focus groups facilitated open and honest dialogue, fostering rapport and trust between the researcher and participants. This approach proved particularly valuable in exploring sensitive topics and uncovering unanticipated insights.

## CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the data collected from in-depth interviews with grandmothers living in grandmother-headed households and child and youth care workers who work closely within the life space of these grandmothers. The study aimed to understand the challenges faced by these grandmothers and develop strategies that can be implemented to strengthen family life in these households.

There were four objectives in this study, namely, to understand the factors that led to grandmothers heading households in Ndwedwe, to inquire about the challenges faced by grandmothers in these households, to understand what support grandmothers required to function better in their homes and to inquire what community strategies were required to better support grandmother-headed households in Ndwedwe.

The data was collected using semi-structured interviews which were conducted face to face, using an interview schedule (Appendix A) and a focus group discussion (Appendix B). The data was analysed using thematic analysis, which resulted in the generation of five themes and nineteen subthemes. The following subsection presents the demographic profiles of the participants.

### 4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Table 2: The demographic profiles of participants in sample one are as follows:

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of grandchildren</b>	<b>Type of participant</b>	<b>The data collection method used</b>
PI (1)	64	Female	6	Grandmother	Individual interview
PI (2)	71	Female	5	Grandmother	Individual interview
PI (3)	76	Female	9	Grandmother	Individual interview
PI (4)	65	Female	4	Grandmother	Individual interview
PI (5)	75	Female	6	Grandmother	Individual interview
PI (6)	80	Female	8	Grandmother	Individual interview
PI (7)	65	Female	3	Grandmother	Individual interview
PI (8)	70	Female	3	Grandmother	Individual interview
PI (9)	82	Female	11	Grandmother	Individual interview

PI (10)	69	Female	4	Grandmother	Individual interview
PI (11)	79	Female	5	Grandmother	Individual interview
P1 (12)	84	Female	6	Grandmother	Individual interview
PI (13)	67	Female	3	Grandmother	Individual interview
PI (14)	73	Female	7	Grandmother	Individual interview

Table 3: The demographic profiles of participants in sample two are displayed as follows:

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Type of participant</b>	<b>The data collection method used</b>
FGD (1)	39	Female	Child and youth care worker	Focus group discussion
FGD (2)	42	Female	Child and youth care worker	Focus group discussion
FGD (3)	40	Female	Child and youth care worker	Focus group discussion
FGD (4)	36	Female	Child and youth care worker	Focus group discussion
FGD (5)	44	Female	Child and youth care worker	Focus group discussion
FGD (6)	31	Female	Child and youth care worker	Focus group discussion
FGD (7)	33	Female	Child and youth care worker	Focus group discussion
FGD (8)	40	Female	Child and youth care worker	Focus group discussion
FGD (9)	48	Female	Child and youth care worker	Focus group discussion
FGD (10)	51	Female	Child and youth care worker	Focus group discussion
FGD (11)	49	Female	Child and youth care worker	Focus group discussion

#### 4.2.1. Summary of the demographic data

There were a total number of 25 participants in this study. Fourteen were grandmothers and eleven were child and youth care workers. The demographic profiles reflect that they were all females residing in the Ndwedwe rural area. The ages of the grandmothers ranged from 64 to 84 years old, with most being in their 70s. The number of grandchildren they cared for varied, with the youngest being three and the oldest being eleven. All of the grandmothers participated in individual interviews.

The demographic profiles of the child and youth care workers who participated in the focus group discussions are provided. They were all female, aged between 31 to 51 years. All of the participants provided a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and the challenges faced by grandmothers raising their grandchildren in the rural Ndwedwe area.

#### 4.3. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

**Table 4: Themes and sub-themes**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
THEME 1: Factors influencing grandmothers caring for their grandchildren.	1. Death of a parent
	2. Migration and Inconsistent parenting
	3. Teenage pregnancy
	4. Cultural values
THEME 2: Challenges encountered by grandmothers.	1. Financial insecurities
	2. Challenging behaviours of Grandchildren
	3. Health Challenges
	4. Inadequate support structures
THEME 3: The well-being of grandchildren.	1. Social-Emotional Development
	2. Mental health and cognitive development
	3. The toll of overcrowding on grandchildren
THEME 4: Coping mechanisms as a strategy for survival.	1. Social support from friends
	2. Spiritual coping mechanisms
	3. Engaging in handcraft activities

	4. Nature-based activities as a coping mechanism
THEME 5: Community-based strategies to assist grandmother-headed households in rural communities.	1. Support groups and peer networks
	2. Housing and financial assistance
	3. Promoting wellbeing and access to healthcare and mental health services
	4. Strengthening families by providing educational resources and opportunities

### 4.3.1 Theme 1: Factors influencing grandmothers caring for grandchildren

The first theme in this study explored the factors that led grandmothers to take on the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren. Prior studies have shown that grandmothers frequently assume the role of primary caregivers for their grandchildren due to a variety of reasons. Four subthemes emerged under theme one, namely, (1) death of a parent; (2) migration and inconsistent parenting; (3) cultural values and (4) teenage pregnancy.

#### 4.3.1.1 Subtheme 1: Death of a parent

Kornhaber and Woodward (2019: 6) revealed that the death of a parent can be a significant factor that drives grandmothers to assume the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren. This is especially prevalent in rural regions, where healthcare accessibility can be limited, and certain occupations like farming, logging, or mining carry elevated risks of accidents or prolonged health issues (Dolbin-MacNab and O’Connell 2021: 112). In this study, the grandmothers shared their views on how the death of a parent can contribute to this caregiving dynamic. This is reflected in the excerpts below:

*“I never thought I’d be raising my grandchildren... When my daughter passed away in a car accident eight years ago, I knew I had to step in to keep the family together... as a result, I ended up raising them.” PI (1)*

*“I ended up raising my grandchildren because my son passed away after a short illness... After the passing of my son, I took in my grandchildren to prevent them from being separated or placed in foster care... Even though I have no money to take care of them, I have to because they have no one else” PI (3)*

Child and youth care workers who work closely with these grandmothers further described how the deaths of parents had compelled grandmothers to take on the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren. This is evident in the excerpts that follow:

*"The grandmother will usually step in to provide the child with care and stability when one of the children's parents pass away due to illness or an accident... It is sad because this often leads the family into poverty because the grandmothers have no other source of income, they only get money from their other children" FGD (6)*

*"We've seen several cases where the grandmother becomes the primary caretaker after the parent dies, often due to HIV/AIDS, work-related accidents, or other illnesses. Grandmothers then take on this role to keep the family together" FGD (2)*

These narratives reflect that when a parent passed away, grandmothers had to step in to provide care and stability for the child. The personal accounts of grandmothers, as well as the insights from child and youth care workers, revealed the pivotal role grandmothers played by stepping in to care for their grandchildren when a parent was no longer present, as a result of death or other circumstances. Grandmothers often took on this caregiving role to preserve the family unit during these difficult times.

Research shows that when grandmothers unexpectedly become the primary caregivers for their grandchildren, it can be both emotionally draining and financially burdensome. The loss of a parent, who may have been the family's main breadwinner, can have significant socioeconomic consequences. Grandmothers further face the loss of a crucial income source, which is exacerbated by the limited job opportunities available in rural areas (Hansen *et al.* 2020: 40; Venter and Wyk 2019: 225; Crowther, Ford and Peterson 2014: 241).

The combination of emotional strain, financial struggles, and a lack of resources can have a profound and complex impact on grandmothers who unexpectedly become the primary caregivers for their grandchildren due to the death of a parent.

#### **4.3.1.2 Subtheme 2: Migration and Inconsistent Parenting**

In addition to the death of a parent, Di Gessa, Bordone and Arpino (2020: 250) revealed that migration and inconsistent parenting also contribute to grandmothers taking on caregiving responsibilities for their grandchildren. This inconsistency can manifest in various ways,

including inconsistent financial support, which places a significant burden on grandmothers (Condon, Luszcz and McKee 2018: 336).

The burden of inconsistent financial support is illustrated in the personal account of one participant, who shared:

*"I love my son, but he's always moving from one job to the next... He'll send money for the kids one month, then disappear for the next three... I'm retired, I don't get pension money, but I have to make sure my grandchildren have food on the table and clothes on their backs." PI (8)*

This excerpt illustrates how inconsistent financial support from a parent had forced the grandmother to assume not only the role of primary caregiver but also the primary financial provider, often at the expense of their own well-being. For some grandmothers, the struggle to provide consistent financial support for their grandchildren was an ongoing challenge. One participant despairingly revealed the reality of this situation, stating:

*"My daughter had to move away for work, so I took in my grandchildren to ensure they were cared for... While I don't mind, it has been challenging, especially when she doesn't provide financial support as regularly as she had promised." PI (11)*

These excerpts further illustrated how grandmothers often take on the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren when the parents have to relocate for work. In these cases, the grandmothers felt compelled to step in and become the primary caregivers, ensuring that their grandchildren were provided for and had stability, even though it may not have been their initial plan. The grandmothers expressed a sense of duty and necessity in assuming this role, as the parents were frequently absent due to their employment obligations.

Child and youth care workers also witnessed firsthand the difficult realities faced by many grandmother-headed families when parents migrate for work. One child and youth care worker, reflecting on the issue of inconsistent financial support, shared a significant narrative that revealed a heartbreaking trend among the families they served, as follows:

*"We see a lot of cases where the parents have migrated for work, leaving the grandparents to care for the kids." FGD (1)*

Another child and youth care worker further explained, the psychological toll that this took, as stated below:

*"In my experience, the shift to becoming a primary caregiver due to inconsistent parenting can be incredibly difficult for grandmothers emotionally. I've spoken with grandmothers who describe feeling like they're on an emotional rollercoaster... One grandmother told me that one minute it's quiet, and the next she's scrambling because her daughter needs her to watch the kids. It's emotionally exhausting." FGD (7)*

These narratives highlighted how inconsistent parenting led to chronic stress, anxiety, and sleeplessness for the grandmothers, which also impacted their physical health over time. The existing literature corroborated these findings. Souralova (2020: 366) noted that when parents migrate for employment opportunities, grandmothers often become the primary caregivers for their grandchildren left behind. This can be due to several factors, such as the need for financial stability, the desire to provide a nurturing environment for the children, or the lack of other available family members to take on the caregiving responsibilities (Ingersoll-Dayton 2018: 257). Additionally, research by Souralova (2020: 373) has shown that even in cases where parents are physically present, inconsistent or neglectful parenting can lead grandmothers to assume the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren. In these situations, grandmothers may step in to ensure the well-being and proper upbringing of their grandchildren (Louie, Cromer and Berry 2017: 359). Another research study by Elder, Robertson and Ardelit (2020: 7), it was found that economic hardship and lack of access to social services in rural areas can also contribute to grandmothers becoming the heads of households and primary caregivers for their grandchildren. The limited availability of community resources and support systems in these areas can make it challenging for parents to provide adequate care, leading grandmothers to assume this role (Souralova 2020: 374).

The data from the child and youth care workers and the supporting research indicated that migration and inconsistent parenting, as well as the death of a parent, are significant factors contributing to grandmothers, becoming the primary caregivers for their grandchildren.

#### **4.3.1.3 Subtheme 3: Cultural values and norms**

The third subtheme revealed that another factor why grandmothers assume the caregiving role, was the influence of cultural values and norms. Grandmothers in this study shared their perspectives, that they felt obligated to raise their grandchildren, for cultural reasons. This is reflected in the excerpts below:

*"In our culture, it is the grandmother's responsibility to care for the grandchildren when the parents are unable to do so... We see it as our duty to keep the family together and provide for the children." PI (12)*

Another grandmother echoed this sentiment, explaining that in her cultural tradition when a daughter gets married, the child must remain with the grandmother's family. She said:

*"In our cultural tradition, if a child is born into my family, that child will stay with me and my family, even if my daughter gets married... I would never let my grandchild go to live with someone else." PI (14)*

Another participant (child and youth care worker) supported this by saying:

*"In the rural areas where we work, it is very common for grandmothers to be the primary caretakers of their grandchildren. Traditionally, grandmothers in these communities are seen as the family's pillars, responsible for nurturing and protecting the younger generations." FGD (11)*

Another grandmother described how a child had to remain behind with her when the mother married into another family. Because the child was not from that family, he had to stay with his maternal family. This is reflected below:

*"I stepped in and raised my grandson when my daughter got married... She had to leave my grandson behind because culturally, the child cannot be recognised by the husband's ancestors, and as a result, he must remain on his maternal side of the family." PI (6)*

These narratives suggest that African cultural traditions often require grandmothers to care for grandchildren, even when their parents are alive. In many cultures, grandchildren stay with the grandmother when a daughter marries another family. The belief that family lineage is traced through the mother places a strong responsibility on grandmothers to raise the grandchildren within the family.

According to Neema (2020: 8), certain cultural beliefs and traditions dictate that caring for children is a responsibility that falls primarily on the grandparents, especially grandmothers. A study on grandparenting experiences in the Eastern Cape revealed that grandmothers were compelled by their cultural and familial obligations to provide care for their grandchildren, despite the significant personal costs and challenges associated with this caregiving role (Soganga and Kang'ethe 2023: 109; Neema 2020: 10).

Another study further found that in the African American community, grandmothers often assume the role of primary caregiver for their grandchildren due to deeply rooted cultural values and traditions that emphasise the importance of family (Kinsner, Parlakianand MacLaughlin 2017: 4).

#### **4.3.1.4 Subtheme 4: Teenage pregnancy**

In rural communities, the silent epidemic of teenage pregnancy often ripples outwardly, placing grandmothers on the front lines of child-rearing once more (Aizer, Devereux and Salvanes 2022: 202). This subtheme highlights how the prevalence of teenage pregnancies in rural areas contributed to the rise of grandmother-headed households, highlighting both the selfless love of grandmothers and the significant burdens these grandmothers carry. One participant shared as follows:

*"The day my granddaughter, barely more than a child herself, handed me my newborn great-grandson and said, 'Please, grandma, don't make me leave him,' I knew my life had changed forever. I had to become a parent again to both my granddaughter and great-grandson" PI (2)*

This narrative reveals the emotional burden driving many grandmothers to become primary caregivers. To them, it's not just a family duty, but a heartfelt response to a crisis. One of the child and youth care workers elaborated on this, saying:

*"In this rural community of Ndwedwe, teenage pregnancy is still a significant issue... grandmothers often feel compelled to take on the caregiving role to ensure the child is properly cared for and the teenage mother can continue her education and still build a life for herself... I have observed that this leads to financial issues for the grandmothers" FGD (3)*

This narrative highlighted the role grandmothers play in supporting young mothers, who lack resources and support. Furthermore, it highlighted the harsh reality of the complex interplay of socioeconomic factors, limited access to sexual education and healthcare, and cultural norms that often normalise early parenthood in certain rural communities. The narrative further highlights that this situation perpetuates a cycle of financial distress. Grandmothers, who have fixed or limited incomes, bear the additional financial responsibility of raising their grandchildren. This puts additional strain on their already limited resources, potentially affecting their personal well-being and access to healthcare and other necessities.

The data from the grandmothers and child and youth care workers revealed that these grandmothers step in, to provide a safety net for their teenage daughters, ensuring that their grandchildren are properly cared for and that the young mothers can continue their education and build a life for themselves. However, this additional responsibility places a significant emotional and financial burden on the grandmothers. Despite the challenges, these grandmothers demonstrated remarkable love and dedication in caring for their families.

While grandmothers stepped in with admirable love and dedication to care for their grandchildren, the existing literature also highlights the significant challenges they face as a result of this (Werner 2017: 69). Many of these grandmothers have already reached or are nearing retirement age, a time when they anticipated enjoying the fruits of their lifelong labour and finally having the freedom to pursue their own interests and hobbies. Yet, due to unexpected pregnancies of their own children as teenagers, they find themselves abruptly thrust back into the all-consuming role of primary caregiver once more (Ladner 2020: 65).

Margolis (2016: 610) stated that this transition can be deeply disruptive, forcing grandmothers to forgo the relaxation and personal fulfilment they had looked forward to in their golden years. Instead, they have to adapt to the relentless physical, emotional, and financial demands of raising a young child, often with limited resources and energy. The emotional toll can be particularly heavy, as grandmothers have to struggle to balance their love and concern for their grandchild, with the resentment and grief, they may feel having to sacrifice their dreams and plans for the future (Youngblut *et al.* 2015: 966).

One participant (grandmother) shared similar sentiments to those written in the literature. She mentioned how the shift towards being a parent again in her old age has held her back from pursuing her dreams of doing beadwork. This is reflected in the narrative below:

*"I had dreams of starting my beadwork business because I'm good at it and spending time with my friends, but the sad reality is that I've never gotten that opportunity because raising my grandchildren is quite demanding. Don't get me wrong, I love my grandchildren, but it's hard."*  
PI (7)

This grandmother expressed a sense of regret and unfulfilled personal goals, as the responsibilities of raising her grandchildren prevented her from pursuing her passion for African beadwork and socializing with friends. According to Ndaa *et al.* (2021: 36) African beadwork is deeply connected to the lives of grandmothers in many African societies. Grandmothers often

pass down the intricate designs and techniques of this traditional craft to their grandchildren, playing a vital role in preserving cultural identities, spiritual beliefs, and social structures. Researchers have studied the symbolism, materials, and production methods used in African beadwork, showing its importance as a vibrant artistic expression central to the experiences of grandmothers raising their grandchildren (Werner 2017: 74). While this grandmother loves her grandchildren, she acknowledged the challenges of this demanding role, which came at the expense of her own goals.

Because of her inability to venture into the beadwork business, the financial strain she endured was particularly severe. This subtheme reflects that many grandmothers, living on little to no income, use limited budgets to cover the unexpected expenses of a new grandchild. The emotional toll is also significant, as they navigate the challenges of raising a grandchild while potentially still processing their own child's unexpected pregnancy.

#### **4.3.2 Theme 2: Challenges encountered by grandmothers**

Theme two delved into the challenges faced by grandmothers who are caring for their grandchildren, who have been orphaned or neglected by their biological parents. Participants in this study broadly agreed that the challenges they encountered while raising their grandchildren manifested in diverse, individualized ways, that were unique to each grandmother. These challenges are categorized into the following subthemes: (1) financial insecurities; (2) challenges with grandchildren's behaviour; (3) health challenges and (4) inadequate support.

##### **4.3.2.1 Subtheme 1: Financial Insecurities**

Grandmothers caring for grandchildren reported that their responsibilities as full-time caregivers placed a significant financial burden on them. The findings below highlighted the diverse financial challenges they encountered as follows:

###### **4.3.2.1.1 Insufficient funds and poverty**

Participants shared how insufficient funds and poverty led to the challenges they encountered as grandmothers. This is reflected in the excerpts that follow:

*“I am very poor, my child... Not having money to take care of my grandchildren has been hard for me, I'm not doing well at all emotionally... The most important things my grandchildren and*

*I need are food, electricity and school uniforms for the children, but I can't afford any of these things." PI (1)*

The excerpt highlights the financial struggles of a grandmother in caring for her grandchildren, unable to afford necessities like food, school uniforms, and electricity. The grandmother shared that being poor and not having money to take care of her grandchildren has been hard for her. This sense of helplessness and anxiety is echoed throughout her narrative, highlighting that the financial distress she faced extended far beyond simply lacking material goods, but the constant worry over having insufficient funds also profoundly impacted her emotional and psychological well-being.

Another grandmother further described her experience of financial hardships and mentioned the struggle she faced to afford necessities due to the limited income she makes through sewing. This is reflected in the excerpt below as follows:

*"I don't have any money, I do not receive any pension, so we are only living off the little money I make when sewing... it is not enough to sustain us, and I can hardly sew anymore because my eyes have gone bad... I must limit what I spend money on... I can't afford many of the things my grandchildren need, such as buying them proper clothing and food" PI (3)*

In the above excerpt, sewing is established as the sole source of income for the grandmother and her grandchildren. Her inability to see properly due to ageing highlights the direct threat to her livelihood. This means that less sewing leads to less income, which in turn restricts her ability to provide necessities. Additionally, these financial constraints are an issue as they have led to further challenges that the grandmothers had to endure. One participant expressed that because of the financial challenges they faced, their living conditions were very poor. With a deteriorating household, the weather conditions were an issue for them, especially when it rained, and getting people to fix the roof was an issue due to a lack of finances. This is reflected in the following excerpt:

*"I face so many challenges. Right now, my house is in very bad condition when it rains, the rain comes in. I try to get the boys from my neighbours to cover it up with a large sail plastic that I keep, but sometimes the wind blows it away and rain comes in. I have no money to pay the boys to build a proper roof for me." PI (7)*

When asked if they receive any financial assistance, some grandmothers expressed that they did, however, the money that they receive remained insufficient to meet their basic needs as a family. This is reflected as follows:

*“Two of my grandchildren receive social grants, however, how can I raise them properly with such little money? I don’t receive pension money because I have not turned 60 yet, so the money we get from their social grants is not enough. We only buy food with it which doesn’t even last us the whole month.” PI (2)*

On the other hand, some participants reported that they do not receive any financial assistance and have to make ends meet to have food on the table for their families. This is exacerbated by her physical condition which prevented her from selling vetkoeks. One grandmother described her plight as follows:

*“No, I do not receive any financial assistance... to feed myself and my grandchildren, I have to sell vetkoeks, but I’m too old now and I don’t have the strength to make them anymore. My back is always so painful, it’s been hard.” PI (13)*

One participant shared that she had been using her retirement pension funds to cover the expenses of caring for her orphaned grandchildren, rather than using that money for her own needs. She explained that she was spending the pension she received on buying school uniforms for the children, leaving her unable to even afford a pair of shoes for herself. She shared:

*“As we speak, I only have one pair of shoes, they have holes... I use all my pension money to buy food and clothes for my grandchildren, and it is worse because they are boys. Boys clothing is very expensive.” PI (8)*

These findings mirror the insights within the literature, which suggests that grandparents raising grandchildren often lack sufficient financial resources to cover the expenses of their households. These financial burdens have exerted a significant toll on the grandmothers' physical, psychological and emotional well-being, as they struggle to meet the basic needs of their grandchildren (Park 2006: 264; Meyer and Kandic 2017: 7).

The immense stress of having to provide for a family on a limited income can cause detrimental health issues for the grandmothers. This includes increased risk of cardiovascular problems and other chronic conditions, stress and anxiety, depression and social isolation (Hadfield 2014:

32). These health issues can further compound the difficulties that grandmother-headed households face. Grandmothers in rural areas may be particularly vulnerable, as they often have fewer economic opportunities and social support systems compared to their urban counterparts (Bailey, Haynes and Letiecq 2013: 671).

Furthermore, studies have highlighted how some grandmothers resorted to alternative means of income, such as selling traditional snacks, to supplement their limited financial resources. However, their advanced age and declining physical health made it increasingly challenging for them to maintain these income-generating activities. Consequently, grandmother-headed households in rural areas often find themselves in a vicious cycle where financial strain, health problems and reduced social engagement reinforce one another (Kim 2017: 50; Chazan 2014: 1641).

#### 4.3.2.1.2. Difficulties in accessing social funds

Many participants also reported encountering numerous obstacles and bureaucratic hurdles when attempting to secure social grants and other government assistance programs for their grandchildren. Some participants shared as follows:

*“Accessing social grants for my grandchildren has been an immense challenge... I have visited the social development offices repeatedly, but they persistently claim that I lack the required documentation... I am an old woman and right now I am at a loss as to what else to do, and I simply do not have the energy to continue this back-and-forth process.” PI (9)*

*“At first, I didn’t know I could get grant money for my grandchildren... when I found out, I applied for a child support grant for my sick grandchild, and I gave the documents two years ago, but I am still waiting for the money. They would send me up and down telling me to wait, I’ve been waiting for more than two years now” PI (4)*

These narratives reflect the significant challenges that grandmothers in rural areas face in accessing social grants for their grandchildren. Despite repeatedly visiting the social development offices and providing the required documentation, they are often confronted with administrative issues that lack the necessary paperwork. As elderly women, they expressed feeling overwhelmed and lacked the energy to continue navigating this bureaucratic process. The delay in receiving the child support grant for a sick grandchild further highlights the hardships these grandmothers endure in their efforts to support their families.

These narratives also highlight the grandmothers' lack of knowledge and difficulties in navigating the social support system to access available grants and subsidies. Many were unaware of the existence of certain financial assistance programs, and even when they did try to apply, they encountered significant hurdles and delays in receiving the much-needed funds. This supports other research studies, which found that grandparents raising grandchildren often struggle to navigate the complex social welfare system and access the available financial support (Gladstone, Brown and Fitzgerald 2009: 55)

According to Rutigliano (2020: 1393), the application process is complex and often requires multiple documents and visits, which can be difficult for older adults with literacy or language issues. The lack of easily available information, especially for those with limited digital skills or internet access, makes it harder for them to navigate the system (Heckman *et al.* 2013: 200). The government agencies also do not actively reach out or provide support, leaving many grandmothers unaware of the resources available. These systemic barriers have created a gap between the available support and the grandmothers' ability to access it, making their struggles even harder (Yancura 2013: 473).

During data collection, it was also found that grandmothers failed to access social grant services because their own children refused to leave the grandchildren's personal documents with the grandmothers. One participant asserted that because her daughter left with her grandchildren's documents, she was unable to access social grants for the children. She described this as follows:

*"I am unable to access social grant for my grandchildren because I do not have their birth certificates... Their mother's husband, who is not their biological father, refuses to allow her to bring the certificates to me." PI (6)*

The grandmothers' experiences in this study are consistent with experiences of the child and youth care workers in their milieu, who frequently witness the struggles older caregivers face in accessing social grants. These professionals highlighted the urgent need for a more user-friendly and compassionate system that adequately supported the grandparents raising grandchildren. In the excerpts below, child and youth care workers stated:

*"The process of getting grants for grandmother-headed households is just too challenging... There are so many hoops they have to jump through, and the staff at the social development offices are often not empathetic to the special circumstances of these grandmothers." FGD (8)*

*“There is an urgent need to simplify the system and provide more hands-on support to guide these grandmothers through the process... It is heartbreaking to see these elderly women struggling to navigate the bureaucracy when they are already overburdened with the demands of raising their grandchildren.” FGD (10)*

Based on these excerpts, it was evident that the process of obtaining grants for grandmother-headed households was highly challenging. Grandmothers must transition through a multitude of bureaucratic hurdles, and the staff at social development offices often lack empathy for their unique circumstances. As a result, there is a pressing need to streamline the system and offer more hands-on support to guide these grandmothers through the process.

This coheres with literature which reflected that the social welfare system is not adequately designed to address the specific needs of grandmother-headed households, thereby creating significant barriers to accessing the much-needed resources (Meyer and Abdul-Mala 2015: 102).

#### **4.3.2.2 Subtheme 2: Challenges with the behaviour of grandchildren**

Many grandchildren in grandmother-headed households present with behavioural problems, creating a significant strain on their caregivers. This subtheme reflects the complexities of the behavioural problems presented by grandchildren which puts an added strain on grandmothers. Participants in this study vividly described the significant stress and burden they carry, as they endure their grandchildren's behavioural problems which include defiance, drug and substance abuse, aggression, and difficulty following rules.

##### **4.3.2.2.1 Substance abuse and defiant behaviours amongst teenage grandchildren**

The participants were deeply concerned about their grandchildren's defiant behaviours and lack of interest in schoolwork. They found it very challenging to manage the behavioural issues of these teenage grandchildren, which took a significant toll on their health and well-being. The participants also noted that alcohol and drug abuse was common among the teenagers in their care, further reducing the grandchildren's motivation to pursue education. In the following excerpt, one participant stated:

*“My grandson has been giving me sleepless nights... he does not want to listen to anything I have to say and he even started smoking. I have been called to his school numerous times*

*because they keep catching him with cigarettes and weed... When I tell him to do his homework he doesn't listen, he's just not interested in anything that has to do with school" PI (9)*

Research has shown that substance abuse and lack of commitment to their school were prevalent issues amongst teenagers being raised by their grandparents (Gordon 2018: 39). Research has found that young adolescents living with a custodial grandmother displayed more outward and disruptive behavioural issues as time went on (Gasa 2012: 203). Another study by Hani, Amat and Mahmud (2020: 288) indicated that reduced academic resilience and increased procrastination were associated with substance abuse tendencies among secondary school students being raised by their grandparents.

The participants also shared the difficulties they encountered with alcohol abuse among the grandchildren they were raising. One participant stated:

*"My eldest granddaughter comes home drunk sometimes and it's so embarrassing, I see the neighbours judging my family sometimes... when I try to talk to my granddaughter about it, she just gets angry and doesn't want to listen to me... My other grandson drinks a lot, I suspect he steals money from my purse too because it disappears, but he denies it when I ask." PI (4)*

Another participant shared a similar experience below:

*"My granddaughter has a habit of disappearing for days, I've even stopped looking for her when she does... Some of my neighbours tell me that they have seen her with a group of boys drunk and making noise" PI (14)*

These grandmothers mirror those in other empirical studies and are a concerning trend observed by child and youth care workers. This indicates a rise in substance abuse among teenagers being raised by grandmothers. According to Dombrowski *et al.* (2016: 22), an estimated 30-50% of children in rural communities are residing with their grandparents, and many of these young people display issues related to drug and alcohol use. Writers have posited that the stressors and challenges of being raised by one's grandmother, rather than a parent, can contribute to increased risk-taking behaviours like substance abuse and delinquency (Hansen *et al.* 2020: 44; Goulette, Evans and King 2016: 349)

Child and youth care professionals often work on the front line with families facing similar challenges and have attested to the devastating impact substance abuse has on both the youth and the grandparents struggling to care for them. They highlight that substance abuse in these

cases is often a coping mechanism for underlying trauma, such as the loss of parents or exposure to parental substance abuse. One child and youth care worker stated:

*“Many of the kids we work with are dealing with so much loss and instability in their lives, that the drugs and alcohol become a way for them to numb the pain and escape their reality.” FGD (4)*

These excerpts revealed that this behaviour can create significant strain within families, particularly for grandparents who were thrust into parenting roles. Additionally, the findings underscore the substantial difficulties grandmothers face in addressing the problematic behaviours exhibited by teenage grandchildren in their care.

#### 4.3.2.2.2 Sense of entitlement and increasing demands from grandchildren

Financial pressure emerged as a significant challenge for grandmothers raising teenagers. Many grandchildren were found to exhibit demanding behaviours related to material possessions. Grandchildren frequently requested expensive items, placing a heavy burden on grandparents already struggling to make ends meet. One grandmother shared:

*“This child gives me a hard time (referring to the grandchild). She receives a social grant, which is money I use to buy food for her and her siblings but she’s constantly demanding that I buy her expensive items, things she knows we cannot afford” PI (5)*

Studies have found that grandchildren raised by grandparents often develop a sense of entitlement, expecting grandparents to cater to their every whim (Mansson 2020: 3). This can lead to significant conflict, as grandparents are unable to fulfil the material needs of their grandchildren (Damian 2017: 18; Gettings and McNallie 2021: 287). Damain (2017: 20) further stated that grandchildren take advantage of their grandparents' emotional investment and caregiving responsibilities, leading to increased demands for money, material goods, and freedom. The literature resonates with the findings made in the present study.

Another grandmother shared as follows:

*“Sometimes I feel like I’m being taken advantage of... This child knows that I cannot say no to her, she plays on my emotions and gets upset when I don’t get her what she wants, she acts like I owe her everything” PI (14)*

The excerpt suggests a strained relationship between the grandmother and the grandchild in her care. The child appeared to exploit the grandmother's inability to refuse their demands,

despite knowing that the grandmother lacked the means to provide them, manipulating the grandmother's emotions and acting entitled. This dynamic points to an imbalance of power and a lack of appropriate boundaries, which could have negative consequences for the child's development and the grandmother's well-being. A child and youth care worker further revealed the difficulties grandmothers face when their grandchildren constantly demand things from them. She said as follows:

*"The grandmothers often feel powerless to set boundaries with their grandchildren, they don't want to risk losing the relationship or having the grandchild act out even more, so they end up giving in to unreasonable demands." FGD (5)*

This narrative suggests that the grandmothers struggled to balance the setting of appropriate limits and preserving their relationship with their grandchildren, ultimately leading them to give in to the grandchildren's excessive requests even when they are unreasonable. Research by Rogers (2021: 16) also highlighted the tendency of adolescents being raised by their grandparents to exhibit entitlement behaviour and who have heightened material expectations. They often pressure their grandparents to purchase costly goods and services beyond the grandparents' financial means.

#### 4.3.2.2.3 Poor academic results from grandchildren

As a result of persistent delinquent behaviour, some grandchildren performed poorly academically. One participant stated they had to constantly attend meetings at their grandchildren's schools due to poor academic performance and behavioural issues. This is reflected in the findings below:

*"I am always called in for a meeting by the school principal... My grandchild has been performing poorly... when I investigate why they underperform at school, I find that they were fighting, swearing at teachers and just being disruptive in class, they don't seem to care about their schoolwork at all, and because of this, they get suspended from the school and don't inform me... What's worse is that every day they wake up and wear their school uniform but end up not going to school. I don't know where they sit the whole day" PI (12)*

Another participant stated:

*"My grandchild is struggling at school... she can't read well, and the teacher says she is also very disruptive and rude in class... I always get called to the school because of her behaviour"*  
PI (13)

Adding to these experiences, child and youth care workers involved in the study highlighted the complex interplay of factors influencing the academic struggles of grandchildren as follows:

*"These kids are often dealing with a lot of emotional baggage... They might be grieving the loss of their parents, feeling abandoned, or struggling to adjust to a new home environment... It's no wonder that school becomes a secondary concern."* FGD (2)

Another worker emphasised the need for academic support tailored to meet the unique circumstances of each child as follows:

*"Many of them have missed out on consistent schooling due to family instability... They might be behind their peers academically and require individualised attention to catch up... Providing access to tutoring, counselling, and other support services is crucial."* FGD (7)

The narratives from the child and youth care workers reveal a complex challenge for grandchildren raised by their grandmothers. These children often had significant emotional burdens, such as grief, feeling abandoned, and adjusting to new homes. This made academic success a lower priority. Inconsistent schooling due to family instability also led to academic gaps, which required individual support. The child and youth care workers also emphasise the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing emotional and academic needs. This included services like tutoring and counselling to help these children thrive.

These findings are consistent with research indicating that grandchildren raised by their grandparents tend to underperform academically compared to those living with their biological parents (Fomby, Krueger and Wagner 2014: 71). The elevated responsibilities and stresses experienced by grandparent caregivers may hinder their ability to properly support their grandchildren's educational requirements and growth (Geng 2020: 422). Additionally, the emotional and social challenges faced by these children can significantly impact their academic performance (Geng 2020: 424).

#### 4.3.2.2.4 Discipline issues amongst grandchildren:

The challenges faced by grandmothers in this study extended beyond material demands and academic difficulties to include significant discipline issues. Grandmothers in this study

frequently reported struggling to manage their grandchildren's behaviour, particularly during adolescence. This is illustrated in the following excerpts:

*"My grandchildren do not want to listen to me at all, they ignore curfews... As it is, my 16-year-old granddaughter has trouble completing chores no matter how many times I address this, all she does is engage in things that are not good for her." PI (4)*

*"They don't want to listen to anything I say... when I try to discipline them it's as if I'm talking to walls, instead they become aggressive towards me." PI (8)*

These narratives highlighted the difficulties grandmothers face in enforcing rules and setting boundaries. The teenagers' defiance exhibited by teenagers and, at times, aggression created a stressful and tenuous home environment. Consequently, the grandmothers faced significant challenges in managing the difficult behaviours of their grandchildren. The grandchildren also engaged in risky or forbidden activities, ignoring curfews and failing to complete chores. These challenging behaviours created immense stress and strain for the grandmothers, who already were burdened with the responsibility of raising their grandchildren.

When asked about potential reasons for these behavioural challenges, grandmothers pointed to the traumatic experiences many of their grandchildren had endured. They shared as follows:

*"I think they do this because of how they tragically lost their parents... Both my son and his wife were involved in a tragic accident that took their lives at the same time... since then, my grandchildren's behaviour has been difficult to deal with" PI (6)*

*"Their parents are alive, but they don't care about these children and, they don't even send money... last I heard, my daughter is living with a man somewhere in Johannesburg, but she could be anywhere by now, she never comes here or calls to check in on her children, it's no wonder they behave this way." PI (1)*

The narratives highlighted that the profound loss of the grandchildren's parents in a tragic accident had a devastating impact on the family. The grandmother observed that her grandchildren's behaviour had become increasingly difficult to manage since the traumatic event. In addition to the heartbreak of losing both parents, the grandchildren also previously endured neglect and abandonment by their biological parents.

One grandmother further revealed that her daughter had completely disconnected from her children, never visiting or providing any financial support. This severe parental neglect,

combined with the overwhelming loss of both parents, contributed to the grandchildren's disturbing behaviours. The grandmother's observation that "it's no wonder they behave this way" reflects a deep understanding of the challenges the grandchildren face.

Child and youth care workers echoed these findings, emphasising the need for a deeper understanding of the grandchildren's emotional needs. This is reflected in the data below:

*"It's crucial to remember that these discipline issues are often a symptom of deeper emotional struggles. These young people need support and guidance, not just punishment." FGD (1)*

*"We need to work with both the grandparents and the grandchildren to develop healthy coping mechanisms and communication strategies. Building trust and understanding is essential." FGD (11)*

These narratives highlighted that the disciplinary issues faced by these young people are often indicative of deeper emotional and psychological challenges they were struggling with. Child and youth care workers shared that instead of focusing solely on disciplinary measures, it was crucial to provide young people with comprehensive support and guidance tailored to their unique needs. This holistic approach could help address the root causes of their struggles and empower them to develop healthy coping mechanisms and effective communication strategies. Moreover, child and youth care workers emphasised that collaborating closely with the grandmothers and the grandchildren was essential for building trust, fostering mutual understanding, and implementing strategies that resonate with all parties involved.

The experiences of parental death, incarceration, substance abuse, or neglect can profoundly impact a child's emotional well-being and manifest as behavioural problems (Beresford, Loucks and Raikes 2020: 3). Moreover, addressing discipline-related issues effectively requires a multi-faceted approach that considers the grandchildren's emotional well-being, the grandparents' capacity for discipline, and the availability of external support systems (Smith, Mongeluzzo and Drente 2021: 829).

#### **4.3.2.3 Subtheme 3: Health challenges**

In addition to the socioeconomic factors mentioned earlier, the grandmothers in this study also faced considerable health challenges. Smalls *et al.* (2020: 233) revealed that raising grandchildren is physically and emotionally demanding, particularly in rural environments where access to healthcare and support systems may be limited. This subtheme delves into the

specific health issues that grandmothers endure, the impact on their caregiving responsibilities and their physical and mental well-being.

#### 4.3.2.3.1 Diminished physical health

Grandmothers in rural areas often face significant health challenges. The grandmothers in this study shared that they experienced poor physical health due to the physical demands of caring for their grandchildren. This is reflected in the narratives below:

*"As you can see, I'm old and nobody is helping me raise these children... I have to make sure that they eat every day, I have to clean and help them get ready for school, it's very tiring, my body can't take it anymore... my blood pressure is always high, and I feel myself getting weaker every day" PI (9)*

*"My back and knees always hurt because I have to carry the little one around, I have no one to help me, I wish I could just rest for a while" PI (10)*

Participants shared that because of their diminished physical health, they are unable to take care of their garden and plant crops, which is what they use to feed their family. One participant revealed:

*"I used to have a garden that I could use to feed my family, but now I cannot bend over and work in it anymore, so we end up eating less healthy foods that I have to buy from the market" PI (2)*

*"My crops are dying, my energy and strength are going down, I cannot take care of my garden like I used to." PI (6)*

The child and youth care workers echoed the grandmother's sentiments by sharing what they observed when working with grandmother-headed families. They stated:

*"The older grandmothers we work with often look physically exhausted, and they do so much with little support." FGD (2)*

*"Many of the grandmothers are in poor health, they have chronic conditions like arthritis and diabetes but still try to care for their grandchildren the best they can." FGD (9)*

As the findings indicate, grandmothers in this study face significant physical health challenges due to the demanding nature of caring for their grandchildren. Sari (2023: 160) found that

grandparents who take on the primary caregiving role for their grandchildren often experience increased physical strain and fatigue.

The grandmothers also described feeling physically exhausted from the daily tasks of caring for the children, such as ensuring that they eat, getting ready for school, and cleaning. Additionally, the physical demands of carrying young grandchildren have led to chronic back pain, a common issue among grandparent caregivers.

On the other hand, child and youth care workers observed that the older grandmothers appeared physically worn out, as they take on so much responsibility with limited support. This supports similar findings by Whitley, Fuller-Thomson and Brennenstuhl (2015: 671) who indicated that grandparent caregivers in rural areas often face greater challenges due to limited access to healthcare resources and support services.

#### 4.3.2.3.2 Mental and emotional health issues

The grandmothers also expressed concerns regarding their mental well-being, as they struggle with the emotional toll of raising their grandchildren and dealing with the circumstances that led to them assuming this responsibility. This is reflected in the excerpts below:

*"Sometimes I just feel so overwhelmed and sad... I never thought I'd have to be doing this at my age, raising children again, it's so stressful." PI (14)*

*"I'm depressed a lot of the time, I don't have the energy to do the things I used to enjoy, all my time is focused on the kids now." PI (5)*

These findings reveal the significant mental health challenges they experienced such as depression, anxiety, and feelings of being overwhelmed. This corroborates findings made by Tompkins *et al.* (2020: 72), who reported that many grandmothers are struggling emotionally with the unexpected responsibility of raising their grandchildren, particularly when the circumstances leading to this situation, such as their adult children's substance abuse issues, are distressing. Moreover, Tracy *et al.* (2021: 757) argued that grandparent caregivers often experience high levels of stress and emotional challenges due to the demanding nature of their role and the complex family dynamics involved.

Child and youth care workers in the present study shared the mental and emotional struggles that grandmothers experience in the narratives below:

*"The grandmothers we work with are struggling mentally and emotionally, they feel isolated and like they have lost their freedom, it takes a big toll on their well-being." FGD (13)*

*"The grandmothers we work with are struggling, they are dealing with a lot of grief and trauma from what led to them taking on this role, on top of the daily stresses of caring for the children." FGD (3)*

These narratives reveal the significant challenges faced by the grandmothers. Child and youth care workers reported that the grandmothers were struggling mentally and emotionally, feeling isolated and as if they had lost their freedom, which took a heavy toll on their well-being. Additionally, they were dealing with substantial grief and trauma stemming from the circumstances that led them to take on the caregiver role, along with the daily stresses of caring for the grandchildren. These excerpts underscore the immense burdens placed on the grandmothers and the need for comprehensive support to address their mental, emotional, and practical needs. The findings and the insights from child and youth care workers align to support the existing research, which suggests that grandparent caregivers, especially in rural areas, are at an increased risk of experiencing mental and emotional health issues due to the unique challenges they face (Tracy *et al.* 2021: 758).

#### **4.3.2.4 Subtheme 4: Lack of support and resources**

This subtheme highlights the lack of support the grandmothers experienced. While financial hardships presented a significant barrier for grandmother-headed households in rural areas, the lack of support systems often exacerbated their struggles (Sano and Mammen 2022: 227). Neema and Annet (2020: 8) argued that many grandmothers raise their grandchildren with minimal support from family members, who may be geographically distant or unable to assist.

##### **4.3.2.4.1 Inadequate family and social support**

Grandmothers further shared how the absence of a strong support network contributed to their feelings of isolation and burden as follows:

*"I don't have anyone to lean on, I feel alone... my family doesn't care about my current situation, they don't send money for food or clothes for the children, whenever I ask, they say they will help but they never do so. I just do what I can on my own." PI (4)*

Other participants shared a similar experience and went on to say:

*"There is no support system here for me and the kids, it's just me... They don't even call to see how I'm doing emotionally." PI (2)*

*"When I ask my family members for help, they don't help. When I am sick, they don't even come to check on me." PI (12)*

The narratives revealed the profound isolation and lack of support that grandmother-headed households in rural areas often face. The first participant's statement, "I don't have anyone to lean on," conveys a deep sense of loneliness and the absence of a support system, which is consistent with research indicating that many grandparent caregivers in rural areas lack adequate social and familial support (Yancura *et al.* 2019: 267). The other participants' comments further highlighted this issue, as they expressed feeling entirely alone in caring for their grandchildren, with "no support system" and no one to help, even when they were sick.

These narratives further highlighted the significant challenges and burdens these grandmothers must shoulder without the assistance of family members or a broader support network. This was corroborated in a study by L'Heureux *et al.* (2022: 1155) who reported the significant strain and burden experienced by rural grandmother caregivers, who often lack access to the social, financial, and healthcare resources necessary to support their grandchildren. This can further compound the physical and emotional toll of caregiving. Conway *et al.* (2010: 128) asserted that grandparent caregivers in rural areas face heightened challenges in obtaining critical services and support, further exacerbating the difficulties they navigate daily.

Child and youth care workers in this study echoed the grandmothers' sentiments. They shared how grandmothers have to rely only on themselves, to take care of their grandchildren. This is revealed in the following excerpts:

*"These grandmothers are left to fend for themselves, with little or no support from the community or social services. They are struggling to make ends meet and provide for their grandchildren." FGD (6)*

Another child and youth care worker stated that beyond the lack of family support, the government does little to nothing to help grandmothers raise grandchildren. This was reflected as follows:

*"They don't get enough support from the government and social services, it's a huge burden on them. At times, people from the government come to check in on these grandmothers and make a lot of promises but they never deliver on anything they promise" FGD (5)*

These insights from child and youth care workers underscore the profound lack of support and resources available to grandmother-headed households in rural areas, which can have far-reaching consequences for the well-being of both the grandparents and their grandchildren. This reflects the lack of community and institutional support available. Moreover, these narratives highlighted that these grandmothers are left to navigate the difficulties of caring for their families with limited support from the community or social services. They were struggling financially to meet the basic needs of their grandchildren and themselves. This suggests that increased community and social service support, including financial assistance, childcare resources, and counselling, could help alleviate the burdens faced by grandmothers raising their grandchildren. Additionally, outreach and education programs can raise awareness of the challenges these grandmother-headed households encounter, empowering the community to provide more robust assistance. Interventions that provide comprehensive support services have been shown to improve the well-being of these grandmothers and their families (Smith & Dannison, 2003; Hayslip & Kaminski, 2005)

#### 4.3.2.4.2 Inadequate Community Support

In addition to the lack of family and social support, grandmother-headed households in this study also confront limited community resources and services. These findings reveal that the limited access to community support services and resources is a significant challenge for grandmothers raising grandchildren in rural areas. One participant shared her frustration as follows:

*"There are no programs or services here for me and the kids... We're just left to fend for ourselves." PI (12)*

Another participant expressed a similar sentiment:

*"The community doesn't care about us. We don't get any help from them." PI (2)*

Research consistently highlights the severe lack of community resources and services available to grandmother-headed households in rural areas. This sentiment is illustrated by the experiences shared by participants in this study. Many grandmothers expressed feeling

abandoned and overlooked, emphasising the lack of programs, services, and general support within their communities. This absence of essential resources and support structures places a significant burden on these families, forcing them to navigate considerable challenges with limited assistance.

### **4.3.3 Theme 3: The Impact of Grandmother-Headed Households on Grandchildren's Well-Being**

The third theme delved into the complex and multifaceted ways that growing up in a grandmother-headed household had shaped a child's development. While previous themes have explored the factors leading grandmothers to become primary caregivers and the challenges they face, this theme shifts the focus to the children themselves.

According to Wang (2024: 585), understanding the overall development of children in these families is paramount. Grandmother-headed households often arise from complex circumstances. These situations can expose children to significant adversity and disrupt family structures, potentially impacting their holistic development. Three subthemes emerged under theme three, namely (1) social-emotional development; (2) mental health and cognitive development and (3) the toll of overcrowding on grandchildren.

#### **4.3.3.1 Subtheme 1: Social-Emotional Development**

This subtheme examined key aspects of social-emotional development within the context of grandmother-headed households, drawing upon existing research and seeking insights from the grandmothers and child and youth care professionals. Grandmothers in this study revealed the emotional challenges their grandchildren face, including feelings of confusion, loss, and a desire to maintain connections with parents, even when absent or unable to provide care. Based on the data collected, these emotional complexities can manifest in a child's behaviour, social interactions, and ability to form attachments. For example, one grandmother stated:

*"My granddaughter struggles with feelings of abandonment... anytime I try to reprimand her for whatever behaviour she may be displaying at that moment, she becomes upset and says, 'You're going to leave me too.' it breaks my heart." PI (1)*

This sentiment echoes the findings made in previous research studies by Chan *et al.* (2019: 612) which highlighted the significant emotional strain, and practical challenges experienced by grandchildren as they transition to living in a grandmother-headed household. According to Shorey and Ng (2022: 194), the shift in family dynamics and responsibilities can be particularly

difficult for young grandchildren to adjust to, as they grapple with the absence of their parents and must adapt to the new caregiving arrangement led by their grandparents.

Another grandmother added:

*"He gets very angry sometimes, lashing out at me or his siblings. He does not want to talk much. This one time he threatened to run away. I think he feels confused and resentful that his parents aren't here raising him."* PI (2)

This narrative highlighted the psychological trauma of child abandonment. The child appeared to be struggling with intense emotional and behavioural issues. The narrative further indicated that the child experienced episodes of significant anger, lashing out at the grandmother and their siblings. Additionally, the child was withdrawn and reluctant to communicate and even threatened to run away. This behaviour suggested that the child may have felt confused and resentful about their parents not being present to raise them. The child and youth care professionals working with these families have also observed similar patterns. As one participant noted:

*"We see a lot of children raised by their grandmothers struggle with their emotions, they present with withdrawal and aggression... I think this is because the children have experienced significant disruption and loss in their young lives, and it manifests in how they interact with others and cope with their emotions."* FGD (6)

Insights from the grandmothers and child and youth care professionals further illustrate the psychological difficulties that these grandchildren face. These excerpts underscore the profound impact that the transition to a grandmother-headed household can have on a child's well-being. The emotional and behavioural difficulties described illustrate the need for targeted support and interventions to help these grandchildren cope with this challenging family structure and develop healthy social-emotional skills.

#### **4.3.3.2 Subtheme 2: Mental health and cognitive development**

Beyond the social-emotional context, this subtheme explored the mental health effects on the development of grandchildren. The literature has identified increased risks for mental health issues and academic difficulties among children in these family structures (Yoo and Russell 2020: 845)

Some participants in this study shared their observations, indicating a shift in the mental well-being and cognitive abilities of their grandchildren as follows:

*"My grandson used to be such a bright, curious child... Ever since he's been living with me, I've noticed he has trouble processing information, I could send him to the shop to buy bread, but he comes back with sugar... I worry that the instability of our situation is taking a toll on his mental health and learning." PI (9)*

Another grandmother echoed this concern, remarking:

*"My granddaughter has been seeing a counsellor that was assigned by a social worker for anxiety and depression... I think a lot of it stems from the trauma of being separated from her parents and having to adjust to life in my home." PI (3)*

As shared by one grandmother, her grandchild was presenting with anxiety and depression and needed to see a counsellor. The grandmother believed that the trauma of her granddaughter being separated from her parents and transitioning to a new home had significantly contributed to her mental health issues. The insights from these grandmothers resonate with the findings of previous studies, which highlight the heightened risk of mental health issues and cognitive difficulties among grandchildren in custodial care arrangements (Webster, Cappellini and Harman 2023: 16). These studies have similarly shown that grandchildren raised by their grandmothers often face unique challenges, such as adjusting to a new caregiver, dealing with the trauma of their parent's absence, and navigating complex family dynamics (Oman 2024: 12).

According to Backhouse and Graham (2013: 440) grandchildren may struggle with feelings of loss, confusion, and instability as they adapt to living with their grandmothers, who may have different parenting styles and expectations. Peterson (2017: 394) added that the grandmothers themselves may face physical, emotional, and financial challenges in taking on the role of primary caregiver later in life, which can further impact the grandchildren's wellbeing.

Child and youth care professionals also found that children had elevated levels of anxiety, depression and learning disabilities within grandmother-headed households. One professional said:

*“During home visits, we often find children with elevated levels of anxiety, depression and learning disabilities... One child told me that they can’t cope without their parents with them... These children need all the professional help they can get” FGD (10)*

These grandmothers and child and youth care workers provided a deep and troubling glimpse into the emotional and cognitive toll experienced by grandchildren in grandmother-headed households. Previous research by Creasey and Kaliher (2019: 411) also documented the heightened prevalence of severe mental health challenges, such as increased anxiety and clinical depression, among this vulnerable population which suggests the need for more psychotherapeutic support amongst this vulnerable group.

Moreover, Creasey and Kaliher (2019: 418) revealed that these children often grapple with significant cognitive difficulties, including persistent struggles with memory, attention, and academic performance, which can further impede their overall development and well-being. The grandmothers' firsthand accounts shed critical light on the complex, multidimensional impact of being raised by a grandparent, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive, tailored support systems to address the unique needs of these grandchildren and promote their long-term resilience and success.

#### **4.3.3.3 Subtheme 3: The toll of overcrowding on grandchildren**

This subtheme examines the huge toll experienced due to overcrowding on the lives of grandchildren raised by their grandmothers. Drawing upon the experiences shared by both grandmothers and child and youth care workers, this subtheme sheds light on the multifaceted challenges these grandchildren face, paying particular attention to the detrimental effects of inadequate living conditions and overcrowding.

For many of these families, being financially constrained has translated to cramped living conditions, often with many family members sharing inadequate space. One grandmother shared:

*“My three grandchildren and I share a single rondavel. It's crowded, and there's no privacy whatsoever. What breaks my heart more is that they have to sleep on the floor because my bed is a single bed, when it's cold they get sick easily” PI (12)*

Another grandmother echoed this sentiment, saying:

"The four of us - myself, my two grandchildren, and their younger sibling - all share a two-room shack with no running water or electricity... It's so cramped, the kids don't have any space to play or do their homework... I worry this environment is stunting their development." PI (6)

These accounts vividly capture the harsh realities faced by families as a result of overcrowding in grandmother-headed households in rural areas. In the above excerpt, the grandmother describes a cramped, under-resourced living environment that compromises her grandchildren's development and well-being. With four people sharing a two-room shack, that lacks basic amenities like running water and electricity, the household is overcrowded, affording the children little space to play or study. This living condition, therefore takes a huge toll on the grandmother and her grandchildren.

The child and youth care professionals working directly with these families provided in-depth insights into the challenges faced by grandmother-headed households. Their firsthand accounts shed light on the issue of overcrowding and its detrimental effects on the well-being and development of the grandchildren. As one professional narrated in the following excerpt:

*"The living conditions in these households are often very poor... multiple family members crammed into a small space, with little privacy or room for the children to thrive... This lack of space and privacy places immense stress on the families, which we see manifesting in behavioural problems, poor academic performance, and even physical health issues among the grandchildren."* FGD (8)

This narrative further revealed that the living conditions in these households are often exceedingly poor, with multiple family members crammed into limited space, depriving the children of privacy and room to thrive. This severe lack of space and privacy placed a heavy emotional and psychological toll on the children, manifesting in behavioural problems, poor academic performance, and even physical health concerns among the grandchildren.

Extensive research by Condon, Luszcz and McKee (2018: 338) has documented the profound impact of overcrowded living conditions on the well-being and development of children in grandmother-headed households. Studies have consistently shown that cramped, resource-scarce environments can have a detrimental effect on children's physical and mental health, cognitive abilities, and overall quality of life (Polvere, Barnes and Lee 2018: 549).

Lim and Kim (2020: 118) indicated that the lack of personal space and privacy in overcrowded homes has been linked to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and behavioural issues among

children. Researchers have found that children living in overcrowded conditions are more likely to exhibit withdrawal, aggression, and difficulty regulating their emotions. Furthermore, the lack of quiet, dedicated study spaces can hinder children's academic performance and cognitive development (Damian, Mashau and Tugli 2019: 139).

These findings align with the firsthand experiences shared by the grandmothers and child and youth care professionals in this study. Their accounts illustrated the profound toll that inadequate living conditions can take on the grandchildren in their care, underscoring the urgent need for targeted interventions and policy solutions to address the housing challenges faced by these families.

Grandmothers in this study further revealed how inadequate living conditions can severely impact the health and well-being of grandchildren in these families. In the excerpt below, one grandmother shared:

*"My granddaughter has asthma, and consequently, the dampness in our home makes matters worse... I'm worried about her health, but finding a better place is just not possible right now."*

*PI (4)* This highlights the living conditions potential for health disparities due to poor housing conditions, placing grandchildren at greater risk for respiratory issues and other illnesses. In addition to physical health concerns, the lack of space and privacy can also have far-reaching consequences on the mental health and cognitive development of these grandchildren. Child and youth care workers echoed these concerns, observing a higher prevalence of health issues among children in these families. One child and youth care worker said:

*"We often see children with untreated medical conditions or developmental delays due to their living conditions at home... The lack of access to quality healthcare and early intervention services can have long-term consequences." FGD (11)*

This narrative highlighted the key issues that emerged as a result of overcrowding in grandmother-headed households, which include untreated medical conditions and developmental delays among children, which can be attributed to their living conditions at home. This excerpt also suggests that the living conditions in these households are directly impacting the health and development of children. The mention of "untreated medical conditions" and "developmental delays" indicates that the children's basic healthcare needs are not being met, which can hinder their overall well-being and prospects.

Furthermore, the narrative underscores the importance of access to quality healthcare and early intervention services, which are crucial for supporting the growth and development of children, especially those in vulnerable living situations. The lack of these services is likely exacerbating the challenges faced by the children in grandmother-headed households, with the potential for long-term negative impacts on their physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development.

#### **4.3.4 Theme 4: Coping mechanisms as a strategy for survival**

Given the significant challenges faced by grandmother-headed households in rural areas, it is crucial to understand the coping mechanisms they employ to manage their responsibilities and ensure the well-being of their families. The coping mechanisms used by grandmothers in this study are divided into four subthemes: (1) social support from friends, (2) spiritual coping, (3) engaging in handcraft activities and (4) engaging in nature-based activities.

##### **4.3.4.1 Subtheme 1: Social support from friends**

One strategy employed by the grandmothers to manage the stressors of their caregiving role is to seek social support from friends and peers in their community. As one grandmother explained:

*"My friends and I get together regularly to share a meal and just talk about what's going on... It's a chance for us to speak about our feelings, to get advice, and to feel like we're not alone in this" PI (13).*

Another grandmother echoed this sentiment, stating:

*"The other grandmothers in my church group have become like a second family to me... We look out for each other, we pray together, and we have that understanding of what each other is going through." PI (14)*

The child and youth care workers interviewed corroborated the importance of social support networks for these grandmothers, saying:

*"Based on my observations, having that community of other grandmothers who can empathise and provide a listening ear makes a huge difference in their ability to cope." FGD (2)*

The excerpts highlight the importance of social support networks for the grandmothers in managing the challenges of their caregiving roles. The grandmothers describe getting together with friends and peers, such as those from their church group, as a way to vent, seek advice, and feel a sense of community. This social support allows them to cope with the stresses of

their responsibilities and not feel alone in their experiences. The child and youth care workers interviewed also supported the significance of these support networks, noting that the empathy and support provided by other grandmothers in the community, make a substantial difference in their ability to manage their roles effectively.

A study by Noreiga *et al.* (2022: 13) demonstrated the importance of connecting as a group that shares similar struggles and getting the necessary social support. Researchers have found that having access to support networks, whether through community groups, religious organisations or informal connections with other grandparents in similar circumstances, can significantly enhance grandparents' ability to manage the emotional, physical, and financial challenges of raising their grandchildren (Mugedy, Kang'ethe and Nomngcoyiya 2020: 525).

#### **4.3.4.2 Subtheme 2: Spiritual coping mechanisms**

In addition to seeking social support, the grandmothers in this study also relied on spiritual coping mechanisms to help them cope with the difficulties of their caregiving roles. As one grandmother explained:

*"My faith is what keeps me going... I pray every day for strength to take care of my grandchildren, and I find comfort in knowing that God is with me through all of this." PI (7)*

Another grandmother shared a similar sentiment, stating:

*"When I'm feeling overwhelmed, I turn to my Bible and church community... The pastors and the other congregation members are always there to provide me with encouragement and guidance." PI (12)*

The child and youth care workers in the sample emphasised the significance of these spiritual coping strategies, saying:

*"For many of the grandmothers, their religious beliefs and involvement in their church community are central to their ability to persevere in the face of adversity... Some of the grandmothers we work with always express how their spiritual life helps with keeping them grounded despite the challenges they encounter when raising their grandchildren" FGD (5)*

These narratives highlight the important role that spiritual coping mechanisms play in the lives of the grandmothers. The grandmothers described how their faith, prayer, and involvement in their church community are key sources of strength, comfort, and guidance as they navigate the challenges of their caregiving roles. Existing research by Dunfee, Brown and Schoenberg

(2021: 1495), found that spiritual and religious coping strategies are commonly employed by grandparent caregivers, particularly in rural and minority communities, and can significantly enhance their ability to manage stress and maintain a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives.

One grandmother in this study noted the importance of African spirituality and how they use it as a tool to manage their emotions and deal with the stress of raising grandchildren. As one grandmother shared:

*"My ancestors' traditions and rituals have been a source of tremendous comfort and strength for me... When I feel overwhelmed, I turn to the wisdom of my elders and the spiritual practices that have been passed down through generations." PI (4)*

Another grandmother noted that the behaviours of their grandchildren are resolved through the use of African spirituality and rituals, which can be an important coping mechanism in these contexts. This is illustrated in the excerpts below:

*"When my grandchild acts out, I rely on the wisdom of our elders and the traditional rituals to help guide their behaviour and restore balance in our home... The spiritual practices of our ancestors have been vital in helping me navigate the challenges of raising my grandchildren." PI (2)*

This excerpt highlights the important role that grandmothers play, particularly in providing childcare and imparting cultural and spiritual knowledge to their grandchildren. This grandmother emphasized her reliance on the wisdom of her elders and traditional rituals to address behavioural issues with her grandchild. This suggests that grandmothers draw upon longstanding community knowledge and practices to guide and discipline their grandchildren. The reference to "spiritual practices of our ancestors" further indicates the centrality of spirituality and connection to cultural heritage in the grandmother's approach to childrearing.

Raising grandchildren can present unique challenges, and this narrative further demonstrates how grandmothers use their cultural resources to meet those challenges. The grandmother's words convey a sense of resilience, as she navigates the difficulties of her role through the support of her community's traditions and beliefs. Research by Mthembu, Myburgh and Poggenpoel (2020: 19) further supported the significance of African spiritual and cultural practices for some grandmothers in rural areas, saying that these traditional belief systems and rituals can provide a sense of identity, belonging, and resilience in the face of adversity.

#### 4.3.4.3 Subtheme 3: Engaging in handcraft activities

In addition to spiritual support mechanisms, grandmothers also reported that engagement in handcraft activities to cope with the demands of caregiving for their grandchildren was beneficial. One grandmother revealed that she found great solace and comfort in sewing and knitting, which allowed her to find moments of peace and joy amidst the challenges of raising her grandchildren. This is reflected in the following excerpt:

*"Whenever I'm feeling overwhelmed, I just sit down and start sewing or knitting... It calms me down and gives me a sense of peace." PI (2)*

Another grandmother shared that the rhythmic and meditative nature of crocheting helped her manage the stresses of her caregiving responsibilities as follows:

*"Raising grandchildren at my age is not easy and crocheting is like my therapy... I can just get lost in the rhythm of it, and forget about all the worries for a little while." PI (14)*

These personal accounts highlight how grandmothers use craft handicraft activities as a coping mechanism to manage the stressors of caring for their grandchildren. The existing literature also supported the notion that engaging in handcraft activities can be a valuable stress-reduction strategy for grandparent caregivers. A study by Kornhaber and Woodward (2019: 17) found that grandmothers who regularly engaged in activities like sewing, knitting, and crocheting reported lower levels of caregiver burden and higher overall well-being.

The insights from the grandmothers themselves, as well as the supporting research, suggest that handcraft activities can serve as an important self-care practice for grandmothers who are fulfilling the role of primary caregivers of their grandchildren.

Another participant noted that doing beadwork was another fulfilling activity that provided her with a sense of purpose and joy amidst the challenges of caregiving.

*"Beadwork allows me to create something beautiful and meaningful... it gives me a sense of purpose and pride even as I care for my grandchildren." PI (8)*

These narratives reflected how grandmothers utilised a variety of handcraft activities, from sewing and knitting to beadwork, as a means of coping with the demands of their caregiving responsibilities and finding moments of solitude and rejuvenation. As narrated by one grandmother, African beadwork was a meaningful creative outlet for her, it allowed her to produce beautiful and purposeful work, which in turn gave her a great sense of fulfilment and

self-worth. Even as she faced the challenges of raising her grandchildren, the process of crafting beadwork provided her with refuge and pride. Research on the cognitive and emotional benefits of engaging in creative, manual tasks such as those associated with handcrafting (e.g., sewing, knitting, crocheting, beadwork) has shown that these activities can help alleviate stress, foster a sense of mastery and control, and provide an outlet for self-expression (Mthembu, Myburgh and Poggenpoel 2020: 21)

#### **4.3.4.4 Subtheme 4: Nature-based activities as a coping mechanism**

In addition to spiritual practices and handcraft activities, grandmothers also relied on nature-based activities to cope with the demands of caregiving for their grandchildren. Child and youth care workers shared their insight into the ways grandmothers in their rural communities find relief and restoration through their connection to the natural world in the findings below:

*"For many of the grandmothers we work with, spending time in nature, tending to a garden, going for walks, or just sitting outside is a crucial way for them to recharge and find peace amidst the challenges of caring for their grandchildren." FGD (1)*

*"The grandmothers we work with often talk about the calming and grounding effect of being outdoors, whether working in their fields or just sitting and observing the natural surroundings... These nature-based activities seem to provide them with a sense of peace and rejuvenation." FGD (4)*

These narratives highlighted the importance of nature-based activities for grandmothers in South African rural areas who care for their grandchildren. Activities, such as tending to a garden, going for walks, or simply sitting outdoors, provided the grandmothers with a crucial sense of peace, rejuvenation, and grounding amidst the challenges they face in raising their grandchildren.

The grandmothers described a calming and soothing effect from being in natural surroundings, whether working in their fields or just observing the natural world around them. These nature-based activities seem to offer them respite from the demands of caregiving and a chance to reconnect with themselves and their cultural traditions.

Overall, the narratives suggested that access to nature and the ability to engage in calming outdoor activities are essential for the well-being and resilience of these grandmother-headed households in rural areas. The insights from the child and youth care workers highlight the

importance of integrating nature-based interventions and support systems that can help ease the stresses and burdens they face in caring for their grandchildren.

The notion that nature-based activities can serve as an important coping mechanism for grandmothers is supported by existing research. Studies have shown that engaging with nature, whether through gardening, or simply spending time outdoors can have significant psychological and physiological benefits, including reduced stress, improved mood, and enhanced well-being (D'Amore and Chawla 2020: 799). For grandmothers who are shouldering the demands of primary caregiving, these nature-based respite activities may be particularly valuable in helping them manage the stresses of their role (Kim, Kang and Johnson-Motoyama 2017: 118).

Grandmothers also shared how nature-based activities helped them cope with the adversities of raising grandchildren, particularly how these activities played a significant role in providing for them as a family:

*"When I feel overwhelmed, I just go out to my garden and start tending to my plants... This also helps me because I get to feed my grandchildren the vegetables I grow." PI (14)*

Moreover, when asked about how engaging in nature-based activities helped the grandmothers, they revealed that not only is it beneficial for their mental and emotional well-being, but it also helps them get nutritious food for their grandchildren. One grandmother stated:

*"Growing some of our food, even if just a little, makes me feel happy and healthy... It also means I can provide fresh produce for my grandkids, which is important for their development." PI (6)*

This demonstrates how nature-based activities like gardening not only provide grandmothers with a means of coping and restoring their well-being but also directly benefit the children in their care by allowing them to provide nutritious food.

Overall, the insights from the interviews and the supporting research suggest that in addition to spiritual practices and handcraft activities, nature-based activities served as an important coping mechanism for grandmothers with the challenges of raising their grandchildren in rural areas.

### **4.3.5 Theme 5: Community-based strategies to assist grandmother-headed households in rural communities**

Findings from the interviews and the existing literature have highlighted the significant challenges and stressors faced by grandmother-headed households in rural areas. However, the data also revealed several promising community-based strategies that could be implemented to better support this vulnerable population. The community-based strategies emerging from the data can be divided into four subthemes, (1) support groups and peer networks; (2) housing and financial assistance; (3) promoting well-being and access to healthcare and mental health services and (4) strengthening families by providing educational resources and opportunities.

#### **4.3.5.1 Subtheme 1: Support groups and peer networks**

A consistent theme emerging from the interviews was the value of support groups and peer networks for grandmothers raising their grandchildren. When asked about the community strategies that should be put in place that could help them, many grandmothers emphasised the importance of having opportunities to connect with other grandparents in similar situations. As one grandmother explained:

*"It would help to know I'm not alone in this... Being able to talk to other grandmothers in a group setting who are going through the same things and share our experiences and coping mechanisms, could be valuable for me." PI (2)*

Another grandmother echoed this sentiment, stating:

*"It would be nice if we can get support groups as grandmothers in the different areas we live in... only one exists and attending is sometimes difficult because the location where they take place is too far... This would be nice because I can vent my frustrations, get advice, and feel understood by people who get what I'm going through more often." PI (10)*

These excerpts highlight the importance of support groups and peer networks for grandmothers raising grandchildren. One grandmother expressed a desire to connect with others in similar situations, saying that sharing experiences and coping mechanisms could be valuable. Another grandmother described the benefits of the support group in her community, describing it as a "lifeline" where she can vent frustrations, seek advice, and feel understood by those who empathise with her challenges.

Existing research by Cong and Gong (2021: 213) on the needs of grandmother-headed households underscores the value of these types of support networks. A study by Collins (2011: 454), revealed that participating in support groups can help to reduce feelings of isolation, decrease caregiver burden, and foster a greater sense of empowerment and self-efficacy. Montoro-Rodriguez (2021: 647) also found that social support, whether from informal networks or formal programs, serves as a crucial buffer against the negative effects of caregiving stress and burden. Facilitating opportunities for grandparents to come together, share their experiences, and learn from one another represents a powerful community-based strategy (Collins 2011: 457).

On the other hand, when asked about the effectiveness of these support groups, child and youth care workers said that they are helpful for many grandmothers raising grandchildren. However, they also mentioned that there are often barriers to accessing these types of support groups, reflected in the findings below:

*"We've found that transportation and childcare are major obstacles for many of the grandmothers in our community when it comes to participating in support groups and other programs... Without assistance to overcome these practical barriers, it is very difficult for them to access this much-needed support." FGD (9)*

This suggests that in addition to establishing support groups and peer networks, it is also crucial to address the practical barriers that may prevent grandmothers from being able to regularly attend and participate in them. The findings point to the importance of providing things like transportation assistance, respite care, and on-site childcare to facilitate greater accessibility and engagement.

#### **4.3.5.2 Subtheme 2: Housing and financial assistance**

Recognizing that emotional support must be coupled with tangible assistance, this subtheme examined the critical need for accessible housing and financial assistance programs tailored to the unique circumstances of grandmother-headed households. The interviews and literature highlighted the need for increased access to housing and financial assistance for grandmother-headed households in rural areas. Many of the grandmothers interviewed spoke about the financial strain of raising their grandchildren, particularly in the absence of their children's financial support. As one grandmother explained in the narrative below:

*"My pension barely covers the basics like food, utilities, and clothing for the kids. I would be happy if I could get some help with housing costs or other financial assistance to ease this burden." PI (6)*

Another grandmother shared this sentiment, stating:

*"My house is crumbling around me, but I don't have the resources to fix it or move somewhere more stable... I wish some programs could help with housing for grandparents like me." PI (8)*

These narratives illustrate the significant housing challenges that many grandmother-headed households face and the need for targeted housing and financial assistance programs to alleviate this burden.

Another child and youth care worker in this study corroborated these findings, saying:

*"Many of the grandmothers we work with are living in inconducive and unsafe housing conditions due to limited financial resources. I think the community leaders should run projects to raise funds so that grandmothers in this community can get proper housing because the government is taking too long." FGD (3)*

A study by Polvere, Barnes and Lee (2018: 549) also highlighted the lack of affordable and suitable housing as a major barrier for grandmothers raising grandchildren, particularly in rural areas where options may be more limited. Furthermore, Amorim (2019: 132) revealed that financial assistance programs, such as subsidies for childcare, utilities, and other essential expenses, can have a meaningful impact in reducing caregiver burden and improving outcomes for grandmother-headed households. A survey of grandparent caregivers found that accessing these types of tangible financial and housing support was consistently cited as one of the most important unmet needs (Sadruddin *et al.* 2019: 112).

#### **4.3.5.3 Subtheme 3: Promoting wellbeing and access to healthcare and mental health services**

Raising grandchildren can be physically and emotionally demanding, particularly for older adults who may have health concerns. Ensuring access to quality healthcare and mental health services was something that emerged as essential for the grandmothers in this study as well as for their grandchildren.

Many participants described that they had neglected their own health needs while caring for their grandchildren. In the following excerpt, one said:

*"I put everyone else first. I'm so busy taking the kids to their appointments with my sore back and painful knees that I forget to take care of myself. Perhaps getting community volunteers who will help us with stretching our bodies could ease the physical pain we feel and make it easier to care for our grandchildren." PI (7)*

Another grandmother admitted:

*"I have arthritis, I know I should see a doctor about it, but it's just one more thing to worry about. I'll get to it eventually. It's just that taking care of my grandchildren is very demanding" PI (5)*

These narratives reveal the tendency of grandmothers raising their grandchildren to prioritize the needs of their grandchildren over their health and well-being. One grandmother expressed how she was so focused on taking her grandchildren to their appointments that she neglected to care for herself.

The other grandmother acknowledged that she should see a doctor about her arthritis but feels it is just one more worry to add to her already burdened life. These glimpses into the experiences of these grandmothers highlight the importance of ensuring that they have access to support services and resources to maintain their own physical and mental health, which is crucial for their ability to care for their grandchildren.

Child and youth care workers in this study observed a common pattern of grandmothers prioritizing their grandchildren's needs above their own, thereby delaying their necessary medical care. One child and youth care worker said:

*"We see many grandmothers with chronic health conditions that are poorly managed because they are so focused on their grandchildren. They skip medications or appointments due to a lack of time, resources, or simply feeling overwhelmed." FGD (5)*

This narrative highlights a critical issue faced by many grandmothers as they are grappling with the challenge of managing their chronic health conditions while prioritising the needs of their grandchildren. Moreover, it indicates that these grandmothers neglect their healthcare due to a lack of time, and resources, or feeling overwhelmed by their caregiving responsibilities. This can lead to the poor management of their chronic health conditions, which can have serious implications for their well-being and ability to continue providing care.

It further suggests that grandmothers in these households may skip taking their medication or miss appointments, further exacerbating their health issues. This can create a vicious cycle,

where the grandmothers' declining health compromises their ability to effectively care for their grandchildren, potentially putting the children's well-being at risk as well.

Beyond their physical health challenges, the emotional toll of raising grandchildren is significant. Grandmothers spoke of feeling stressed, anxious, and isolated. One grandmother said:

*"I love my grandchildren dearly, but sometimes I feel so stressed and overwhelmed. I don't know where to turn for help. It would be nice if we could get medical attention that doesn't require us to walk a long distance to get to the clinic " PI (3)*

Child and youth care workers also emphasised the need for increased mental health support for grandparent caregivers. One child and youth care worker stated,

*"Many of the grandmothers we work with are dealing with past traumas, grief, and the daily stresses of raising children in challenging circumstances. They need access to counselling, support groups, and respite care to help them cope and thrive." FGD (2)*

This narrative underscores the emotional burdens these grandmothers bear, including dealing with past traumas, grief, and the constant stress of raising children under adverse conditions. It further suggests that these grandmothers require access to various forms of support to help them cope and thrive. Counselling services could provide them with the necessary tools and strategies to process their past experiences and manage their emotional well-being. Support groups would offer a valuable platform for these grandmothers to connect with others in similar situations, share their experiences, and find solidarity and mutual understanding. Additionally, respite care would provide them with much-needed breaks and the opportunity to recharge, enabling them to better attend to the needs of the children in their care.

Overall, the narrative highlights the importance of providing comprehensive support systems to address the grandmothers' emotional, psychological, and practical needs. Addressing these issues could significantly improve the well-being of the grandmothers and the children they are responsible for raising.

A research study by MacDonald *et al.* (2020: 141), has revealed that community-based initiatives, such as mobile health clinics, home health visits, support groups specifically for grandparent caregivers, and accessible mental health services, can play a vital role in promoting the well-being of these families. By addressing both the physical and emotional

health needs of grandmothers raising grandchildren, communities can empower these families to flourish (Pandey *et al.* 2019: 271).

#### **4.3.5.4 Subtheme 4: Strengthening families by providing educational resources and opportunities**

Many grandmothers expressed a desire to be the best caregivers they could be but felt unequipped to handle the unique challenges of raising children in today's world. They spoke about feeling overwhelmed by the responsibility, being out of touch with modern parenting approaches, and unsure where to turn for guidance. One grandmother said:

*"Things are so different now than when I raised my children... I worry that I'm not doing things right or giving my grandchildren what they need. I would love to know more about the correct approach when it comes to raising my grandchildren, it would be nice if we get people who could teach us" PI (11)*

Child and youth care workers confirmed that grandparent caregivers often benefit from additional support and education. One child and youth care worker shared:

*"Many of the grandmothers we work with are eager to learn and grow as parents, but they may not know where to start... Providing them access to relevant information and resources can make a world of difference." FGD (9)*

Grandmothers expressed a strong interest in parenting classes or workshops tailored to their unique circumstances. One participant shared:

*"I would love to learn more about how to set appropriate boundaries, communicate effectively with my grandchildren, and positively deal with challenging behaviours." PI (1)*

*"It would be so helpful to connect with other grandparents raising grandchildren and share experiences and advice at least once a week, I wish that could be organised for us." PI (7)*

The child and youth care workers emphasised the importance of providing grandparents with the tools and resources they needed to advocate for their grandchildren's educational success. One child and youth care worker explained as follows:

*"We encourage grandmothers to be active participants in their grandchildren's education... We provide them with information about their rights, connect them with school resources, and empower them to communicate effectively with teachers and administrators... If the community*

*could get together and push this mandate even further, these families can be happier and healthier." FGD (3)*

The excerpts above indicated that grandmothers were willing to go the extra mile to gain the necessary knowledge on how to raise their grandchildren properly during these modern times it further indicated that child and youth care workers provided grandmothers with access to educational resources, parenting support, and opportunities for personal growth, which was necessary for them to raise grandchildren. The narrative above further indicated that receiving assistance from the community was essential, as communities can help strengthen these families by offering grandmothers access to parenting workshops, support groups, and social services. This can provide the resources and support needed to create a more nurturing and stable environment for children raised by grandparents.

A study by Murovhi *et al.* (2018: 21), corroborated these findings and revealed that comprehensive support programs, which combine educational workshops, support groups, and individualised coaching, can have a significant positive impact on the overall well-being and functioning of grandmother-headed households in rural areas. Moreover, Brunissen *et al.* (2020: 6) stated that equipping grandmothers with the knowledge and skills they need to understand complex systems and advocate for their grandchildren's needs can help break down some of the barriers that often hinder the success of these families

#### **4.4. CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the themes and subthemes that emerged from an analysis of the data from fourteen individual interviews and a focus group of eleven participants. The themes and subthemes were presented in Table 3 and discussed in the rest of this chapter. The findings reflected the various factors that led to grandmothers heading their households. Moreover, the findings illustrated the multitude of challenges participants experienced in grandmother-headed households and the coping mechanisms and community strategies that needed to be in place for grandmother-headed families to cope with their adversities. The chapter that follows seeks to provide recommendations in light of these findings and to conclude the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

The study aimed to understand the challenges faced by grandmother-headed households and develop strategies that could be implemented to strengthen family life in these households. Four objectives were designed to achieve this, namely;

- (i) to understand the factors that led to grandmothers heading households in Ndwedwe;
- (ii) to inquire what challenges are faced by grandmothers in these households;
- (iii) to understand what coping mechanisms the grandmothers require to function better in their homes.
- (iv) to inquire what community strategies must be in place to better support grandmother-headed households in Ndwedwe.

The theoretical framework guiding the study was Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. It reflected the various systems, which influenced and impacted the grandmothers who headed households in Ndwedwe. The study provided an in-depth understanding of the challenges participants faced while caring for their grandchildren. They painted a picture of the complexities of their roles, struggles and challenges, which they transcended by their resilience and love for their grandchildren. By understanding what they experienced and felt during this process, richer insights into how to better support grandmother-headed households emerged. This chapter summarises the research findings, presents the conclusions, and offers recommendations to enhance support for grandmother-headed households. It concluded by suggesting areas for further research.

### 5.2. DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The five major themes that emerged from the interviews and focus group discussion are reflected in the table below:

**Table 5.2: Themes and sub-themes**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
THEME 1: Factors influencing grandmothers caring for their grandchildren.	1. Death of a parent
	2. Migration and Inconsistent parenting
	3. Teenage pregnancy
	4. Cultural values

THEME 2: Challenges encountered by grandmothers.	1. Financial insecurities
	2. Challenging behaviours of Grandchildren
	3. Health Challenges
	4. Inadequate support structures
THEME 3: The well-being of grandchildren.	1. Social-Emotional Development
	2. Mental health and cognitive development
	3. The toll of overcrowding on grandchildren
THEME 4: Coping mechanisms as a strategy for survival.	1. Social support from friends
	2. Spiritual coping mechanisms
	3. Engaging in handcraft activities
	4. Nature-based activities as a coping mechanism
THEME 5: Community-based strategies to assist grandmother-headed households in rural communities.	1. Support groups and peer networks
	2. Housing and financial assistance
	3. Promoting wellbeing and access to healthcare and mental health services
	4. Strengthening families by providing educational resources and opportunities

### 5.3. FACTORS THAT LED TO GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

The study's first objective sought to investigate the factors contributing to the formation of grandmother-headed households in Ndwedwe. The findings revealed a complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural influences, including parental death, labour migration, teenage pregnancy, and cultural norms that contributed to grandmothers having to care for their grandchildren. Parental death emerged as a significant factor, with some grandmothers in this study assuming primary caregiving responsibilities after the loss of their adult children due to accidents, illness, or other causes. Grandmothers reported the devastating impact of parental loss on both their grandchildren and them.

Existing research has demonstrated that high adult mortality rates, particularly due to HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, lead to grandmothers becoming the primary caregivers for orphaned grandchildren (Minkler and Roe 2017: 85). Child and youth care workers however emphasised the crucial role grandmothers played in providing a sense of stability and continuity for children experiencing the trauma of parental loss. They also highlighted the need for increased support services for these families, recognising the significant challenges grandmothers faced in providing emotional and material care in the face of such adversity.

Another major finding revealed the phenomenon of parents migrating for work, often coupled with inconsistent financial support. Grandmothers were left having to provide their grandchildren with necessities, forcing them to make difficult choices, such as prioritising food over school supplies or forgoing necessary medical care. Beyond the financial strain, findings revealed that this separation often led to emotional distress for both grandmothers and grandchildren, who experienced a sense of loss and disruption in their family unit. Ngumbela (2021: 114) similarly found how labour migration, often driven by economic disparities, can reshape family structures and place a disproportionate financial and caregiving burden on older generations left behind (Pecora *et al.* 2018: 7). Similarly, Park (2018: 297) documented how the labour migration of parents in Sub-Saharan Africa resulted in grandmothers bearing most childcare responsibilities, including providing food, shelter, education, and emotional support

Another major finding related to the cultural values and norms that influenced grandmothers to look after their grandchildren. Their sense of *Ubuntu* (humanity), family unity, and respect for elders, strengthened their desire to care for their grandchildren. Burke (2017: 12) also highlighted the cultural importance of grandparental caregiving in African communities. Grandmothers reported that their grandchildren often internalised these cultural values, viewing their grandmothers not only as caregivers but also as sources of wisdom and emotional guidance.

#### **5.4. CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN GRANDMOTHER HEADED HOUSEHOLDS**

The second objective of this study focussed on the challenges grandmothers faced raising their grandchildren in Ndwedwe. The findings revealed a range of interconnected difficulties, impacting their financial, physical, and emotional well-being. One significant challenge was financial insecurity, with many grandmothers struggling to meet the basic needs of their grandchildren. Limited income, often derived from social grants or informal work, proved insufficient to cover essential expenses such as food, clothing, education, and healthcare.

Grandmothers expressed that accessing these crucial social grants, often presented a hurdle, as they encountered numerous bureaucratic obstacles, complex application processes, and lengthy waiting periods.

This finding resonates with studies which highlighted the systemic barriers faced by vulnerable populations in accessing social safety nets, particularly in resource-constrained settings (Park 2006: 265; Meyer and Kandic 2017: 9). This also aligns with a growing body of literature documenting the economic vulnerabilities of grandparent-headed households, particularly within the contexts of widespread poverty, unemployment, and systemic inequality (Bailey, Haynes and Letiecq 2013: 671).

Another salient finding revealed that grandmothers often faced challenging behaviours from their grandchildren, including defiance, aggression, and poor school performance. These findings support the views of Tompkins *et al.* (2020: 72), regarding the need for targeted interventions and support systems for children raised in non-traditional family structures.

Tracy *et al.* (2021: 758) stated that community education programs for grandparent-headed families aimed at reducing stigma and promoting understanding of the challenges could contribute to a more supportive environment.

This study further revealed the impact of overcrowded and inadequate housing which significantly impacted children's well-being. The study found that shared small spaces lacked basic amenities like running water and electricity, leading to cramped living conditions, compromising children's privacy, play areas, and study spaces. Existing literature has shown that overcrowding and the lack of basic amenities in housing can severely affect children's physical, mental, and social development (Carole 2018: 118; Feldman and Shwartz-Ziv 2024: 107). These children experience stress, anxiety, behavioural problems, and difficulty regulating emotions, which can lead to long-term negative outcomes if not addressed (Lee and Blitz 2022: 773).

The grandmothers' health challenges linked to chronic illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes, and arthritis, alongside other physical limitations and emotional distress, impacted their ability to provide adequate care for their grandchildren. The physical demands of childcare, including lifting, carrying, and playing with active children, often exacerbated existing health conditions, leading to increased pain, fatigue, and mobility issues. According to Hughes *et al.* (2007: 108), the stresses associated with caring for grandchildren can take a significant toll on

the health of grandparents. This finding corroborates other studies which indicate that grandparents raising grandchildren, particularly those of low socioeconomic status, are faced with added financial burdens and barriers to healthcare that exacerbate their health challenges (Hughes *et al.* 2007: 109; Birhanu 2020: 115; Woods, 2020: 1429).

Finally, findings also revealed that inadequate support structures compounded the challenges faced by grandmothers. While some grandmothers received assistance from family members, neighbours, or community organisations, many felt isolated and lacked adequate social, emotional, and practical support. This isolation stemmed from various factors, including geographical distance from family members, strained relationships with grandchildren's biological parents, and the stigma sometimes associated with raising children in later life. Birhanu (2020: 116) suggested that without strong support systems, the physical and mental health of grandparent caregivers can be seriously compromised.

The lack of readily available and accessible formal support systems, such as government-funded programs or non-profit organisations specifically designed for grandparent caregivers, exacerbated their challenges. Hayslip *et al.* (2018: 425) argued that the gap between grandparents' needs and the utilisation of available services, underscores the critical importance of proactively addressing the unique needs and barriers experienced by this population.

## **5.5. THE COPING MECHANISMS THAT EMERGED TO ENHANCE THE FUNCTIONING OF GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS**

This section addresses the study's third objective, by exploring the coping mechanisms grandmothers use to navigate the challenges of raising grandchildren and enhance their overall functioning at home. These strategies were crucial for maintaining well-being and fostering a positive home environment. Social support from friends emerged as a major finding in this study. It can be concluded that strong friendships were a significant coping mechanism, providing emotional validation, stress reduction, and a sense of belonging. Grandmothers with strong social networks felt less isolated and more resilient, echoing the findings by Noreiga *et al.* (2022: 14) who highlighted the protective effects of social support on the mental health of custodial grandparents. According to Noreiga *et al.* (2022: 15), this support can buffer the negative impacts of stress, offering a safe space for sharing experiences and receiving practical and emotional assistance.

Spiritual practices, including prayer, meditation, and religious activities, were found to offer participants strength, solace, and a sense of meaning and purpose. These mechanisms helped grandmothers cope with grief, loss, and the daily stressors of caregiving, contributing to a more positive home environment. Grandmothers revealed that these practices provided a framework for instilling values, promoting positive behaviour, and strengthening family bonds, which proved invaluable in raising grandchildren and managing their behaviours. Kornhaber and Woodward (2019: 18) noted the positive association between spirituality and religiosity and coping with stress among older adults.

Handcraft activities, such as knitting, crocheting, and sewing, were also found to be valuable coping mechanisms for grandmothers raising grandchildren. Engaging in hobbies can promote relaxation, reduce stress, and enhance self-esteem, potentially creating a more harmonious home environment and strengthening family relationships (D'Amore and Chawla 2020: 800).

It can also be concluded that nature-based activities, such as gardening, walks in nature, or simply spending time outdoors, offered peace, tranquillity, and renewal. Grandmothers revealed that these activities helped them manage stress, improve their physical health, and enhance overall well-being, positively impacting their ability to function effectively at home. McCarthy (2021: 295) similarly wrote that exposure to natural environments reduces stress hormones, lowers blood pressure, and improves mood, making the inclusion of these activities in the community relevant.

## **5.6. COMMUNITY-BASED STRATEGIES TO ASSIST GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS**

The fourth objective of this study explore potential community-based strategies that could support grandmother-headed households in Ndwedwe. Support groups and peer networks emerged as important, with grandmothers revealing that shared experiences would not only offer emotional relief and validation for them but also facilitate the exchange of practical coping strategies. Muggedya, Kang'ethe and Nomngcoyiya (2020: 525) also reported on the benefits of social support for vulnerable populations which highlighted the potential of mutual support and shared experiences to foster resilience, reduce stress, and improve overall well-being.

The study found that housing and financial assistance for grandmother-headed households was important. Many grandmothers described their unstable living situations, including overcrowded homes and dilapidated structures which exacerbated their stress. Finally, strengthening families

by providing educational resources and opportunities emerged as a key finding. For the participants, access to quality education for their grandchildren was a top priority. They viewed education as a pathway to a brighter future, a means of breaking the cycle of poverty, and a critical tool for empowering their grandchildren to achieve their full potential.

Grandmothers expressed a deep desire to support their grandchildren's educational journeys but often felt limited by their lack of resources, knowledge, and background. They spoke of the challenges of navigating the educational system, advocating for their grandchildren's needs, and providing the necessary support at home. Providing educational resources and opportunities, would not only benefit the children directly but also equip them with the tools and confidence to become active participants in their grandchildren's education.

Child and youth care workers echoed this sentiment, observing the positive impact of educational resources on both grandmothers and grandchildren. They noted that access to education programs, tutoring services, and parenting workshops could empower grandmothers to create more supportive and stimulating learning environments at home. Moreover, they highlighted the importance of providing grandmothers with information and guidance on navigating the educational system, advocating for their grandchildren's needs, and accessing available resources. According to Xu *et al.* (2020: 104), by investing in educational resources and opportunities for grandmother-headed households, communities can create a more equitable and empowering environment for both generations, fostering a cycle of learning, growth, and opportunity.

## **5.7. CONCLUSION**

This study provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by grandmother-headed households in rural communities of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and suggested several community-based strategies to enhance their well-being. These findings can inform families, community members, child and youth care workers, organisations, and the Department of Social Development in their efforts, to support these families. The major findings in this study reflected significant challenges, including financial strain, declining health, feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety, and inadequate support from government and community structures. These difficulties were often compounded by the challenges of rural environments, where access to resources and services was scarce. The study found that grandmothers lived on limited pension funds, which were sometimes difficult to access due to the complicated bureaucratic processes. This precarious financial situation often forced them to make difficult

choices regarding essential needs such as food, healthcare, and education for their grandchildren.

Consequently, some grandchildren faced limited access to healthcare, and disruptions in their education resulting in some grandchildren displaying behavioural problems, which had detrimental effects on them and the grandmothers raising them. The emotional burden on grandmothers was also evident, with many reporting symptoms of depression and anxiety, and employing coping mechanisms such as reliance on religious faith and social support networks. This emotional strain sometimes affected their ability to provide consistent care and support to their grandchildren, further compounding the challenges faced by the children. A critical factor contributing to these challenges was inadequate support systems. Grandmothers reported feeling unsupported by family members who were unable to provide financial assistance or childcare support, and by government programs that lacked sufficient funding or accessibility for elderly care in rural areas.

This lack of support further marginalised these families and limited their ability to access essential resources. This research addressed a critical gap in the existing literature. While some studies touched upon the challenges faced by grandmothers raising grandchildren, there remained a scarcity of research specifically focusing on the intersection of these challenges and the potential of community-based strategies to mitigate them, particularly within the context of rural South Africa. By exploring the lived experiences of grandmothers and child and youth care workers in Ndwedwe, this study provided a deeper understanding of the complex interplay of these factors. The findings underscored the urgent need for increased funding for social programs targeting elderly caregivers and the development of community-based support groups specifically for grandmothers. In addition, improved access to mental health services in rural areas, and streamlined access to pension funds are also needed.

## **5.8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING GRANDMOTHER-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS**

Grandmother-headed households face numerous challenges, requiring comprehensive support to ensure the well-being of both grandmothers and grandchildren. Recommendations are presented below regarding what government officials, policymakers, the community councillor, community leaders and other stakeholders such as healthcare professionals can do to support grandmother-headed households. These recommendations focus on a holistic approach, addressing physical, mental, economic, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being as follows:

## 1. Empowering Grandmothers as Caregivers:

- **Enhanced caregiving skills training:** The provision of training programs focused on child development, positive discipline, and managing the unique challenges of raising grandchildren in challenging circumstances should be a critical component in supporting these families.
- **Respite care:** Community care workers should offer temporary relief for grandmothers through organised holiday programs and other respite services, allowing them time for self-care and reducing caregiver burnout.
- **Mental health support:** The community councillor should prioritise access to mental health services, including therapy, support groups, and stress management techniques, to address the emotional toll of caregiving.
- **Peer support networks:** Community care workers should facilitate support groups and networking opportunities for grandmothers to share experiences, build social connections, and learn from one another.

## 2. Strengthening Economic Security:

- **Financial assistance and benefits:** Government officials should streamline access to social grants, pensions, and other financial assistance programs to ensure economic stability.
- **Sustainable livelihoods:** Community leaders should support grandmothers in developing income-generating activities through skills training, micro-loans, and access to local markets.
- **Financial literacy training:** Community stakeholders must develop programs aimed at equipping grandmothers with financial management skills to effectively utilise resources and plan for the future.

## 3. Addressing Social and Emotional Well-being:

- **Grief and loss counselling:** Specialized counselling and support groups must be offered to grandmothers and grandchildren to help them cope with the loss of parents and other family members.

- **Trauma-informed care:** Healthcare professionals should recognise the potential impact of trauma on grandmothers and grandchildren and provide appropriate support services.
- **Promoting intergenerational connections:** Professional community care workers must encourage activities that strengthen bonds between grandmothers and grandchildren, fostering a sense of belonging and resilience.

### 3. Ensuring Access to Essential Services:

- **Simplified documentation processes:** Grandmothers should be assisted in obtaining necessary identity documents, birth certificates, and other legal paperwork to access essential services.
- **Healthcare access:** Healthcare professionals must facilitate access to quality healthcare services for grandmothers and grandchildren, including preventative care and chronic disease management.
- **Educational support:** Community child and youth care workers should ensure grandchildren have access to quality education and support services to succeed in school.

### 5. Leveraging Community Resources:

- **Collaboration with child and youth care workers:** government officials and community stakeholders must utilise the expertise of child and youth care workers to provide comprehensive support, including parenting skills training, access to foster care services, and referrals to specialised resources.
- **Community-based support programs:** Community leaders should develop and strengthen community-based programs that offer holistic support to grandmother-headed households.
- **Public awareness campaigns:** Raising awareness about the challenges faced by grandmother-headed households and promoting community involvement in providing support should be prioritised.

## 5.9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- **Financial well-being:** A study that explores the long-term impacts of financial assistance can illustrate its effects on the overall well-being of grandmother-led families.

- **Healthcare and mental health:** Future research can also be conducted to evaluate effective service delivery models for the healthcare and mental health of grandmother-headed families, ensuring accessibility and cultural sensitivity.
- **Educational needs:** It is important to investigate the specific educational needs of these families to be considered to inform the development of targeted resources and opportunities.
- **Community-based support:** Further research can explore the role of community support systems in enhancing the well-being of grandmother-headed families.
- **Tracking family progress:** Future research can be conducted to track the trajectories of these families and identify factors contributing to resilience and positive outcomes.
- **Grandfathers raising grandchildren:** Future research can shed light on the experience of grandfathers raising grandchildren, addressing a gap in existing research.
- **Policy and program evaluation:** Investigating the impact of policy changes and social programs can be done to inform advocacy efforts for supportive policies.
- **Technology and digital platforms:** Exploring the potential of technology can connect these families with resources and support, bridging digital and geographical barriers.
- **Participatory research:** Future research can empower grandmothers to shape research agendas and contribute to the development of effective interventions.

## 5.10. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to understand the challenges faced by grandmother-headed households in rural Ndwedwe and explore potential support strategies. Fourteen interviews with grandmothers and a focus group discussion with eleven child and youth care workers were conducted and it provided valuable insights into the lived experiences of these families. The findings revealed the complex interplay of social, economic, and emotional factors impacting grandmother-headed households, highlighting the critical need for comprehensive support systems. The research underscores the resilience and strength of grandmothers in the face of adversity while also emphasising the importance of community-based interventions. The recommendations presented in this study, informed by the voices of grandmothers and child and youth care workers, offer a framework for strengthening these families and building more resilient communities. Further research is needed to evaluate the long-term impact of these interventions and to tailor support strategies to the unique needs of grandmother-headed

households in diverse contexts. By investing in the well-being of these families, the future of rural communities will be protected and strengthened.

## REFERENCES

- Abutabenjeh, S. and Jaradat, R. 2018. Clarification of research design, research methods, and research methodology: A guide for public administration researchers and practitioners. *Teaching Public Administration*, 36(3): 23-25. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0144739418775787> (Accessed 03 March 2023).
- Adams, W. C. 2015. Conducting semi-structured interviews. *Handbook of practical program evaluation*, 492-505. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19> (Accessed 12 October 2024).
- Adetoro, A. A., Ngidi, C, S, M. and Danso-Abbeam, G. 2023. "Towards the global zero poverty agenda: examining the multidimensional poverty situation in South Africa," *SN social sciences*, 3(9): 134-139. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-023-00735-2> (Accessed 11 October 2023).
- Aizer, A., Devereux, P. and Salvanes, K. 2022. Grandparents, moms, or dads? Why children of teen mothers do worse in life. *Journal of Human Resources*, 57(6): 202-207. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.58.2.1019-10524R2> (Accessed 02 June 2024).
- Akinyele, O. D., Oloba, O. M. and Mah, G. 2023. Drivers of unemployment intensity in sub-Saharan Africa: do government intervention and natural resources matter?. *Review of Economics and Political Science*, 8(3): 166-185. Available: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/REPS-11-2020-0174/full/html> (Accessed 18 November 2023).
- Akyildiz, S. T. and Ahmed, K. H., 2021. An overview of qualitative research and focus group discussion. *International Journal of Academic Research in Education*, 7(1), pp.1-15. Available: <https://doi.org/10.17985/ijare.866762> (Accessed 16 October 2024).
- Alase, A. 2017. The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A guide to a good qualitative research approach. *International journal of education and literacy studies*, 5(2): 9-19. <http://www.journals.aiac.org.au/index.php/IJELS/index> (Accessed 19 September 2024).
- Alderete, E., Sonderegger, L. and Pérez-Stable, E. J. 2018. Emerging themes in food security: environmental justice, extended families and the multiple roles of grandmothers. *International journal for equity in health*. 17, 1-11. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-018-0856-3> (Accessed 13 August 2023).

Alhammad, M., Aljedani, R., Alsaleh, M., Atyia, N., Alsmakh, M., Alfaraj, A., Alkhunaizi, A., Alwabari, J. and Alzaidi, M. 2022. Family, individual, and other risk factors contributing to risk of substance abuse in young adults: A narrative review. *Cureus*, 14(12). Available: <https://doi.org/10.7759%2Fcureus.32316> (Accessed 19 December 2023).

Ali, N. A. M. and Aun, N. S. M. 2022. Factors of teenage pregnancy out of marriage from the perspective of social work students. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 11(1). Available: <https://ijarped.com/index.php/journal/article/view/1925>

Allen, K. R., Henderson, A. C. and Murray, M. M. 2019. Theoretical approaches to grandparenting. *Grandparenting: Influences on the dynamics of family relationships*, 3-16.

Amin, M. E. K., Nørgaard, L. S., Cavaco, A. M., Witry, M. J., Hillman, L., Cernasev, A. and Desselle, S. P. 2020. Establishing Trustworthiness and Authenticity in Qualitative Pharmacy Research. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 16(10): 147-148. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2020.02.005> (Accessed 01 October 2022).

Amorim, M. 2019. Are grandparents a blessing or a burden? Multigenerational coresidence and child-related spending. *Social Science Research*, 80, 132-144. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2019.02.002> (Accessed 01 August 2024).

Amorim, M. 2019. Are grandparents a blessing or a burden? Multigenerational coresidence and child-related spending. *Social Science Research*, 80, 132-144. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2019.02.002> (Accessed 07 September 2024).

Anakpo, G. and Kollamparambil, U. 2023. Family structure and household well-being: Evidence from South Africa. *Development Southern Africa*, 40(1): 57-75. Available: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0376835X.2021.1954883> (Accessed 02 March 2023).

Anglin, J. P. and Brendtro, L. K., 2017. Enduring wisdom: Towards a comprehensive history of professional child and youth care. *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care*, 16(3). Available: [https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/84772/1/Anglin\\_Bendtro\\_SJRCC\\_2017\\_Enduring\\_wisdom\\_towards\\_a\\_comprehensive\\_history.pdf](https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/84772/1/Anglin_Bendtro_SJRCC_2017_Enduring_wisdom_towards_a_comprehensive_history.pdf) (Accessed 01 December 2023).

Ardiningrum, A. R., Mesrawati, F., Pradiafta, F. S., Hakim, F., Fajar, G. S. and Angreini, R. 2021. Phenomenological Study of Factors Causing Pre-Marriage Pregnancy among

Adolescents. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research of Higher Education*, 4(2): 65-71. Available: <http://ijmurhica.ppj.unp.ac.id/index.php/ijmurhica> (Accessed 12 December 2023).

Ariyo, E., Mortelmans, D. and Wouters, E. 2019. The African child in kinship care: A systematic review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 98, 178-187. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.12.013> (Accessed 17 December 2023).

Asenahabi, B. M. 2019. Basics of research design: A guide to selecting appropriate research design. *International Journal of Contemporary Applied Researches*, 6(5), 76-89. Available: <http://www.ijcar.net/> (Accessed 19 September 2024).

Astin, F. and Long, A. 2014. Characteristics of qualitative research and its application. *British journal of cardiac nursing*, 9(2): 93-98. Available: <https://doi.org/10.12968/bjca.2014.9.2.93> (Accessed 19 September 2024).

Aubel, J. 2020. A neglected family resource for saving newborn livesgrandmothers. *OSF Preprints*.

Aubel, J. 2021. Grandmothers—a neglected family resource for saving newborn lives. *BMJ Global Health*, 6(2): 380. Available: <https://gh.bmj.com/content/6/2/e003808.citation-tools> (Accessed 21 October 2023).

Backhouse, J. and Graham, A. 2013. Grandparents raising their grandchildren: Acknowledging the experience of grief. *Australian Social Work*, 66(3): 440-454. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2206.2011.00781.x> (Accessed 10 August 2024).

Bailey, S. J., Haynes, D. C. and Letiecq, B. L. 2013. “How can you retire when you still got a kid in school?": Economics of raising grandchildren in rural areas. *Marriage & Family Review*, 49(8): 671-693. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2013.803009> (Accessed 11 July 2024).

Bailey, S. J., Letiecq, B. L., Visconti, K. and Tucker, N. 2019. Rural native and European American custodial grandparents: Stressors, resources, and resilience. *Journal of cross-cultural gerontology*, 34, 131-148. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10823-019-09372-w> (Accessed 12 June 2023).

- Baker, L. A. and Mutchler, J. E. 2010. Poverty and material hardship in grandparent-headed households. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72(4): 947-962. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00741.x> (Accessed 04 September 2023).
- Barrett, D. and Twycross, A. 2018. Data collection in qualitative research. *Evidence-based nursing*, 21(3): 63-64. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2018-102939> (Accessed 16 October 2024).
- Bauer, A., Garman, E., McDaid, D., Avendano, M., Hessel, P., Díaz, Y., Araya, R., Lund, C., Malvasi, P., Matijasevich, A. and Park, A. L. 2021. Integrating youth mental health into cash transfer programmes in response to the COVID-19 crisis in low-income and middle-income countries. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 8(4): 340-346. Available: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(20\)30382-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30382-5) (Accessed 17 November 2023).
- Bautista, C, C. 2020. Explaining Multidimensional Poverty: A Household-Level Analysis. *Asian Economic Papers*. 17(3): 183–210. Available: [https://doi.org/10.1162/asep\\_a\\_00648](https://doi.org/10.1162/asep_a_00648) (Accessed 01 August 2023).
- Beasley, L. O., Jespersen, J. E., Morris, A. S., Farra, A. and Hays-Grudo, J. 2022. Parenting challenges and opportunities among families living in poverty. *Social Sciences*, 11(3): 119. Available: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/11/3/119> (Accessed 02 May 2023).
- Bennett, K. J., Borders, T. F., Holmes, G. M., Kozhimannil, K. B. and Ziller, E. 2019. What is rural? Challenges and implications of definitions that inadequately encompass rural people and places. *Health Affairs*, 38(12): 1985-1992. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00910> (Accessed 01 October 2024).
- Beresford, S., Loucks, N. and Raikes, B. 2020. The health impact on children affected by parental imprisonment. *BMJ Paediatrics Open*, 4(1). Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7047477/> (Accessed 22 July 2024).
- Bernard, J., Contzen, S., Decker, A. and Shucksmith, M. 2019. Poverty and social exclusion in diversified rural contexts. *studia*, 13(2): 29-53. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12260> (Accessed 02 August 2023).
- Berndt, A. E. 2020. Sampling methods. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 36(2): 224-226. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334420906850> (Accessed 22 June 2024).

- Berrick, J. D. and Hernandez, J. 2016. Developing consistent and transparent kinship care policy and practice: State mandated, mediated, and independent care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 68, 24-33. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.06.025> (Accessed 18 December 2023).
- Billings, S.B. 2018. Parental arrest and incarceration: How does it impact the children?. Available: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3034539](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3034539) (Accessed 25 July 2023).
- Bird, K., Hulme, D., Shepherd, A. and Moore, K. 2021. Chronic poverty and remote rural areas. *Chronic Poverty Research Centre Working Paper*, (13). Available: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1754490](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1754490) (Accessed 02 August 2021).
- Biyase, M. and Zwane, T. 2018. An empirical analysis of the determinants of poverty and household welfare in South Africa. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 52(1): 115-130. Available: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26416998> (Accessed 02 November 2023).
- Blanckstein, A. M. M. M., Van der Rijken, R. E. A., Broekhoven, J. L., Lange, A. M. C., Simons, I., Van Domburgh, L., Van Santvoort, F. and Scholte, R. H. J. 2022. Residential youth care combined with systemic interventions: Exploring relationships between family-centered care and outcomes. *Residential Treatment for Children & Youth*, 39(1): 34-56. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0886571X.2020.1863894> (Accessed 19 November 2023).
- Bloomfield, J. and Fisher, M. J. 2019. Quantitative research design. *Journal of the Australasian Rehabilitation Nurses Association*, 22(2): 27-30. Available: <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.738299924514584> (Accessed 19 September 2024).
- Blundell, B., Fernandes, C. and Moran, R. J. 2024. Identifying the service and social policy needs, gaps, barriers and enablers for grandparent carers. *Family Relations*.
- Blustein, J., Chan, S. and Guanais, F. C. 2004. Elevated depressive symptoms among caregiving grandparents. *Health Services Research*, 39(6p1): 1671-1690. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6773.2004.00312.x> (Accessed 04 September 2023).
- Blythe, S. L., Wilkes, L. and Halcomb, E. J. 2014. The foster carer's experience: An integrative review. *Collegian*, 21(1): 21-32. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.colegn.2012.12.001> (Accessed 28 November 2023).

Boyden, J. 2018. 'We're not going to suffer like this in the mud': Educational aspirations, social mobility and independent child migration among populations living in poverty. *In Education, Mobilities and Migration*. London: Routledge.

Briggs, F. 2020. *Child protection: A guide for teachers and child care professionals*. London: Routledge.

Bronfenbrenner, U. 2013. *Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. Adolescents and their families*. New York: Routledge. Available: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315827063-1/ecology-family-context-human-development-research-perspectives-urie-bronfenbrenner> (Accessed 29 October 2024).

Brooks, B., McBee, M., Pack, R. and Alamian, A. 2017. The effects of rurality on substance use disorder diagnosis: a multiple-groups latent class analysis. *Addictive behaviors*, 68, 24-29. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2017.01.019> (Accessed 18 November 2023).

Brown, J. 2018. *Interviews, focus groups, and Delphi techniques. In Advanced Research Methods for Applied Psychology*, London: Routledge.

Brunissen, L., Rapoport, E., Fruitman, K. and Adesman, A., 2020. Parenting challenges of grandparents raising grandchildren: Discipline, child education, technology use, and outdated health beliefs. *GrandFamilies: The Contemporary Journal of Research, Practice and Policy*, 6(1): 6. Available: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/grandfamilies/vol6/iss1/6> (Accessed 06 August 2024.)

Buchanan, A. and Rotkirch, A. 2018. Twenty-first century grandparents: Global perspectives on changing roles and consequences. *Contemporary Social Science*, 13(2): 131-144. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21582041.2018.1467034>

Buelens, B., Burger, J. and van den Brakel, J. A. 2018. Comparing inference methods for non-probability samples. *International Statistical Review*, 86(2): 322-343. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/insr.12253> (Accessed 22 June 2024).

Burke, R. J. 2017. The sandwich generation: individual, family, organizational and societal challenges and opportunities. *The sandwich generation*, 3-39. Available: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781785364969.00007> (Accessed 30 August 2023).

- Burkholder, M. 2019. The impact of HIV/AIDS on orphans in a South African context. Available: <https://pillars.taylor.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=ovc-student> (Accessed 13 April 2023).
- Butts, D. M. and Bodiford, K. 2018. *Family and Intergenerational Relationships. Social Isolation of Older Adults: Strategies to Bolster Health and Well-Being*. New York: Springer.
- Campbell, S., Burn, K. and Szoeké, C. 2016. Grand-parenting for healthy ageing in women: Fact or fiction?. *Maturitas*, 92, 130-133. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.maturitas.2016.07.004> (Accessed 02 December 2023).
- Capous-Desyllas, M., Perez, N., Cisneros, T. and Missari, S. 2020. Unexpected caregiving in later life: Illuminating the narratives of resilience of grandmothers and relative caregivers through photovoice methodology. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 63(4): 262-294. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2020.1746462> (Accessed 17 March 2024).
- Carletto, G., Covarrubias, K., Davis, B., Krausova, M., Stamoulis, K. G., Winters, P. C. and Zezza, A. 2007. Rural income generating activities in developing countries: re-assessing the evidence. *eJADE: electronic Journal of Agricultural and Development Economics*, 4(1): 146-193.
- Carminati, L., 2018. Generalizability in qualitative research: A tale of two traditions. *Qualitative health research*, 28(13): 2094-2101. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732318788379> (Accessed 19 September 2024).
- Carole, C. 2017. *Caregiving in Later Life: Challenges and Policies. In Later-Life Social Support and Service Provision in Diverse and Vulnerable Populations*. New York: Routledge.
- Carthron, D. L. and Busam, M. R. 2016. The Diabetic Health of African American Grandmothers Raising their Grandchildren: Supplementary Issue: Health Disparities in Women. *Clinical Medicine Insights: Women's Health*, 9, 34-69. Available: <https://doi.org/10.4137/CMWH.S34694> (Accessed 16 September 2023).
- Carthron, D., Bailey Jr, D. E. and Anderson, R. 2015, August. Adaptive challenges rising from the life context of African-American caregiving grandmothers with diabetes: A pilot study. In *Healthcare*, 3(3): 710-725. MDPI. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare3030710> (Accessed 13 August 2024).

- Castillo-Montoya, M. 2016. Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol refinement framework. *Qualitative report*, 21(5). Available: <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2016.2337> (Accessed 12 October 2024).
- Challacombe, S. J. 2020. Global inequalities in HIV infection. *Oral diseases*, 26, 16-21. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/odi.13386> (Accessed 12 December 2023).
- Chambers, R. 2019. *Challenges for rural research and development. In Green Revolution?* New York: Routledge.
- Chan, K. L., Chen, M., Lo, K. M. C., Chen, Q., Kelley, S. J. and Ip, P. 2019. The effectiveness of interventions for grandparents raising grandchildren: A meta-analysis. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 29(6): 607-617. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731518798470> (Accessed 30 November 2023).
- Chatterjee, B., Caffarelli, L. and Ranawana, A. 2022. Grandmother, breadwinner, caregiver, widow, entrepreneur: COVID-19, older women, and challenges for the implementation of the women's economic empowerment agenda. *Gender & Development*, 30(1-2): 247-264. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2022.2071983> (Accessed 22 March 2023).
- Chazan, M. 2014. Everyday mobilisations among grandmothers in South Africa: survival, support and social change in the era of HIV/AIDS. *Ageing and Society*. 34(10): 164-166. Available: [https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S0144686X13000317/type/journal\\_article](https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S0144686X13000317/type/journal_article). (Accessed 12 July 2023).
- Chen, M., Chen, Q., Lo, C.K.M., Kelley, S.J., Chan, K. L. and Ip, P. 2022. Attitudes toward grandparental involvement in Hong Kong: a trend analysis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(16): 98. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19169858> (Accessed 16 September 2023).
- Chesebro, J. W. and Borisoff, D. J. 2007. What makes qualitative research qualitative?. *Qualitative research reports in communication*, 8(1): 3-14. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17459430701617846> (Accessed 19 September 2024).
- Choi, M., Sprang, G. and Eslinger, J. G. 2016. Grandparents raising grandchildren: A synthetic review and theoretical model for interventions. *Family & Community Health*, 39(2):

120-128. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1097/FCH.0000000000000097> (Accessed 17 March 2024).

Chung, E. O., Hagaman, A., LeMasters, K., Andrabi, N., Baranov, V., Bates, L. M., Gallis, J. A., O'Donnell, K., Rahman, A., Sikander, S. and Turner, E. L. 2020. The contribution of grandmother involvement to child growth and development: an observational study in rural Pakistan. *BMJ Global Health*, 5(8): 181. Available: <https://gh.bmj.com/content/5/8/e002181.abstract> (Accessed 12 December 2023).

Clark, B. A. 2017. Ethics in child and youth care practice with transgender youth. *International journal of child, youth and family studies*, 8(1): 74-96. Available: <https://doi.org/10.18357/ijcyfs82201716754> (Accessed 01 December 2023).

Clark, K. C., Kelley, S. J., Clark, P. C. and Lane, K. 2024. Needs of grandparents raising grandchildren: A qualitative study. *The Journal of School Nursing*, 40(4): 421-430. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/10598405221115700> (Accessed 07 September 2024).

Clark, S., Henderson, M. and Kabiru, C. 2024. Single Motherhood and Stress in a Kenyan Slum: The Importance of Paternal and Kin Support. *Journal of Family Issues*, 45(1): 74-102. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X221150978> (Accessed 05 January 2024).

Collingridge, D. S. and Gantt, E. E. 2019. Republished: The quality of qualitative research. *American journal of medical quality*, 34(5): 439-445. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1062860619873187> (Accessed 19 September 2024).

Collins, W. L. 2011. A strengths-based support group to empower African American grandmothers raising grandchildren. *Social Work and Christianity*, 38(4): 453-466. Available: <https://www.proquest.com/openview/3753f1054718bf8ff23ede955ec2ac7a/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=40430> (Accessed 30 July 2024).

Condon, J., Luszcz, M. and McKee, I. 2018. The transition to grandparenthood: A prospective study of mental health implications. *Aging & Mental Health*, 22(3): 336-343. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2016.1248897> (Accessed 12 June 2024).

Cong, X. and Gong, X. 2021. *Develop Education for the Elderly in the Context of Rural Revitalization Strategy and Improve Rural Elderly Care. In 2021 International Conference on Modern Educational Technology and Social Sciences (ICMETSS 2021)*. Netherlands: Atlantis Press.

Conway, F., Jones, S. and Speakes-Lewis, A. 2011. Emotional strain in caregiving among African American grandmothers raising their grandchildren. *Journal of women & aging*, 23(2): 113-128. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2011.561142> (Accessed 25 October 2023).

Conway, P., Boeckel, J., Shuster, L. and Wages, J. 2010. Grandparent caregivers' use of resources and services, level of burden, and factors that mediate their relationships. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 8(2): 128-144. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15350771003741931> (Accessed 28 July 2024).

Cox, C. 2018. Cultural diversity among grandparent caregivers: Implications for interventions and policy. *Educational Gerontology*, 44(8): 484-491. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2018.1521612> (Accessed 13 August 2024).

Crawford, M. 2020. Ecological Systems theory: Exploring the development of the theoretical framework as conceived by Bronfenbrenner. *J Pub Health Issue Pract*, 4(2), 170. Available: <https://doi.org/10.33790/jphip1100170> (Accessed 15 August 2024).

Creasey, G. L. and Kaliher, G. 2019. Age differences in grandchildren's perceptions of relations with grandparents. *Journal of Adolescence*, 17(5): 411-426. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.1994.1036> (Accessed 11 August 2024).

Crowther, M. R. and Ford, C. D. 2019. USING COMMUNITY-BASED MODELS TO PROVIDE INTEGRATED CARE FOR RURAL OLDER ADULTS. *Innovation in Aging*, 3(1): 553. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igz038.2038> (Accessed 01 October 2024).

Crowther, M. R., Ford, C.D. and Peterson, T. 2014. A qualitative examination of barriers for urban and rural custodial grandparents. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 12(3): 241-256. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15350770.2014.929938> (Accessed 18 November 2024).

Cudjoe, E., Abdullah, A. and Chiu, M. Y. 2021. Experiences of children in kinship care (CKC) in Ghana: Challenges for cultural practices. *Journal of Family Issues*, 42(4): 741-761. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x20921523> (Accessed 11 January 2024).

Cunha, C. R., Gomes, J. P., Fernandes, J. and Morais, E. P. 2020. *Building smart rural regions: Challenges and opportunities. In World Conference on Information Systems and Technologies*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

- D'Amore, C. and Chawla, L., 2020. Significant life experiences that connect children with nature: A research review and applications to a family nature club. *Research handbook on childhoodnature: Assemblages of childhood and nature research*, 799-825. Available: [https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-67286-1\\_49](https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-67286-1_49) (Accessed 30 July 2024).
- Damian, J. U. 2017. Experiences of Grandmothers in raising their Grandchildren in Thohoyandou, Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa., Doctoral dissertation, University of Limpopo Available: <https://univendspace.univen.ac.za/500> (Accessed 25 July 2023).
- Damian, J. U., Mashau, N. S. and Tugli, A. K. 2019. Experiences of grandmothers raising their grandchildren in Vhembe District, South Africa. *African Journal of Gender, Society & Development*, 8(1): 139-153. Available: <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-1564e70bb1> (Accessed 01 August 2023).
- Danielsbacka, M., Křenková, L. and Tanskanen, A. O. 2022. Grandparenting, health, and well-being: A systematic literature review. *European Journal of Ageing*, 1-28. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10433-021-00674-y> (Accessed 14 June 2023).
- Dannels, S. A. 2018. Research design. In *The reviewer's guide to quantitative methods in the social sciences*, 402-416. Routledge.
- Dare, J., Marquis, R., Wenden, E., Gopi, S. and Coall, D. A. 2020. The impact of a residential camp on grandchildren raised by grandparents: Grandparents' perspectives. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 108, 104-535. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104535> (Accessed 05 December 2023).
- Davis, B., Winters, P., Carletto, G., Covarrubias, K., Quiñones, E.J., Zezza, A., Stamoulis, K., Azzarri, C. and DiGiuseppe, S. 2010. A cross-country comparison of rural income generating activities. *World development*, 38(1): 48-63. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2009.01.003> (Accessed 07 September 2024).
- Davis, M. T., Warfield, M. E., Boguslaw, J., Roundtree-Swain, D. and Kellogg, G. 2020. Parenting a 6-year old is not what I planned in retirement: Trauma and stress among grandparents due to the opioid crisis. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 63(4): 295-315. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2020.1752872> (Accessed 16 September 2023).

- De Wet, N. 2019. The association between mother's socioeconomic status and non-orphan kinship care arrangements in South Africa. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 103, 79-86. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2019.05.015> (Accessed 13 December 2023).
- DeJonckheere, M. and Vaughn, L. M. 2019. Semistructured interviewing in primary care research: a balance of relationship and rigour. *Family medicine and community health*, 7(2). Available: <https://doi.org/10.1136/fmch-2018-000057> (Accessed 12 October 2024).
- Del Boca, D., Piazzalunga, D. and Pronzato, C. 2018. The role of grandparenting in early childcare and child outcomes. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 16, 477-512. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11150-017-9379-8> (Accessed 31 August 2023).
- Delaplane, G. L. 2023. Formal Kinship Service Effectiveness in Addressing the Needs of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. Doctoral dissertation, Grand Canyon University.
- Devotta, K., Woodhall-Melnik, J., Pedersen, C., Wendaferew, A., Dowbor, T. P., Guilcher, S. J., Hamilton-Wright, S., Ferentzy, P., Hwang, S. W. and Matheson, F. I. 2016. Enriching qualitative research by engaging peer interviewers: a case study. *Qualitative research*, 16(6): 661-680. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794115626244> (Accessed 12 October 2024).
- Di Gessa, G., Bordone, V. and Arpino, B., 2020. Becoming a grandparent and its effect on well-being: The role of order of transitions, time, and gender. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, 75(10): 250-262. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbz135> (Accessed 12 June 2024).
- Di Gessa, G., Zaninotto, P. and Glaser, K. 2020. Looking after grandchildren. *Demographic Research*, 43, 1545-1562. Available: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26967850> (Accessed 30 November 2023).
- Dicks, A., Levels, M., Van der Velden, R. and Mills, M. C. 2022. How young mothers rely on kin networks and formal childcare to avoid becoming NEET in the Netherlands. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 6, 78. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2021.787532> (Accessed 17 August 2023).
- DiGiacomo, M., Green, A., Delaney, P., Delaney, J., Patradoon-Ho, P., Davidson, P. M. and Abbott, P. 2017. Experiences and needs of carers of Aboriginal children with a disability: a qualitative study. *BMC family practice*, 18, 1-11. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12875-017-0668-3> (Accessed 01 December 2023).

Ding, K. 2024. The Impact of Grandparents and Intergenerational Living on Children's Social and Emotional Development. *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 29, 403-412.

Dockery, C. 2020. Exploring Adversities of Custodial Grandparents Transitioning from the Grandparent to Parent Role. Doctoral dissertation, Walden University. Available: <https://www.proquest.com/openview/86833fe94febea9d2bfdccf4c910d57a/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y> (Accessed 14 March 2023).

Dodgson, J. E. 2019. Reflexivity in qualitative research. *Journal of human lactation*, 35(2): 220-222. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334419830990> (Accessed 02 October 2024).

Dolbin-MacNab, M. L. 2020. Interventions to support grandparents raising grandchildren. *The handbook of systemic family therapy*, 2, 479-501. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119438519.ch52> (Accessed 20 November 2023).

Dolbin-MacNab, M. L. and O'Connell, L. M. 2021. Grandfamilies and the opioid epidemic: A systemic perspective and future priorities. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 24, 207-223. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-021-00343-7> (Accessed 04 December 2023).

Dolbin-MacNab, M. L. and Yancura, L. A. 2018. International perspectives on grandparents raising grandchildren: Contextual considerations for advancing global discourse. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 86(1): 3-33. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091415016689565> (Accessed 01 October 2023).

Dombrowski, K., Crawford, D., Khan, B. and Tyler, K., 2016. Current rural drug use in the US Midwest. *Journal of drug abuse*, 2(3): 22. Available: <http://drugabuse.imedpub.com/the-many-parts-of-recovery.pdf> (Accessed 05 July 2024).

Doucette, D. 2014. *Raising Our Children's Children: Room in the Heart*. Rowman & Littlefield. United Kingdom: Taylor Trade Publishing.

Douthit, N., Kiv, S., Dwolatzky, T. and Biswas, S. 2015. Exposing some important barriers to health care access in the rural USA. *Public health*, 129(6): 611-620. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2015.04.001> (Accessed 08 December 2023).

du Preez, J., Richmond, J. and Marquis, R. 2017. Issues affecting Australian grandparents who are primary caregivers of grandchildren: a review. *Journal of Family Studies*, 23(1): 142-159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2015.1086406>

Du Toit, M. 2018. Mothers' Pensions and the 'Civilised' Black Poor: The Racialised Provision of Child Maintenance Grants in South Africa, 1921–1940. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 44(6): 973-989. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2018.1548679> (Accessed 13 August 2024).

Du, F., Dong, X. Y. and Zhang, Y. 2019. Grandparent-provided childcare and labor force participation of mothers with preschool children in urban China. *China Population and Development Studies*, 2(4): 347-368. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42379-018-00020-3> (Accessed 03 December 2023).

DuBois, J. M., Strait, M. and Walsh, H. 2018. Is it time to share qualitative research data?. *Qualitative psychology*, 5(3): 380. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000076> (Accessed 19 September 2024).

Dubois-Comtois, K., Bussieres, E. L., Cyr, C., St-Onge, J., Baudry, C., Milot, T. and Labbe, A. P. 2021. Are children and adolescents in foster care at greater risk of mental health problems than their counterparts? A meta-analysis. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 127, 106. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2021.106100> (Accessed 31 August 2023).

Duby, Z., McClinton Appollis, T., Jonas, K., Maruping, K., Dietrich, J., LoVette, A., Kuo, C., Vanleeuw, L. and Mathews, C. 2021. "As a young pregnant girl... the challenges you face": exploring the intersection between mental health and sexual and reproductive health amongst adolescent girls and young women in South Africa. *AIDS and Behavior*, 25, 344-353. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10461-020-02974-3> (Accessed 12 December 2023).

Dunfee, M. N., Brown, R. L. and Schoenberg, N. E. 2021. Perspectives on religious and spiritual coping among rural grandparent caregivers. *Journal of Family Issues*, 42(7): 1495-1515. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X20938857> (Accessed 29 July 2024).

Dunifon, R. and Bajracharya, A. 2012. The role of grandparents in the lives of youth. *Journal of family issues*, 33(9) 1168-1194. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x12444271> (Accessed 20 November 2023).

- Duuki, R. 2023. Addressing the Challenges of Parenthood in an African Context. *East African Journal of Traditions, Culture and Religion*, 6(1): 56-64. Available: <https://journals.eanso.org/index.php/eajtcr/article/view/1258> (Accessed 30 August 2023).
- Elder, G. H., Robertson, E.B. and Ardelt, M. 2020. Families under economic pressure. In *Families in troubled times* (pp. 79-103). Routledge.
- Etikan, I. and Bala, K. 2017. Sampling and sampling methods. *Biometrics & Biostatistics International Journal*, 5(6): 149. Available: <https://doi.org/10.15406/bbij.2017.05.00149> (Accessed 22 June 2024).
- Falconnier, L. A., Tomasello, N. M., Doueck, H. J., Wells, S. J., Luckey, H. and Agathen, J. M. 2019. Indicators of quality in kinship foster care. *Families in society*, 91(4): 415-420. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.4040> (Accessed 21 November 2023).
- Fauziningtyas, R., Indarwati, R., Alfriani, D., Haryanto, J., Ulfiana, E., Efendi, F., Nursalam, N. and Abdullah, K. L. 2019. The experiences of grandparents raising grandchildren in Indonesia. *Working with Older People*, 23(1): 17-26. Available: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/WWOP-10-2018-0019/full/html> (Accessed 20 October 2023).
- Feldman, G. and Shwartz-Ziv, T. 2024. Negotiating housing insecurity: Parenting in poverty and the struggle for home. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 163, 107. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107780> (Accessed 25 November 2024).
- FitzPatrick, B. 2019. Validity in qualitative health education research. *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning*, 11(2): 211-217. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2018.11.014> (Accessed 2 October 2024).
- Fomby, P., Krueger, P. M. and Wagner, N. M. 2014. Age at childbearing over two generations and grandchildren's cognitive achievement. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 35, 71-88. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2013.09.003> (Accessed 20 July 2024).
- Forber-Pratt, I. A., Bhandakkar, B., Sharma, R., Dattani, M. and Prasad, L. 2018. A Family Strengthening and Sponsorship Demonstration Model in India. *Institutionalised Children Explorations and Beyond*, 5(1): 57-67. Available: <https://doi.org/10.5958/2349-3011.2018.00003.8> (Accessed 29 November 2023).

- Foster, H. and Hagan, J. 2013. Maternal and paternal imprisonment in the stress process. *Social Science Research*, 42(3): 650-669. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2013.01.008> (Accessed 25 July 2023).
- Francis, D. and Webster, E., 2019. Poverty and inequality in South Africa: critical reflections. *Development Southern Africa*, 36(6): 788-802.
- Freeman, J. D., Elton, J. and Lambert South, A. 2023. "Who is going to take care of these grandkids if I go?": End-of-life planning by caregivers in grandparent-headed households. *Death Studies*, 47(3): 268-278. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2022.2052205> (Accessed 06 September 2023).
- Gammie, E., Hamilton, S. and Gilchrist, V. 2017. Focus group discussions. In *The Routledge companion to qualitative accounting research methods*, 372-386. Routledge.
- Garfat, T., Freeman, J., Gharabaghi, K. and Fulcher, L. 2018. Characteristics of a relational child and youth care approach revisited. *CYC-Online October*, 7.
- Gasa, V. G. 2012. Exploring the role of grandparents in the lives of teenage learners. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 37(3): 203-211. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09709274.2012.11906465> (Accessed 08 December 2023).
- Gasa, V. G. 2012. Exploring the role of grandparents in the lives of teenage learners. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 37(3): 203-211. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09709274.2012.11906465> (Accessed 04 July 2024)
- Ge, W. and Adesman, A. 2017. Grandparents raising grandchildren: a primer for pediatricians. *Current opinion in pediatrics*, 29(3): 379-384. Available: [https://journals.lww.com/co-pediatrics/abstract/2017/06000/grandparents\\_raising\\_grandchildren\\_a\\_primer\\_for.21.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/co-pediatrics/abstract/2017/06000/grandparents_raising_grandchildren_a_primer_for.21.aspx) (Accessed 07 September 2024).
- Geng, Z. 2020. Will grandparents' co-residence inhibit Grandchildren's educational performance?. *Modern Economy*, 11(02): 422-426. Available: <https://doi.org/10.4236/me.2020.112032> (Accessed 19 July 2024).
- Gettings, P. E. and McNallie, J. 2021. Examining grandparents' perceptions of expectations and family communication patterns in the development of grandparent–grandchild

relationships. *Journal of Family Communication*, 21(4): 287-305. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2021.1976183> (Accessed 07 July 2024).

Gibbons, C. and Jones, T. C. 2003. Kinship care: Health profiles of grandparents raising their grandchildren. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 7(1): 1-14. Available: [https://doi.org/10.1300/J039v07n01\\_01](https://doi.org/10.1300/J039v07n01_01) (Accessed 19 October 2024).

Gilligan, M., Betz-Hamilton, A. and Chapman, A., 2019. ADDRESSING THE THEORETICAL GAPS IN ELDER FAMILY FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION. *Innovation in Aging*, 3(1): 384.

Gladstone, J. W., Brown, R. A. and Fitzgerald, K. A. J. 2009. Grandparents raising their grandchildren: Tensions, service needs and involvement with child welfare agencies. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 69(1): 55-78. Available: <https://doi.org/10.2190/ag.69.1.d>.

Gordon, L. 2018. 'My daughter is a drug addict': grandparents caring for the children of addicted parents. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 13(1): 39-54. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2017.1413664> (Accessed 05 December 2023).

Gorman, M. 2017. Development and the rights of older people. In *The ageing and development report* (3-21). Routledge. Available: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315071541-2/development-rights-older-people-mark-gorman> (Accessed 20 May 2023).

Goulette, N. W., Evans, S. Z. and King, D. 2016. Exploring the behavior of juveniles and young adults raised by custodial grandmothers. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 70, 349-356. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.10.004> (Accessed 05 July 2024).

Goulette, N. W., Evans, S. Z. and King, D. 2019. Exploring the behavior of juveniles and young adults raised by custodial grandmothers. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 70, 349-356. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.10.004> (Accessed 05 December 2023).

Gqeba, L. M. and Gqeba, N. G. 2020. Freeing Rural Girls and Women from the Bondages of Gender-Based Violence to Have Quality of Life within the Global Village. *Counseling and Therapy*, 45-54. Available: <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.91301> (Accessed 06 December 2023).

- Greenwood, M., Kendrick, T., Davies, H. and Gill, F. J. 2017. Hearing voices: Comparing two methods for analysis of focus group data. *Applied Nursing Research*, 35, 90-93. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2017.02.024> (Accessed 16 October 2024).
- Guastafarro, W. P., Guastafarro, K. M. and Stuart, D. 2015. An exploratory study of grandparents raising grandchildren and the criminal justice system: A research note. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 38(1): 137-161.
- Guest, G., Namey, E., Taylor, J., Eley, N. and McKenna, K. 2017. Comparing focus groups and individual interviews: findings from a randomized study. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 20(6): 693-708. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2017.1281601> (Accessed 16 October 2024).
- Gundumogula, M. 2020. Importance of focus groups in qualitative research. *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies*, 8(11). Available: <https://indianjournalofeconomicsandresearch.com/index.php/index/index> (Accessed 21 June 2023).
- Hadfield, J. C. 2014. The health of grandparents raising grandchildren: A literature review. *Journal of Gerontological Nursing*, 40(4): 32-42. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3928/00989134-20140219-01> (Accessed 18 June 2024).
- Haft, S. L. and Hoeft, F. 2017. Poverty's impact on children's executive functions: Global considerations. *New directions for child and adolescent development*, 2017(158): 69-79. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/cad.20220> (Accessed 11 January 2024).
- Hall, K. and Richter, L. 2018. *Introduction: Children, families and the state. South African child gauge*. Available: [https://ci.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/content\\_migration/health\\_uct\\_ac\\_za/533/files/introduction%2520-%2520children%2520C%2520families%2520and%2520the%2520state.pdf](https://ci.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/content_migration/health_uct_ac_za/533/files/introduction%2520-%2520children%2520C%2520families%2520and%2520the%2520state.pdf) (Accessed 11 January 2024).
- Hall, K. and Sambu, W. 2019. Demography of South Africa's children. *South African child gauge*: 216-220. Available: [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Trisha-Ramraj/publication/337973440\\_Prioritising\\_child\\_and\\_adolescent\\_health\\_A\\_human\\_rights\\_imperative/links/5df8a47392851c83648324d5/Prioritising-child-and-adolescent-health-A-human-rights-imperative.pdf#page=216](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Trisha-Ramraj/publication/337973440_Prioritising_child_and_adolescent_health_A_human_rights_imperative/links/5df8a47392851c83648324d5/Prioritising-child-and-adolescent-health-A-human-rights-imperative.pdf#page=216) (Accessed 02 March 2023).

Hani, A. B. A. N., Amat, S. and Mahmud, I. M. (2020) Issues of Substance Abuse Among Schooling Adolescents: Approaches and Solutions, 288-290. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200814.063>.

Hansen, A. C., Brown, R., Keller, P. and Schoenberg, N. 2022. Sources of stress and strength: Contextualizing the experience of grandparents rearing grandchildren in Appalachia. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 20(1): 39-59. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15350770.2020.1774461> (Accessed 05 May 2023).

Harris, L. M., Boggiano, V. and Nguyen, D. T. 2016. "Social Crimes": Understandings of HIV/AIDS as a Disease Among Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in Vietnam. *Social Work in Public Health*, 31(6): 520-529. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19371918.2016.1160334> (Accessed 14 December 2023).

Harris, N. and Boudin, C. 2019. Parents in Prison. *The Encyclopedia of Child and Adolescent Development*, 1-10. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171492.wecad244> (Accessed 27 December 2023).

Hatcher, J., Voigts, K., Culp-Roche, A., Adegboyega, A. and Scott, T., 2018. Rural grandparent headed households: A qualitative description. *Online journal of rural nursing and health care: the official journal of the Rural Nurse Organization*, 18(1): 40-62. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.14574/ojrnhc.v18i1.486> (Accessed 16 November 2024).

Hayslip Jr, B. and Fruhauf, C.A. 2019. *Grandparenting: Influences on the dynamics of family relationships*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Hayslip Jr, B., Fruhauf, C. A. and Dolbin-MacNab, M. L. 2019. Grandparents raising grandchildren: What have we learned over the past decade?. *The Gerontologist*, 59(3): 152-163. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnx106> (Accessed 01 June 2023).

Hayslip Jr, B., Knight, R. P., Page, K. S. and Phillips, C. 2018. Rural versus urban residence as an influence on grandparent caregivers' needs for service. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 16(4): 422-440. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15350770.2018.1489327> (Accessed 06 December 2023).

Healy-Clancy, M. 2017. The family politics of the federation of South African women: A history of public motherhood in women's antiracist activism: Winner of the 2017 Catharine Stimpson Prize for outstanding feminist scholarship. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and*

*Society*, 42(4): 843-866. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1086/690916> (Accessed 13 August 2024).

Heckman, G. A., Hillier, L., Manderson, B., McKinnon-Wilson, J., Santi, S. M. and Stolee, P. 2013, December. Developing an integrated system of care for frail seniors. In *Healthcare management forum*, 26(4): 200-208. Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hcmf.2013.09.003> (Accessed 02 July 2024).

Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N. and Weber, M. B. 2019. What influences saturation? Estimating sample sizes in focus group research. *Qualitative health research*, 29(10): 4-19. Available: <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/qhr> (Accessed 22 June 2023).

Hill, L. 2016. Grandmothers Caring. *J Gerontol Geriatr Res*, 5(370): 2. Available: <https://www.omicsgroup.org/journals/grandmothers-caring-2167-7182-1000370.php?aid=82844> (Accessed 13 August 2024).

Hill, L., Gilligan, R. and Connelly, G. 2020. How did kinship care emerge as a significant form of placement for children in care? A comparative study of the experience in Ireland and Scotland. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 117, 104. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.06.003> (Accessed 15 December 2023).

Hlophe, S. D. and Jooste, K. 2023. Self-management guidelines for youth who have lost a family provider through HIV/AIDS. *Health SA Gesondheid*, 28(1). Available: <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/hsa/article/view/256292> (Accessed 05 January 2024).

Holmes, A. G. D. 2020. Researcher Positionality--A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research--A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(4): 1-10. Available: <http://www.shanlaxjournals.in/journals/index.php/education> (Accessed 19 September 2024).

Hong, Y., Xu, W. and Zhao, L. 2023. The impact of grandchild care on depressive symptoms of grandparents in China: the mediating effects of generational support from children. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11, 104-396. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1043969> (Accessed 16 September 2023).

Hossain, Z. 2018. *Grandparents in cultural context*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hughes, M. E., Waite, L. J., LaPierre, T.A. and Luo, Y. 2007. All in the family: The impact of caring for grandchildren on grandparents' health. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B:*

*Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 62(2): 108-119. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/62.2.s108> (Accessed 11 October 2024).

Hunt, J. 2018. Grandparents as substitute parents in the UK. *Contemporary Social Science*, 13(2): 175-186. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21582041.2017.1417629> (Accessed 16 September 2023).

Huo, M., Kim, K., Zarit, S. H. and Fingerman, K. L. 2018. Support grandparents give to their adult grandchildren. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, 73(6): 1006-1015. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbw208> (Accessed 05 January 2024).

Huot, S., Ho, H., Ko, A., Lam, S., Tactay, P., MacLachlan, J. and Raanaas, R. K. 2019. Identifying barriers to healthcare delivery and access in the Circumpolar North: important insights for health professionals. *International journal of circumpolar health*, 78(1): 157-185. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/22423982.2019.1571385> (Accessed 14 January 2024).

Ijadunola, M. Y., Obiyan, M.O., Odia, B. O., Ogun, O. O., Fajinmi, O. B., Uzezi, P. U. and Abiola, A. J. 2017. Assessing the Challenges of Schooling among Adolescents in Skipped Generation Households in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. *Journal of Community Medicine and Primary Health Care*, 29(1): 62-67. Available: <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jcmphc/article/view/160833> (Accessed 06 September 2023).

Imaiso, J. 2019. Significant differences of the elderly health between urban and rural communities through a literature review. Available: <http://hdl.handle.net/10755/18195> (Accessed 27 June 2023).

Indah, R. 2022. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW WITH SENSITIVE PARTIPANTS. *Jurnal Pendidikan Kedokteran Indonesia: The Indonesian Journal of Medical Education*, 11(1): 22-30. Available: <https://doi.org/10.22146/jpki.64308> (Accessed 12 October 2024).

Ingersoll-Dayton, B., Tangchonlatip, K. and Punpuing, S. 2020. A confluence of worries: Grandparents in skipped-generation households in Thailand. *Journal of Family Issues*, 41(2): 135-157. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X19868836>

Ingersoll-Dayton, B., Tangchonlatip, K., Punpuing, S. and Yakas, L., 2018. Relationships between grandchildren and grandparents in skipped generation families in Thailand. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 16(3): 256-274. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X19868836> (Accessed 12 June 2024).

- Isangula, K. G. 2022. The dangers of being old in rural Tanzania: a call for interventions for strengthening palliative care in low-income communities. *Frontiers in Aging*, 3, 96. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fragi.2022.888396> (Accessed 05 August 2023).
- Isworo, E. J. and Mardiansjah, F. H. 2020. Rural poverty characteristics in Kokap Sub-District, Special Region of Yogyakarta Province. In *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 447(1), 126. IOP Publishing.
- Izenstark, D., Oswald, R. F., Holman, E. G., Mendez, S. N. and Greder, K. A. 2016. Rural, low-income mothers' use of family-based nature activities to promote family health. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 48(2): 134-155. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2019-002181> (Accessed 07 September 2024).
- Jennings, E. A., Farrell, M. T. and Kobayashi, L. C. 2021. Grandchild caregiving and cognitive health among grandparents in rural South Africa. *Journal of aging and health*, 33(9): 661-673. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/08982643211006592> (Accessed 04 September 2023).
- Jin, J. Y. and Kim, T. H. 2015. Current situation of postmenopausal grandmothers raising their grandchildren. *Journal of Menopausal Medicine*, 21(2): 72-78. Available: <https://doi.org/10.6118/jmm.2015.21.2.72> (Accessed 12 January 2024).
- Jochim, J., Groves, A. K. and Cluver, L. D. 2020. When do adolescent mothers return to school? Timing across rural and urban South Africa. *South African Medical Journal*, 110(9): 850-854. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7196%2FSAMJ.2020.v110i9.14664> (Accessed 17 December 2023).
- Jongenelis, M. I., Morley, B., Worrall, C. and Talati, Z. 2021. Grandparents' perceptions of the barriers and strategies to providing their grandchildren with a healthy diet: A qualitative study. *Appetite*, 159, 105. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2020.105061> (Accessed 20 July 2024).
- Jongenelis, M. I., Talati, Z., Morley, B. and Pratt, I. S. 2019. The role of grandparents as providers of food to their grandchildren. *Appetite*, 134, 78-85. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2018.12.022>
- Kahn, S. and Denov, M. 2022. Transgenerational trauma in Rwandan genocidal rape survivors and their children: A culturally enhanced bioecological approach. *Transcultural*

*psychiatry*, 59(6): 727-739. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615221080231> (Accessed 10 December 2023).

Kahya, O. and Ekinici, C. E. 2018. In their own words: School lives of children with an imprisoned parent. *International journal of educational development*, 62, 165-173. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2018.04.002> (Accessed 25 July 2023).

Kalomo, E. N. and Taukeni, S. G. 2022. Elderly grandparents as caregivers of children affected or infected by HIV and AIDS in Namibia. In *Research anthology on supporting healthy aging in a digital society*, 1388-1399. IGI Global.

Kang'ethe, S., Mugedya, S. and Nomngcoyiya, T. 2022. Experiences of grandmothers looking after grandchildren exhibiting delinquent behaviours in hill crest location, Alice township, Eastern Cape: implications for social work. *Social Work*, 58(3): 29-38. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15270/58-3-1058> (Accessed 15 April 2023).

Katz, B. 2019. A COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE COGNITIVE FUNCTION IN RURAL APPALACHIAN OLDER ADULTS. *Innovation in Aging*, 3(1): 553. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igz038.2039> (Accessed 01 October 2024).

Kaufman, A. V., Scogin, F. R., Burgio, L. D., Morthland, M. P. and Ford, B. K. 2006. Providing mental health services to older people living in rural communities. *Journal of gerontological social work*, 48(3-4): 349-365. Available: [https://doi.org/10.1300/j083v48n03\\_05](https://doi.org/10.1300/j083v48n03_05) (Accessed 07 September 2024).

Kearabetswe, M. Z. and Grace, K. 2019. Parental absence: Intergenerational tensions and contestations of social grants in South Africa. *Critical Social Policy*, 39(4): 52-54. Available: [https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0261018319867583?casa\\_token=YBeQqJD3Cd0AAAAA:UWof2YqwbBg8kIs8KoTWRaefuvkueuSNoCTAkHe\\_t5GZYWssyKJfOyIbDvHulEN AiloDdcScp-3V0w](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0261018319867583?casa_token=YBeQqJD3Cd0AAAAA:UWof2YqwbBg8kIs8KoTWRaefuvkueuSNoCTAkHe_t5GZYWssyKJfOyIbDvHulEN AiloDdcScp-3V0w) (Accessed 02 April 2023).

Keim, S. A., Parrott, A. and Mason, R. E. 2022. Mental health and parenting demands among grandparent caregivers of young US children. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 1-12. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2022.2094153> (Accessed 18 March 2023).

Keller, P. S., Bi, S. and Schoenberg, N. 2019. Children being reared by their grandparents in rural Appalachia: A pilot study of relations between psychosocial stress and changes in

salivary markers of inflammation over time. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, 12, 269-277. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-018-0214-z> (Accessed 12 January 2024).

Kelley, S. J., Whitley, D. M. and Campos, P. E. 2013. Psychological distress in African American grandmothers raising grandchildren: The contribution of child behavior problems, physical health, and family resources. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 36(4): 373-385. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.21542> (Accessed 20 October 2023).

Kelly, G., Mrengqwa, L. and Geffen, L. 2019. "They don't care about us": older people's experiences of primary healthcare in Cape Town, South Africa. *BMC geriatrics*, 19, 1-14. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-019-1116-0> (Accessed 08 December 2023).

Khalil, M. and Alameddine, M. 2020. Recruitment and retention strategies, policies, and their barriers: a narrative review in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. *Health Science Reports*, 3(4): 192. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/hsr2.192> (Accessed 06 December 2023).

Kim, H. J. 2018. Grandparents providing care for grandchildren and employment status of grandparents in South Korea. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 30(1): 49-61. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2016.1259443>.

Kim, H. J., Kang, H. and Johnson-Motoyama, M. 2017. The psychological well-being of grandparents who provide supplementary grandchild care: A systematic review. *Journal of Family Studies*, 23(1): 118-141. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2016.1194306> (Accessed 01 August 2023).

Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S. and Bradway, C. 2017. Characteristics of qualitative descriptive studies: A systematic review. *Research in nursing & health*, 40(1): 23-42. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.21768> (Accessed 19 September 2024).

Kim, J., Spangler, T. L. and Gutter, M. S. 2016. Extended families: Support, socialization, and stress. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 45(1): 104-118. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcsr.12187> (Accessed 29 October 2023).

Kinsner, K., Parlakian, R. and MacLaughlin, S., 2017. Grandparents Who Care. *Zero to Three*, Washington, DC.

- Kiraly, M., Green, J. and Hamilton, T. 2020. Towards real support for all Australian children in kinship care and their carers. *Children Australia*, 45(2): 97-100. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1017/cha.2020.21> (Accessed 11 January 2024).
- Knight, L. and Yamin, A. E. 2015. "Without a mother": caregivers and community members' views about the impacts of maternal mortality on families in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Reproductive health*, 12, 1-11. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1186/1742-4755-12-s1-s5> (Accessed 13 August 2024).
- Kolomer, S. R. and Lynch, K. Y. 2007. Challenges for grandparent housing programs. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 49(1-2): 65-79. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J083v49n01\\_04](https://doi.org/10.1300/J083v49n01_04) (Accessed 07 September 2024).
- Kornhaber, A. and Woodward, K. L. 2019. *Grandparents/grandchildren: The vital connection*. New York: Routledge.
- Krichene, H., Geiger, T., Frieler, K., Willner, S.N., Sauer, I. and Otto, C. 2021. Long-term impacts of tropical cyclones and fluvial floods on economic growth—Empirical evidence on transmission channels at different levels of development. *World Development*, 144, 105. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2021.105475> (Accessed 02 August 2023).
- Kropf, N. P. and Burnette, D. 2018. Grandparents as family caregivers: Lessons for intergenerational education. *Educational Gerontology*, 29(4): 361-372. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/713844334> (Accessed 29 August 2023).
- Kumar, Y. and Bhakat, P. 2021. Aging and social networks: A perspective on gender disparity in India. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 33(5): 522-540. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2020.1718581> (Accessed 08 December 2023).
- Kusano, K., Ohno, T. and Kohtake, N. 2014, October. Participatory design process to solve social issues in local community: a use case. In *Proceedings of the 13th Participatory Design Conference: Short Papers, Industry Cases, Workshop Descriptions, Doctoral Consortium papers, and Keynote abstracts*, 2, 123-126. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1145/2662155.2662233> (Accessed 01 October 2024).
- Kutoane, M., Brysiewicz, P. and Scott, T. 2021. Interventions for managing professional isolation among health professionals in low resource environments: a scoping review. *Health*

*Science Reports*, 4(3): 361. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/hsr2.361> (Accessed 06 December 2023).

Kwan, C., Walsh, C. A. and Donaldson, R. 2018 'Old age poverty: A scoping review of the literature', *Cogent Social Sciences*, 4(1): 147-148. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2018.1478479> (Accessed 30 July 2023).

L'Heureux, T., Parmar, J., Dobbs, B., Charles, L., Tian, P.G.J., Sacrey, L.A. and Anderson, S., 2022, June. Rural family caregiving: A closer look at the impacts of health, care work, financial distress, and social loneliness on anxiety. In *Healthcare*, 10(7): 1155. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare10071155> (Accessed 28 July 2024).

Ladner, J. A. 2020. *Teenage pregnancy: The implication for black Americans*. In *State of Black America-1986*. New York: Routledge.

Layman, H. M., Thorisdottir, I. E., Halldorsdottir, T., Sigfusdottir, I. D., Allegrante, J. P. and Kristjansson, A. L. 2022. Substance use among youth during the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic review. *Current psychiatry reports*, 24(6): 307-324. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11920-022-01338-z> (Accessed 21 November 2023).

Lechtenberg, U. 2013. Research Guides: Organizing Academic Research Papers: Theoretical Framework. Available: <https://www.library.sacredheart.edu/c.php?g=29803&p=185919> (Accessed 15 August 2024).

Lee, Y. and Blitz, L. 2022. 'Kufunika kwa mtundu/fuko'(Family circle): Understanding experiences of grandparents raising grandchildren in Malawi. *International Social Work*, 65(4): 773-786. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872820959360> (Accessed 26 November 2024).

Lee, Y., Anderson, E., Quranta, J. and Shim, B. 2018. An interdisciplinary family-centered program: An innovative approach to better meet the multifaceted needs of grandparent-headed families. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 21(3): 227-243. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10522158.2017.1300111> (Accessed 03 October 2024).

Leeson, G. W. 2020. *Global demographic change and grandparenthood*. In *The Role of Grandparents in the 21st Century*. London: Routledge.

Li, Y., Cui, N., Kok, H. T. Deatrck, J. and Liu, J. 2019. The relationship between parenting styles practiced by grandparents and children's emotional and behavioral problems. *Journal*

of *Child and Family Studies*, 28, 189-191. Available:

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10826-019-01415-7> (Accessed 02 June 2023).

Li, Y., Westlund, H. and Liu, Y. 2019. Why some rural areas decline while some others not: An overview of rural evolution in the world. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 68, 135-143. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2019.03.003> (Accessed 25 June 2023).

Lightfoot, M., Wu, N., Hughes, S., Desmond, K., Tevendale, H. and Stevens, R. 2018. Risk factors for substance use among youth experiencing homelessness. *Journal of child & adolescent substance abuse*, 27(5-6): 288-296. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1067828X.2018.1500964> (Accessed 28 November 2023).

Lim, S. and Kim, H. 2020. Housing experiences of families with children living in poor and overcrowded housing in Korea. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 118, 105. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105437> (Accessed 11 August 2024).

Liu, Z., Heffernan, C. and Tan, J. 2020. Caregiver burden: A concept analysis. *International journal of nursing sciences*, 7(4): 438-445. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2020.07.012> (Accessed 01 October 2024).

Lloyd, J, S., Bangalore, M., Chaladi, Z., Kovats, R, S., Hallegatte, S. and Ronber, J. 2019.

Potential impacts of climate change on child stunting via income and food price in 2030: a global-level model. Available: [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2542-5196\(19\)30144-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2542-5196(19)30144-5) (Accessed 27 July 2023).

Lo, T. W. and Chan, G. H. 2023. Understanding the life experiences of elderly in social isolation from the social systems perspective: using Hong Kong as an illustrating example. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 14, 114-135. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2023.1114135> (Accessed 02 February 2024).

Lobe, B., Morgan, D. L. and Hoffman, K. 2022. A systematic comparison of in-person and video-based online interviewing. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 160.

Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221127068> (Accessed 12 October 2024).

Long, J. C., Delamater, P. L. and Holmes, G. M. 2021. Which definition of rurality should I use?: The relative performance of 8 federal rural definitions in identifying rural-urban disparities. *Medical Care*, 59, 413-419. Available: <https://journals.lww.com/lww->

[medicalcare/fulltext/2021/10001/Addressing\\_Structural\\_Racism\\_in\\_the\\_Health.4.aspx?context=LatestArticles](https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480717731347) (Accessed 12 June 2023).

Louie, A. D., Cromer, L. D. and Berry, J. O. 2017. Assessing parenting stress: Review of the use and interpretation of the parental stress scale. *The Family Journal*, 25(4): 359-367. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480717731347> (Accessed 12 June 2024).

Luna, S., Ramos, P. and Rivera, F. 2016. Coping strategies, stress and health of grandmothers caring for ascending and descending relatives/Afrontamiento, estrés y salud en abuelas cuidadoras de familiares ascendentes y descendentes. *Studies in Psychology*, 37(1): 90-114. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02109395.2015.1122435> (Accessed 12 October 2023).

Lyu, H., Dong, Z., Roobavannan, M., Kandasamy, J., and Pande, S. 2020. Prospects of interventions to alleviate rural–urban migration in Jiangsu Province, China based on sensitivity and scenario analysis. *Hydrological Sciences Journal*, 65(13): 215–218. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02626667.2020.1802030> (Accessed 17 July 2023).

Mabelane, W. K., Makofane, M. D. and Kgadima, N. P. 2019. Reflections of adult children raised in female-headed families. *Social Work*, 55(2): 156-237. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15270/52-2-713> (Accessed 15 April 2023).

Mabetha, K., De Wet-Billings, N. C. and Odimegwu, C. O. 2021. Healthcare beliefs and practices of kin caregivers in South Africa: implications for child survival. *BMC health services research*, 21(1): 486. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-021-06357-9> (Accessed 21 November 2023).

MacDonald, C. A., Aubel, J., Aidam, B. A. and Girard, A. W., 2020. Grandmothers as change agents: developing a culturally appropriate program to improve maternal and child nutrition in Sierra Leone. *Current Developments in Nutrition*, 4(1): 141. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdn/nzz141> (Accessed 04 August 2024).

MacDonald, M., Hayes, D. and Houston, S. 2018. Understanding informal kinship care: a critical narrative review of theory and research. *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 7(1): 71-87. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1332/204674316X14534751747496> (Accessed 21 November 2023).

- Madzivhandila, T. S. and Niyimbanira, F. 2020. RURAL ECONOMIES AND LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: EXPLORING PROSPECTS OF THE EMERGING CLIMATE CHANGE CRISIS. *International Journal of Economics and Finance Studies*, 12(1): 239-254. Available: <https://doi.org/10.34109/ijefs.202012115> (Accessed 01 August 2023).
- Makiwane, M., Gumede, N.A. and Makiwane, M. 2017. Grandparenting in Southern Africa. *Grandparents in Cultural Context*, 1-4.
- Makiwane, M., Gumede, N.A., Makoe, M. and Vawda, M. 2017. Family in a changing South Africa: structures, functions and the welfare of members. *South African Review of Sociology*, 48(2): 49-69. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21528586.2017.1288166> (Accessed 17 March 2024).
- Manderson, L. and Block, E. 2016. Relatedness and care in Southern Africa and beyond. *Social Dynamics*, 42(2): 205-217. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02533952.2016.1218139> (Accessed 13 August 2024).
- Mansson, D. H. 2020. Relational maintenance and caregiving in the grandparent-grandchild relationship. *Communication Research Reports*, 37(1-2): 1-10. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08824096.2020.1736540> (Accessed 07 July 2024).
- Manyuma, D., Maluleke, M., Raliphaswa, N. S., Masutha, T. C., Rangwaneni, M. E., Thabathi, T. E. and Lavhelani, N. R. 2023. Caring for children with cerebral palsy: A challenge to caregivers in rural areas of South Africa. *Children*, 10(3): 440. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3390/children10030440> (Accessed 11 January 2024).
- Margolis, R., 2016. The changing demography of grandparenthood. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 78(3): 610-622. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12286> (Accessed 17 June 2024).
- Martin, A., Albrechtsons, D., MacDonald, N., Aumeerally, N. and Wong, T., 2021. Becoming parents again: Challenges affecting grandparent primary caregivers raising their grandchildren. *Paediatrics & Child Health*, 26(4): 166-171. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/pch/pxaa0523> (Accessed 03 June 2023).
- Matsa, W. and Matsa, W. 2020. The Impact of Migration on the Family and Children's Rights: Gendered Perspective. *Marginality, Migration and Education: Educational Experiences of*

*Migrants' Children in Zimbabwe*: 79-93. Available:

[https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-60873-6\\_8](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-60873-6_8) (Accessed 26 April 2023).

Mattsson, M., Fernee, C.R., Pärnänen, K. and Lyytinen, P. 2022. Restoring connectedness in and to nature: three nordic examples of recontextualizing family therapy to the outdoors. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 76-86. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.768614> (Accessed 21 November 2023).

Maurice, J. 2014. South Africa's battle against HIV/AIDS gains momentum. *The Lancet*, 383(9928): 1535-1536. Available:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(14\)60733-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(14)60733-9/fulltext)

(Accessed 12 December 2023).

Maxwell, J. A. 2021. Why qualitative methods are necessary for generalization. *Qualitative Psychology*, 8(1): 111. Available: <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/qup0000173> (Accessed 19 September 2024).

Mayfield, K. E., Whitley, D. and Kelley, S. J. 2019. NUTRITIONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN CUSTODIAL GRANDMOTHERS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY. *Innovation in Aging*, 3(1): 628. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igz038.2343> (Accessed 16 September 2023).

Mazhar, S. A., Anjum, R., Anwar, A. I. and Khan, A. A. 2021. Methods of data collection: A fundamental tool of research. *Journal of Integrated Community Health (ISSN 2319-9113)*, 10(1): 6-10. Available: <http://medicaljournalshouse.com/index.php/ADR-CommunityHealth/article/view/631>

(Accessed 20 June 2023).

Mbemba, G. I. C., Gagnon, M. P. and Hamelin-Brabant, L. 2016. Factors influencing recruitment and retention of healthcare workers in rural and remote areas in developed and developing countries: an overview. *Journal of public health in Africa*, 7(2). Available:

<https://doi.org/10.4081/jphia.2016.565> (Accessed 12 December 2023).

McCarthy, L. P. 2021. Attention to gender and race in interventions for custodial grandparents: A scoping review. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, 33(4): 295-314. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08952833.2021.1880186> (Accessed 21 October 2023).

- McGrath, C., Palmgren, P.J. and Liljedahl, M. 2019. Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical teacher*, 41(9): 1002-1006. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159x.2018.1497149> (Accessed 12 October 2024).
- McLaughlin, B., Ryder, D. and Taylor, M. F. 2017. Effectiveness of interventions for grandparent caregivers: A systematic review. *Marriage & Family Review*, 53(6): 509-531. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2016.1177631> (Accessed 10 December 2023).
- Mefteh, K. Y. and Shenkute, B. K. 2022. Experience of Rural Family Caregivers for Older Adults in Co-Residential Family Care Arrangements in Central Ethiopia: Motives of Family Caregivers in Reciprocal Relationship. *Patient preference and adherence*, 247-248. Available: <https://doi.org/10.2147/PPA.S378153> (Accessed 30 August 2023).
- Mendoza, A. N., Fruhauf, C. A. and MacPhee, D. 2020. Grandparent caregivers' resilience: Stress, support, and coping predict life satisfaction. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 91(1): 3-20. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091415019843459> (Accessed 01 December 2023).
- Metsä-Simola, N., Baranowska-Rataj, A., Remes, H., Kühn, M. and Martikainen, P. 2024. Grandparental support and maternal depression: Do grandparents' characteristics matter more for separating mothers?. *Population Studies*, 1-21. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00324728.2023.2287493> (Accessed 12 January 2024).
- Meyer, H. M. and Kandic, A. 2017 "Grandparenting in the United States," University of Oxford, 1(2). Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igx023> (Accessed 17 June 2024).
- Meyer, H. M. and Abdul-Malak, Y. 2015. Single-headed family economic vulnerability and reliance on social programs. *Public Policy & Aging Report*, 25(3): 102-106. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ppar/prv013> (Accessed 02 July 2024).
- Mhaka-Mutepfa, M., Mpofu, E. and Cumming, R. 2015. Impact of protective factors on resilience of grandparent carers fostering orphans and non-orphans in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Aging and Health*, 27(3): 454-479. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0898264314551333> (Accessed 12 January 2024).
- Milan, M. J. and Bridges, C. W. 2019. Conflict in the Multicultural Counseling Classroom: Counselor Educators' Experiences. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 9(1): 234-245. Available: <https://doi.org/10.5590/jerap.2019.09.1.17> (Accessed 15 August 2024).

Milian, E. Z., Spinola, M. D. M. and de Carvalho, M. M. 2019. Fintechs: A literature review and research agenda. *Electronic commerce research and applications*, 34: 10-83. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eierap.2019.100833> (Accessed 20 October 2023).

Miller, A. L., Perryman, J., Markovitz, L., Franzen, S., Cochran, S. and Brown, S. 2013. Strengthening incarcerated families: Evaluating a pilot program for children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers. *Family relations*, 62(4): 584-596. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12029> (Accessed 27 December 2023).

Minkler, M. and Fuller-Thomson, E., 2019. The health of grandparents raising grandchildren: results of a national study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 89(9): 1384-1389.

Minkler, M. and Roe, K. M. 2017. *Grandmothers as caregivers: Raising children of the crack cocaine epidemic*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Minkler, M., Berrick, J.D. and Needell, B. 2014. Impacts of welfare reform on California grandparents raising grandchildren: Reflections from the field. *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*, 10(3): 45-63. Available: [https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J031v10n03\\_04](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J031v10n03_04). (Accessed 20 November 2023).

Mishra, N., Datti, R. S., Tewari, A. and Sirisety, M. 2023. Exploring the positive aspects of caregiving among family caregivers of the older adults in India. *Frontiers in public health*, 11, 105. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1059459> (Accessed 17 March 2024).

Mkhwanazi, N. and Mpanza, S., 2020. Examining the nature of disaster risk reduction strategies in local municipalities: a case study of Ndwedwe Local Municipality. *PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES (IPADA)*, 423.

Mlambo, M. G. and Peltzer, K. 2020. Perceptions of grandmothers and HIV-infected mothers on infant feeding practices in a rural South African district. *Health SA Gesondheid*, 25. Available: <https://doi.org/10.4102/hsag.v25i0.1372>. (Accessed 26 August 2023).

Mohale, N. F. 2013. The burden of grandparenting: caring for AIDS-orphaned grandchildren in Lephalale, South Africa. Doctoral dissertation, University of Limpopo.

Montoro-Rodriguez, J., Hayslip Jr, B., Ramsey, J. and Jooste, J. L. 2021. The utility of solution-oriented strategies to support grandparents raising grandchildren. *Journal of Aging and Health*, 33(9): 647-660. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/08982643211004817> (Accessed 20 November 2023).

- Moore, J., Goffin, P., Wiese, J. and Meyer, M. 2021. An interview method for engaging personal data. *Proceedings of the ACM on Interactive, Mobile, Wearable and Ubiquitous Technologies*, 5(4): 1-28. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1145/3494964> (Accessed 12 October 2024).
- Motsa, N. D. and Morojele, P. J. 2022. Grandparents raising their grandchildren: Implications for the vulnerable children of Eswatini. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 12(1): 1024. Available: <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.4102/sajce.v12i1.1024> (Accessed 30 August 2023).
- Mthembu, L. B., Myburgh, C. P. and Poggenpoel, M. 2020. Experiences of Grandmothers Raising Their Orphaned Adolescent Grandsons. *Africa Journal of Nursing & Midwifery*, 22(2): 5. Available: <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.25159/2520-5293/6200> (Accessed 13 March 2023).
- Mtshali, G, N, M. 2015. "The Relationship Between Grandparents and Their Grandchildren in the Black Families in South Africa," *Journal of comparative family studies*, 46(1): 75-83. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.46.1.75> (Accessed 29 July 2023).
- Mtshali, M. N. G. 2016. Role reversal of rural black grandparents in South Africa. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 47(3): 369-377. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.47.3.369> (Accessed 29 July 2023).
- Mueller, J. T. Gasteyer, S. 2023. The ethnically and racially uneven role of water infrastructure spending in rural economic development. *Nat Water* 1, 74–82. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44221-022-00007-y> (Accessed 2.9 July 2023).
- Mugedya, S., Kang'ethe, S.M. and Nomngcoyiya, T. 2020. The Coping Mechanisms Employed by Grandparent-Headed Families in Addressing Juvenile Delinquency in Hill Crest, Alice Township, Eastern Cape Province. *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, 19(4): 525-540. Available: [https://brill.com/view/journals/pgdt/19/4/article-p525\\_6.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/pgdt/19/4/article-p525_6.xml) (Accessed 29 July 2024).
- Mukti, I. Y., Iacob, M. E., Aldea, A., Govindaraju, R. and van Hillegersberg, J. 2021. Defining rural smartness and its impact: A systematic literature review. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 1-52. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13132-021-00736-7> (Accessed 29 June 2023).

- Munien, S. 2016. Assessing community needs in relation to rural tourism potential in South Africa: a case study of Ndwedwe Municipality. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 5(3): 1-14. Available: [https://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article\\_21\\_vol\\_5\\_3\\_final.pdf](https://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_21_vol_5_3_final.pdf) (Accessed 05 October 2024).
- Munien, S., Phungula, S. and Bob, U. 2018. Tourism potential, economic impacts and implications in marginalised areas in Ndwedwe Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *EuroEconomica*, 37(2): 63-75. Available: <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=728413> (Accessed 05 October 2024).
- Murimba, L., 2020. The role of community care workers in supporting the resilience of grandparent-headed families. Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria. Available: <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/87966> (Accessed 03 May 2023).
- Murovhi, A., Matshidze, P., Netshandama, V. and Klu, E. 2018. Traditional child rearing practices in Vhavenda families South Africa. *Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa (JGIDA)*, 7(1): 21-37. Available: <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-ee9c60c03> (Accessed 05 August 2024).
- Muruthi, J. R., Dolbin-MacNab, M. L. and Jarrott, S. E. 2021. Social capital among Black South African grandmothers raising grandchildren. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 40(10): 1280-1287. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0733464820966474> (Accessed 05 December 2023).
- Musil, C. M., Gordon, N. L., Warner, C. B., Zauszniewski, J. A., Standing, T. and Wykle, M. 2011. Grandmothers and caregiving to grandchildren: Continuity, change, and outcomes over 24 months. *The Gerontologist*, 51(1): 86-100. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnq061> (Accessed 12 November 2023).
- Mwita, K. 2022. Factors influencing data saturation in qualitative studies. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147-4478)*, 11(4): 414-420. Available: <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v11i4.1776> (Accessed 21 June 2023).
- Nakash, M., Baruchson-Arbib, S. and Bouhnik, D. 2022. A holistic model of the role, development, and future of knowledge management: Proposal for exploratory

- research. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 29(1): 23-30. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/kpm.1694> (Accessed 03 March 2023).
- Nassaji, H., 2020. Good qualitative research. *Language Teaching Research*, 24(4): 427-431. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820941288> (Accessed 19 September 2024).
- Nattrass, N. 2020. In Defence of Exploratory Eesearch: A Reply to Critics. *South African Journal of Science*, 116(4): 1-36. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2020/8604> (Accessed 2 October 2024).
- Ndaa, P. O., Kwakye, A. H. and Shann, S. 2021. Beading as a therapeutic activity in Ghana. *World Federation of Occupational Therapists Bulletin*, 77(1): 36-39. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14473828.2020.1846876> (Accessed 11 August 2024).
- Neelam, K., Sunil, K., Monika, M., Saurabh, S., Pankaj, K. and Mohammad, S. M. 2019. Profile and Pattern of Substance Abusers: Substance Abuse, A Global Problem. *Sch J Psychol & Behav Sci*, 2(1). Available: <https://doi.org/10.32474/SJPBS.2019.02.000127> (Accessed 16 September 2023).
- Neema, S, and Annet N. 2020. In need of care but providers of care: Grandparents giving fulltime care to their grandchildren in rural Uganda. *Anthropol Open J*. 4(1): 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.17140/ANTPOJ-4-119> (Accessed 20 August 2023).
- Neema, S., 2020. In need of care but providers of care: Grandparents giving fulltime care to their grandchildren in rural Uganda. *aging*, 7, 1-8. Available: <https://doi.org/10.17140/antpoj-4-119> (Accessed 26 July 2024).
- Nelson, J. R., Ess, R.H., Dickerson, T. T., Gren, L. H., Benson, L. S., Manortey, S.O. and Alder, S. C. 2022. Strategies to increase rural maternal utilization of skilled health personnel for childbirth delivery in low-and middle-income countries: a narrative review. *Global Health Action*, 15(1): 205. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2022.2058170> (Accessed 20 August 2023).
- Nelson, K. S., Nguyen, T. D., Brownstein, N. A., Garcia, D., Walker, H. C., Watson, J. T. and Xin, A. 2021. Definitions, measures, and uses of rurality: A systematic review of the empirical and quantitative literature. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 82, 351-365. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.01.035> (Accessed 20 June 2023).

- Neuert, C., Meitinger, K., Behr, D. and Schonlau, M. 2021. Editorial: The Use of Open-ended Questions in Surveys. *Methods, data, analyses : a journal for quantitative methods and survey methodology (mda)*, 15(1): 3-6. <https://nbnresolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssaoar-73172-3> (Accessed 2 October 2024).
- Ngumbela, X. G. 2021. Unique challenges of the poverty dilemma in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 12(1): 114-131. Available: [https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-ajpa\\_v12\\_n1\\_a8](https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-ajpa_v12_n1_a8) (Accessed 25 October 2023).
- Nguru, M. M. and Maina, S. M. 2020. Social-cultural impact of bead work in East Africa: the nexus between the Dinka, Samburu & Masaai ethnicities. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 9(7): 87-94. Available: [https://web.archive.org/web/20210428080734/http://www.internationaljournalcorner.com/index.php/ijird\\_ojs/article/download/154488/107116](https://web.archive.org/web/20210428080734/http://www.internationaljournalcorner.com/index.php/ijird_ojs/article/download/154488/107116) (Accessed 11 August 2024).
- Nili, A., Tate, M. and Johnstone, D. 2017. A framework and approach for analysis of focus group data in information systems research. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 40.
- Nkosi, N. N. 2020. The debates on social reproduction in South Africa focusing on grandmother headed households in Diepkloof, Soweto. Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.
- Noriega, C., Velasco, C., Pérez-Rojo, G. and López, J. 2022. Character strengths and social support as protective factors between grandparents' caregiving and health-related quality of life. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 1-13. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10826-021-02187-9> (Accessed 29 July 2024).
- Nozikova, N. V. 2020. Family model based on the system approach. In *International Scientific Conference "Far East Con"(ISCFEC 2020)*. Paris: Atlantis Press. 1437-1443.
- Nsibandze, B. S., Downing, C., Poggenpoel, M. and Myburgh, C.P., 2020. Experiences of grandmothers caring for female adolescents living with HIV in rural Manzini, Eswatini: a caregiver stress model perspective. *African Journal of AIDS Research*, 19(2): 123-134. Available: <https://doi.org/10.2989/16085906.2020.1758735> (Accessed 02 June 2023).
- Ntuli, B., Sebola, E. and Madiba, S. 2020, August. Responding to maternal loss: A phenomenological study of older orphans in youth-headed households in impoverished areas

- of South Africa. In *Healthcare*, 8(3): 259. MDPI. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare8030259> (Accessed 10 December 2023).
- Ntuli, M. and Madiba, S., 2019. The burden of caring: an exploratory study of the older persons caring for adult children with AIDS-related illnesses in rural communities in South Africa. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(17): 31-62. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16173162> (Accessed 29 July 2023).
- Nyumba, T., Wilson, K., Derrick, C. J. and Mukherjee, N. 2018. The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of application in conservation. *Methods in Ecology and evolution*, 9(1): 20-32. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/2041-210X.12860> (Accessed 16 October 2024).
- Odimegwu, C. O., Wet, N. D., Adedini, S. A. and Appunni, S. 2020. Family demography in sub-Saharan Africa: Systematic review of family research. *Family demography and post-2015 development agenda in Africa*, 9-56. Available: [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-14887-4\\_2](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-14887-4_2) (Accessed 17 June 2023).
- Oduaran, A. and Oduaran, C. 2018. Grandparents functional capacity in mitigating challenges experienced by children orphaned by HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 7(1): 203-216. Available: <https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.31920/2050-4950/2018/s1n1a11> (Accessed 02 December 2023).
- Ogunbameru, O.A., 2003. Focus groups: Issues and approaches. *The Anthropologist*, 5(1): 1-8. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09720073.2003.11890771> (Accessed 16 October 2024).
- Okidegbe, N. 2021. Attacking Rural Poverty: Strategy and Public Actions. *Rural Development Note*, 6, 1-4. Available: <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/903231468764970044/attacking-rural-poverty-strategy-and-public-actions>. (Accessed 12 November 2023).
- Olmos-Vega, F. M., Stalmeijer, R. E., Varpio, L. and Kahlke, R. 2023. A practical guide to reflexivity in qualitative research: AMEE Guide No. 149. *Medical teacher*, 45(3): 241-251. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2022.2057287> (Accessed 02 October 2024).
- Oman, C. J., Alcasid, J.K., Dagooc, A. F., Delima, J. and Cutamora, A. 2024. Exploring the lived experiences of grandparents as primary caregivers to their grandchildren: a

- phenomenological study. *Canadian Journal of Research, Society and Development*, 1(1): 8-12.
- Packer, M. J. 2017. *The science of qualitative research*. Cambridge University Press.
- Palaganas, E. C., Sanchez, M. C., Molintas, M. V. P. and Caricativo, R. D. 2017. Reflexivity in qualitative research. Available: <https://doi.org/10.46743/> (Accessed 2 October 2024).
- Pandey, A., Littlewood, K., Cooper, L., McCrae, J., Rosenthal, M., Day, A. and Hernandez, L. 2019. Connecting older grandmothers raising grandchildren with community resources improves family resiliency, social support, and caregiver self-efficacy. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 31(3): 269-283. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2018.1444940> (Accessed 30 November 2023).
- Pandialagappan, T. and Ibrahim, R. 2018. Theories of grandparental stress. *Journal of Business and Social Review in Emerging Economies*, 4(1): 101-106. Available: <https://doi.org/10.26710/jbsee.v4i1.372> (Accessed 03 October 2024).
- Pantano, E. and Vannucci, V. 2019. Who is innovating? An exploratory research of digital technologies diffusion in retail industry. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 49: 297-304. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.019> (Accessed 2 October 2024).
- Park, E. H. 2018. For grandparents' sake: The relationship between grandparenting involvement and psychological well-being. *Ageing international*, 43(3): 297-320.
- Park, H. O. H. 2006. The economic well-being of households headed by a grandmother as caregiver. *Social Service Review*, 80(2): 264-296. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1086/503122> (Accessed 02 July 2024).
- Parker, A. 2020. Family, Caregiver. In *Encyclopedia of Behavioral Medicine*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Patino, C. M. and Ferreira, J. C. 2018. Inclusion and exclusion criteria in research studies: definitions and why they matter. *Jornal Brasileiro de Pneumologia*, 44, 84. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1806-37562018000000088> (Accessed 22 June 2023).
- Patterson, K., Maxwell, J. and Proft, K. 2019. Older Women's Risk of Homelessness: Background Paper. Available: <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2019-04/apo-nid232951.pdf> (Accessed 08 December 2023).

- Pearson, N., Naylor, P. J., Ashe, M. C., Fernandez, M., Yoong, S. L. and Wolfenden, L. 2020. Guidance for conducting feasibility and pilot studies for implementation trials. *Pilot and feasibility studies*, 1-12. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40814-020-00634-w> (Accessed 20 June 2023).
- Pearson, R. M., Culpin, I., Loret de Mola, C., Matijasevich, A., Santos, I. S., Horta, B. L., Barros, F. C. and Stein, A. 2019. Grandmothers' mental health is associated with grandchildren's emotional and behavioral development: a three-generation prospective study in Brazil. *BMC psychiatry*, 19, 1-10. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-019-2166-8> (Accessed 16 November 2023).
- Pecora, P. J., Whittaker, J. K., Barth, R.P., Borja, S. and Vesneski, W. 2018. *The child welfare challenge: Policy, practice, and research*. Routledge.
- Pedersen, G. A., Smallegange, E., Coetzee, A., Hartog, K., Turner, J., Jordans, M. J. and Brown, F. L. 2019. A systematic review of the evidence for family and parenting interventions in low-and middle-income countries: child and youth mental health outcomes. *Journal of child and family studies*, 28, 2036-2055. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10826-019-01399-4> (Accessed 19 December 2023).
- Peterson, T. L. 2017. Changes in health perceptions among older grandparents raising adolescent grandchildren. *Social Work in Public Health*, 32(6): 394-406. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19371918.2017.1327389> (Accessed 11 August 2024)
- Peterson, T. L. and Starks, S. H. 2014. The contextual experiences of rural custodial grandparents and opportunities for social work. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 17(2): 175-188. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10522158.2014.881764> (Accessed 02 December 2023).
- Peterson, T. L., Scott, C. B., Ombayo, B., Davis, T. and Sullivan, D. 2019. Biggest concerns of school personnel about students raised by grandparents. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 102: 201-209. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.05.004> (Accessed 17 March 2023).
- Phillippi, J. and Lauderdale, J. 2018. A guide to field notes for qualitative research: Context and conversation. *Qualitative health research*, 28(3): 381-388. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732317697102> (Accessed 05 October 2024).

- Phillips, D. L. and Alexander-Eitzman, B. 2016. Intersections of poverty, geography, and custodial grandparent caregiving in Appalachia. *GrandFamilies: The Contemporary Journal of Research, Practice and Policy*, 3(1), 3. Available <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/grandfamilies/vol3/iss1/3> (Accessed 18 October 2023).
- Pinzon, J. L., Jones, V.F., Committee on Adolescence, Committee on Early Childhood, Blythe, M. J., Adelman, W.P., Breuner, C. C., Levine, D. A., Marcell, A. V., Murray, P. J. and O'Brien, R. F. 2012. Care of adolescent parents and their children. *Pediatrics*, 130(6): 1743-1756. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2012-2879> (Accessed 12 December 2023).
- Pitrone, A. M. 2020. Kinship Voices: Listening to Grandparent Caregivers Raising School-Age Children. Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh.
- Pittman, L. 2015. How well does the “safety net” work for family safety nets? Economic survival strategies among grandmother caregivers in severe deprivation. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 1(1): 78-97. Available: <https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2015.1.1.05> (Accessed 18 October 2023).
- Polvere, L., Barnes, C. and Lee, E. 2018. Housing needs of grandparent caregivers: Grandparent, youth, and professional perspectives. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 61(5): 549-566. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2018.1454566> (Accessed 01 August 2024).
- Pote, C., Swart, E. and Carelse, S. 2021. Food insecurity and hunger: The experiences of child-headed households in a selected community in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. *Assessing the Impact of the Transition Process on Care Leavers of Udayan*, 5. Available: [https://foodsecurity.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/RCYCP-34\\_4.pdf#page=5](https://foodsecurity.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/RCYCP-34_4.pdf#page=5) (Accessed 17 April 2023).
- Powers, M. E., Takagishi, J., Alderman, E. M., Chung, R. J., Grubb, L. K., Lee, J., Upadhya, K. K., Wallace, S. B., Alderman, S. L., Sells, J. M. and Glusman, M. 2021. Care of adolescent parents and their children. *Pediatrics*, 147(5). Available: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2021-050919> (Accessed 13 December 2023).
- Profe, W. and Wild, L. G. 2017. Mother, father, and grandparent involvement: Associations with adolescent mental health and substance use. *Journal of Family Issues*, 38(6): 776-797.

- Prokos, A. H. and Keene, J. R. 2018. The life course and cumulative disadvantage: poverty among grandmother-headed families. *Research on Aging*, 34(5): 592-621. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0164027511423383> (Accessed 18 October 2023).
- Purcal, C., Brennan, D., Cass, B. and Jenkins, B. 2014. Grandparents raising grandchildren: Impacts of lifecourse stage on the experiences and costs of care. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 49(4): 467-488. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1839-4655.2014.tb00324.x> (Accessed 16 November 2023).
- Rahman, M. M. 2023. Sample size determination for survey research and non-probability sampling techniques: A review and set of recommendations. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Business and Economics*, 11(1): 42-62. Available: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7414-8281> (Accessed 22 June 2024).
- Rajpoot, H. A. and Chaudhry, A. G. 2020. Parental Conflict and Role of Child Protection & Welfare Bureau on Children's Life. *Global Regional Review*, 1, 269-278.
- Randolph, J. 2019. A guide to writing the dissertation literature review. *Practical assessment, research, and evaluation*, 14(1): 13. Available: <https://doi.org/10.7275/b0az-8t74> (Accessed 20 October 2023).
- Rapoport, E., Muthiah, N., Keim, S. A. and Adesman, A. 2020. Family well-being in grandparent-versus parent-headed households. *Pediatrics*, 146(3). Available: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-0115> (Accessed 13 March 2023).
- Reid, A. M., Brown, J. M., Smith, J. M., Cope, A. C. and Jamieson, S. 2018. Ethical dilemmas and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Perspectives on medical education*, 7, 69-75. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-018-0412-2> (Accessed 02 October 2024).
- Reidolf, M. and Graffenberger, M. 2019. How local resources shape innovation and path development in rural regions. Insights from rural Estonia. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation*, 15(3): 131-162. Available: <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=795189> (Accessed 01 October 2024).
- Riem, M. M., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J., Cima, M. and van IJzendoorn, M. H. 2023. Grandparental support and maternal postpartum mental health: A review and meta-analysis. *Human Nature*, 34(1): 25-45. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12110-023-09440-8> (Accessed 21 November 2023).

Rocha, I. C. N. and Arcinas, M. M. 2020. Quality of life of Filipino caregivers of children in need of special protection: correlations with their role overload and role distress. *Journal of Caring Sciences*, 9(4): 173. Available: <https://doi.org/10.34172/jcs.2020.027> (Accessed 18 November 2023).

Rogers, A. 2021. *Grandparents in parental roles with grandchildren and social work practice* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University).

Rogers, E., Bell, L. and Mehta, K. 2019. Exploring the role of grandparents in the feeding of grandchildren aged 1–5 years. *Journal of nutrition education and Behavior*, 51(3): 300-306. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2018.08.016>

Roman, N. V., Isaacs, S. A., Davids, C. and Sui, X.C. 2016. How well are families doing? A description of family well-being in South Africa. *Family medicine and community health*, 4(3): 9-18. Available: <https://doi.org/10.15212/fmch.2016.0115> (Accessed 13 August 2024).

Roman, N. V., Schenck, C., Ryan, J., Brey, F., Henderson, N., Lukelelo, N., Minnaar-McDonald, M. and Saville, V. 2016. Relational aspects of family functioning and family satisfaction with a sample of families in the Western Cape. *Social Work*, 52(3): 303-312. Available: <https://doi.org/10.15270/52-3-511> (Accessed 13 August 2024).

Rosalina, P. D., Dupre, K. and Wang, Y., 2021. Rural tourism: A systematic literature review on definitions and challenges. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 47: 134-149. Available: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1447677021000322> (Accessed 20 October 2023).

Rowley, J. 2012. Conducting research interviews. *Management research review*, 35(3/4): 260-271. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1108/01409171211210154> (Accessed 12 October 2024).

Ruiz, D. S. and Kopak, A. 2014. The consequences of parental incarceration for African American mothers, children, and grandparent caregivers. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 7(6): 9-25. Available: <https://www.jpanafrican.org/docs/vol7no6/7.6-4-Ruiz-Oct26.pdf> (Accessed 25 July 2023).

Rutigliano, R. 2020. Counting on potential grandparents? Adult children's entry into parenthood across European countries. *Demography*, 57(4): 1393-1414. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-020-00890-8> (Accessed 02 July 2024).

- Sadrudin, A. F., Ponguta, L. A., Zonderman, A. L., Wiley, K. S., Grimshaw, A. and Panter-Brick, C. 2019. How do grandparents influence child health and development? A systematic review. *Social Science & Medicine*, 239: 112-476. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2019.112476> (Accessed 13 June 2023).
- Sano, Y. and Mammen, S. 2022. Mitigating the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on rural low-income families. *Journal of family and economic issues*, 43(2): 227-238. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-021-09800-5> (Accessed 01 October 2024).
- Sari, E. 2023. Multigenerational health perspectives: the role of grandparents' influence in grandchildren's wellbeing. *International Journal of Public Health*, 68, 160. Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10514349/>. (Accessed 31 October 2023).
- Sartorius, K., Sartorius, B. K., Collinson, M. A. and Tollman, S. M. 2014. The dynamics of household dissolution and change in socio-economic position: A survival model in a rural South Africa. *Development Southern Africa*, 31(6): 775-795. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2014.951991> (Accessed 12 August 2023).
- Saunders, L. W. and Mehanna, S. 2019. *Women-Headed Households from the Perspective of an Egyptian Village*. In *Where Did All the Men Go?* New York: Routledge. Available: <https://www.cogitatiopress.com/socialinclusion/article/view/2674> (Accessed 13 March 2023).
- Schatz, E. and Ogunmefun, C. 2007. Caring and contributing: The role of older women in rural South African multi-generational households in the HIV/AIDS era. *World Development*, 35(8): 1390-1403. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2007.04.004> (Accessed 01 August 2023).
- Schrijner, S. and Smits, J. 2018. Grandmothers and children's schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Human Nature*, 29(1): 65-89. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12110-017-9306-y> (Accessed 01 October 2024).
- Schwartz, E., 2019. Quick Facts: How Climate Change Affects People Living in Poverty. *Mercy corps*, 17. Available: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/quick-facts-how-climate-change-affects-people-living-poverty> (Accessed 17 November 2023).
- Selamu, L. G. and Singhe, M. S. 2017. Mental Health Care Service and Mental Problems among Orphan and Vulnerable Children in Addis Ababa Ethiopia. *Journal of Health and Allied Sciences NU*, 7(04): 3-5.

- Sellers, D. E., Smith, E. G., Izzo, C. V., McCabe, L.A. and Nunno, M. A. 2020. Child feelings of safety in residential care: The supporting role of adult-child relationships. *Residential Treatment for Children & Youth*, 37(2): 136-155. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0886571x.2020.1712576> (Accessed 22 November 2023).
- Semenova, I. E., Afonin, I. A. and Kuznetsova, I. 2019. "Migration processes in rural areas," *IOP conference series. Earth and environmental science*, 274(1): 126-127. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/274/1/012076> (Accessed 03 August 2023).
- Shang, X., Saldov, M. and Fisher, K. R. 2011. Informal kinship care of orphans in rural China. *Social Policy and Society*, 10(1): 103-116. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1474746410000436> (Accessed 10 December 2023).
- Sharaunga, S. and Mudhara, M. 2021. Analysis of livelihood strategies for reducing poverty among rural women's households: A case study of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Journal of International Development*, 33(1): 127-150. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3516> (Accessed 25 April 2023).
- Sharma, G. 2017. Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International journal of applied research*, 3(7): 749-752. Available: [www.allresearchjournal.com](http://www.allresearchjournal.com) (Accessed 22 June 2024).
- Sharma, N., Chakrabarti, S. and Grover, S. 2016. Gender differences in caregiving among family-caregivers of people with mental illnesses. *World journal of psychiatry*, 6(1): 7. Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4804270/> (Accessed 17 March 2024).
- Shergill, B. S., Kaur, M. and Tiwana, S. S. 2018. Rural Household Livelihoods, Non-farm Economy and Landless Workforce: Evidence from the Village Economy of Haryana, India. *Economic Affairs*, 63(1): 09-20. Available: <https://doi.org/10.30954/0424-2513.2018.00150.2> (Accessed 02 August 2023).
- Shorey, S. and Ng, E. D. 2022. A social–ecological model of grandparenting experiences: A systematic review. *The Gerontologist*, 62(3): 193-205. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnaa172> (Accessed 18 November 2024).

- Sim, J. and Waterfield, J. 2019. Focus group methodology: some ethical challenges. *Quality & quantity*, 53(6): 3003-3022. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-019-00914-5> (Accessed 16 October 2024).
- Simpson, G. M., Pressley, T. D., Carthron, D. L. and Stansbury, K. 2017. Social support and survival strategies of older African American grandmother caregivers. *GrandFamilies: The Contemporary Journal of Research, Practice and Policy*, 4(2), 5. Available: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/grandfamilies/vol4/iss2/5/> (Accessed 08 September 2023).
- Skoufalos, A., Clarke, J. L., Ellis, D. R., Shepard, V. L. and Rula, E. Y. 2017. Rural aging in America: Proceedings of the 2017 connectivity summit. *Population health management*, 20(S2): 1. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1089/pop.2017.0177> (Accessed 01 December 2024)
- Skoufias, E. 2023. The poverty impacts of climate change: A review of the evidence. Available: <https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/abs/10.1596/1813-9450-5622> (Accessed 27 July 2023).
- Smalls, B. L., Adegboyega, A., Contreras, O. A., Palmer, K. and Hatcher, J. 2020. Assessing diabetes risk factors in rural dwelling grandparent caregivers. *Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine*, 6, 233-372. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2333721420924986> (Accessed 02 August 2023).
- Smith, A., Mongeluzzo, M. and Drente, T. 2021. Serving kinship families During COVID: Pivotal moments. *Innovation in Aging*, 5(1): 829. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igab046.3039> (Accessed 20 July 2024).
- Snyder, H. 2019. Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of business research*, 104: 333-339. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039> (Accessed 20 October 2023).
- Soganga, A. and Kang'ethe, S.M., 2023. Exploring reciprocity in grandparent-grandchildren care: the case of Mdlankomo location, Libode in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. *Social Work*, 59(1): 99-111. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15270/59-1-1095> (Accessed 14 June 2024)

- Solomon, J. C. and Marx, J. 1999. Who cares? Grandparent/grandchild households. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 11(1): 3-25. Available; [https://doi.org/10.1300/J074v11n01\\_02](https://doi.org/10.1300/J074v11n01_02) (Accessed 19 October 2024)
- Somani, S. and Meghani, S. 2016. Substance abuse among youth: A harsh reality. *Emerg Med (Los Angel)*, 6(330): 2. Available: <https://doi.org/10.4172/2165-7548.1000330> (Accessed 02 August 2023).
- Souralova, A. 2020. Grandparents, kinship ties, and belonging after migration: the perspective of second-generation grandchildren. *Global networks*, 20(2): 362-379. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12240> (Accessed 12 June 2024).
- Southwick, S. M., Sippel, L., Krystal, J., Charney, D., Mayes, L. and Pietrzak, R. 2016. Why are some individuals more resilient than others: the role of social support. *World psychiatry*, 15(1): 77. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20282> (Accessed 02 October 2023).
- Statti, A. and Torres, K. 2020. The forgotten minority: Exploring deficiencies in access to education and technology in rural America. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 95(2): 173-182. Available:
- Stephens, M. L. 2020. Literacy, learning, and human capital development among rural African American grandmothers. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 18(4): 417-433. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15350770.2020.1712295> (Accessed 02 October 2023).
- Sumaryanto, Susilowati, S. H., Saptana, Ashari, Suryani, E. and Suryadi, M. 2021. The effects of rural development on main sources of farm households. <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1755-1315/892/1/012089/pdf> (Accessed 04 August 2023).
- Sun, A., Zhang, C. and Hu, X., 2019. Boys, girls, and grandparents: The impact of the sex of preschool-aged children on family living arrangements and maternal labor supply. *Demography*, 56(3): 813-833. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-019-00783-5> (Accessed 02 August 2023).
- Sun, K. and Dutta, M. 2022. Grandparenting in rural China: a culture-centered approach (CCA) to understand economic inequality and rural labor change. *Qualitative social*

work, 21(3): 602-620. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250211018731> (Accessed 02 October 2023).

Sun, K. and Mulvaney, M. K. 2023. Intergenerational support in Chinese immigrant families: The influences of grandparent support, cultural values, and orientations on parenting stress. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 21(1): 40-61. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15350770.2021.1930622> (Accessed 02 October 2023).

Swain, J. 2018. A hybrid approach to thematic analysis in qualitative research: Using a practical example. *Sage research methods*. Available: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526435477> (Accessed 20 June 2023).

Swedberg, R. 2020. Exploratory research. *The production of knowledge: Enhancing progress in social science*, 2(1): 17-41.

Tai, T. O. and Tu, H. C. 2021. The effect of grandparental care on men's and women's parenting practices in Taiwan. *Journal of Population Ageing*, 14(4): 465-485. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12062-021-09324-8> (Accessed 13 September 2023).

Tamasane, T. and Head, J. 2010. The quality of material care provided by grandparents for their orphaned grandchildren in the context of HIV/AIDS and poverty: A study of Kopanong municipality, Free State. *SAHARA-J: Journal of Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS*, 7(2): 76-84. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17290376.2010.9724960> (Accessed 13 August 2024).

Tang, F., Li, K., Rauktis, M. E., Farmer, E. M. and McDaniel, S. 2022. Stress, Coping, and Quality of Life Among Custodial Grandparents. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 1-14. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2022.2103764> (Accessed 02 May 2023).

Tanga, P. T., Khumalo, P. and Gutura, P. 2017. *Three decades of HIV/AIDS pandemic: Challenges faced by orphans in Tembisa*, South Africa: InTech.

Tanle, A., Ogunleye-Adetona, C. I. and Arthor, G. 2020. Rural-urban migration and household livelihood in the Agona West Municipality, Ghana. *Journal of Geography and Regional Planning*, 13(1): 1-18. Available: <https://doi.org/10.5897/JGRP2017.0670> (Accessed 21 July 2023).

Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R. and DeVault, M. L. 2015. *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guidebook and resource*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

- Teaster, P. B. 2018. Considerations of elder abuse in Rural America. *Innovation in Aging*, 2(1): 608. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igy023.2261> (Accessed 13 September 2023).
- Teherani, A., Martimianakis, T., Stenfors-Hayes, T., Wadhwa, A. and Varpio, L. 2015. Choosing a qualitative research approach. *Journal of graduate medical education*, 7(4): 669-670. Available: <https://doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-15-00414.1> (Accessed 19 September 2024).
- Tesfaye, D. and Getachew, T. 2018. Determinants of Rural Households' Poverty with Selected Link Functions: *The Case of Soro District, Hadiya Zone, SNNPR States, Ethiopia*. 7(1): 2-6. Available <https://doi.org/10.4172/2162-6359.1000490> (Accessed 17 Junly 2023).
- Thomason, E. 2021. United in Suffering: Rural Grandparents and the Intergenerational Contributions of Care. In *Chinese Families Upside Down: Intergenerational Dynamics and Neo-Familism in the Early 21st Century* (76-102). Brill. Available: [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004450233\\_005](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004450233_005) (Accessed 23 October 2023).
- Thompson, C. J., Mick, D. G., van Osselaer, S.M. and Huber, J. 2023. Commentaries on "The case for qualitative research". *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 33(1): 273-282. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1300> (Accessed 03 March 2023).
- Thompson, G. 2016. Meeting the needs of adolescent parents and their children. *Paediatrics & Child Health*, 21(5): 1. Available: <https://www.proquest.com/openview/52c675f2baf8dc70d23c1b2d75ad3ce7/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2032237> (Accessed 13 December 2023).
- Tompkins, C. J. and Vander Linden, K. 2020. Compounding complexity: Examining multiple factors leading to challenges within grandfamilies. *The Gerontologist*, 60(6): 1094-1102. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnz189> (Accessed 01 October 2024).
- Tompkins, C., Zic, A., Carlson, E., Purvis, A., Yancura, L. and Nadorff, D., 2020. Exploring the Stress and Strengths Arising From the Complexities Existing Within Grandfamilies. *Innovation in Aging*, 4(1): 72. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igaa057.237> (Accessed 25 July 2024).
- Totaforti, S. 2021. Urbanization and housing development in South Africa. *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, 13(6): 769-777. Available: [https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-aa\\_ajstid\\_v13\\_i6\\_a769](https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-aa_ajstid_v13_i6_a769) (Accessed 13 August 2024).

Tracy, E. M., Braxton, R., Henrich, C., Jeanblanc, A., Wallace, M., Burant, C. J. and Musil, C. 2022. Grandmothers raising grandchildren: managing, balancing and maintaining family relationships. *Journal of women & aging*, 34(6): 757-772. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2021.1951114> (Accessed 25 July 2024).

Tudge, J. R., Mokrova, I., Hatfield, B. E. and Karnik, R. B. 2009. Uses and misuses of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development. *Journal of family theory & review*, 1(4): 198-210. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1756-2589.2009.00026.x> (Accessed 15 August 2024).

Tuffour, I. 2017. A critical overview of interpretative phenomenological analysis: A contemporary qualitative research approach. *Journal of healthcare communications*, 2(4): 52. Available: <http://healthcare-communications.imedpub.com/a-critical-overview-of-interpretative-phenomenological-analysis-a-contemporary-qualitative-research-approach.php?aid=20787> (Accessed 19 September 2024).

Van Schalkwyk, I. 2021. Strengthening female-headed households: Exploring the challenges and strengths of mothers with substance-problems living in a high-risk community. *Journal of Family Studies*. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2019.1584122> (Accessed 21 October 2023).

Vanderminden, J., Hamby, S., David-Ferdon, C., Kacha-Ochana, A., Merrick, M., Simon, T. R., Finkelhor, D. and Turner, H. 2019. Rates of neglect in a national sample: Child and family characteristics and psychological impact. *Child abuse & neglect*, 88, 256-265. Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6463279/> (Accessed 13 September 2023).

Vasileva, M. and Petermann, F. 2018. Attachment, development, and mental health in abused and neglected preschool children in foster care: A meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 19(4): 443-458. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838016669503> (Accessed 31 August 2023).

Venter, I. C. and Van Wyk, N. C. 2019. Experiences of vulnerability due to loss of support by aged parents of emigrated children: A hermeneutic literature review. *Community, Work & Family*, 22(3): 255-266. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2018.1517729> (Accessed 18 November 2024).

- Verhaeghe, N., Lievens, D., Annemans, L., Vander Laenen, F. and Putman, K. 2017. Methodological considerations in social cost studies of addictive substances: a systematic literature review. *Frontiers in public health*, 4, 295. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2016.00295> (Accessed 13 December 2023).
- Vibert, E. 2020. Translocal lives: Gender and rural mobilities in South Africa, 1970–2020. *Politikon*, 47(4): 460-478. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2020.1840027> (Accessed 13 August 2024).
- Vidal, S., Connell, C. M., Prince, D. M. and Tebes, J. K. 2019. Multisystem-involved youth: A developmental framework and implications for research, policy, and practice. *Adolescent research review*, 4, 15-29. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-018-0088-1> (Accessed 15 August 2024).
- Visagie, J. and Turok, I., 2021. Rural–urban inequalities amplified by COVID-19: evidence from South Africa. *Area Development and Policy*, 6(1): 50-62. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23792949.2020.1851143> (Accessed 5 May 2024).
- Waddoups, A. B., Yoshikawa, H. and Strouf, K. 2019. Developmental effects of parent–child separation. *Annual Review of Developmental Psychology*, 1(1): 387-410. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-devpsych-121318-085142> (Accessed 08 December 2023).
- Wang, D. 2023. Current Situation of Rural Education in Ethnic Areas from the Perspective of Educational Sustainable Development. *Curriculum and Teaching Methodology*, 6(10): 117-124. Available: <https://doi.org/10.23977/curtm.2023.061018> (Accessed 08 December 2023).
- Wang, Y., Chen, X., Wang, A., Jordan, L.P. and Lu, S., 2024. Research Review: Grandparental care and child mental health—a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 65(4), 568-586. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13943> (Accessed 06 August 2024).
- Weber, J. A. and Waldrop, D. P. 2000. Grandparents raising grandchildren: Families in transition. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 33(2): 27-46. Available: [https://doi.org/10.1300/J083v33n02\\_03](https://doi.org/10.1300/J083v33n02_03) (Accessed 16 November 2024).
- Webster, M., Cappellini, B. and Harman, V., 2023. Feeding grandchildren: competing priorities and blurred relational boundaries. *Food, Culture & Society*, 1-18. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2023.2195336> (Accessed 10 August 2024))

- Werner, E. E. 2017. Grandparent-grandchild relationships amongst US ethnic groups. *The psychology of grandparenthood*, 68-82.
- Whitley, D. M., Fuller-Thomson, E. and Brennenstuhl, S. 2015. Health characteristics of solo grandparent caregivers and single parents: a comparative profile using the behavior risk factor surveillance survey. *Current gerontology and geriatrics research*, 2015(1): 630-717. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1155/2015/630717> (Accessed 20 October 2023).
- Williams, M. N. 2011. The changing roles of grandparents raising grandchildren. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 21(8): 948-962. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2011.588535> (Accessed 01 August 2023).
- Willie, M. M. 2022. Differentiating Between Population and Target Population in Research Studies. *International Journal Of Medical Science And Clinical Research Studies*, 2(6): 521-523. Available: <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmscrs/v2-i6-14> (Accessed 20 April 2023).
- Wittenberg-Lyles, E., Washington, K., Demiris, G., Oliver, D. P. and Shaunfield, S. 2014. Understanding social support burden among family caregivers. *Health communication*, 29(9): 901-910. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2013.815111> (Accessed 03 October 2024).
- Woods, T. 2021. Rural grandparenting through a family development lens: Implications for social work practice. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 35(3): 273-286. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2020.1737515> (Accessed 18 December 2023).
- Woods, T. 2021. The health of African American grandmothers raising grandchildren: A growing social problem. *Journal of Family Issues*, 42(7): 1429-1442. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X20934829> (Accessed 20 October 2023).
- Xiao, Y. and Watson, M. 2019. Guidance on conducting a systematic literature review. *Journal of planning education and research*, 39(1): 93-112. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X17723971> (Accessed 20 October 2023).
- Xu, H. 2019. Physical and mental health of Chinese grandparents caring for grandchildren and great-grandparents. *Social Science & Medicine*, 229, 106-116. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.05.047> (Accessed 16 September 2023).
- Xu, Y., Jedwab, M., Soto-Ramírez, N., Levkoff, S. E. and Wu, Q. 2021. Material hardship and child neglect risk amidst COVID-19 in grandparent-headed kinship families: The role of

financial assistance. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 121, 105. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105258> (Accessed 04 September 2023).

Xu, Y., Wang, Y., McCarthy, L. P., Harrison, T. and Doherty, H. 2022. Mental/behavioural health and educational outcomes of grandchildren raised by custodial grandparents: A mixed methods systematic review. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 30(6): 209-212.

Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13876> (Accessed 21 October 2023).

Xu, Y., Wu, Q., Levkoff, S.E. and Jedwab, M., 2020. Material hardship and parenting stress among grandparent kinship providers during the COVID-19 pandemic: The mediating role of grandparents' mental health. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 110: 104. Available:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213420303550> (Accessed 04 March 2023).

Yalcin, B. M., Pirdal, H., Karakoc, E. V., Sahin, E. M., Ozturk, O. and Unal, M. 2018. General health perception, depression and quality of life in geriatric grandmothers providing care for grandchildren. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 79, 108-115. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.archger.2018.08.009> (Accessed 30 November 2023).

Yancura, L. A. 2013. Service use and unmet service needs in grandparents raising grandchildren. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 56(6): 473-486. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2013.804471> (Accessed 02 July 2024).

Yancura, L. A., Barnett, M. A., Sano, Y. and Mammen, S. 2020. Context matters: Nonresident grandparent contributions to low-income rural families. *Child & Family Social Work*, 25(2):

267-276. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12682> (Accessed 29 July 2024).

Yang, F. and Liu, X. 2020. Grandparenting styles, childhood food insecurity, and depression among Chinese rural left-behind children: A structural equation model. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 119: 105. Available:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105648>

(Accessed 28 May 2023).

Yates, J. and Leggett, T. 2016. Qualitative research: An introduction. *Radiologic technology*, 88(2): 225-231. Available:

<http://www.radiologictechnology.org/content/88/2/225.extract> (Accessed 19 September 2024).

- Yılmaz, A. and Soyer, F. 2018. Effect of physical education and play applications on school social behaviors of mild-level intellectually disabled children. *Education Sciences*, 8(2): 89. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci8020089> (Accessed 10 December 2023).
- Yoo, J. and Russell, D. W. 2020. Caring for grandchildren and grandparents' physical and mental health changes. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 29, 845-854. Available: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10826-019-01618-y> (Accessed 10 August 2024).
- Youngblut, J. M., Brooten, D., Blais, K., Kilgore, C. and Yoo, C. 2015. Health and functioning in grandparents after a young grandchild's death. *Journal of Community Health*, 40, 956-966. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-015-0018-0> (Accessed 10 December 2023).
- Yuliana, S. 2021. Comparison of Child Health between Sandwich Generation and Non-Sandwich Generation. *Populasi*, 29(1): 33-51. Available: <https://doi.org/10.22146/jp.67199> (Accessed 13 December 2023).
- Zamarro, G. 2020. Family labor participation and child care decisions: the role of grannies. *SERIEs*, 11(3): 287-312. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13209-020-00213-5> (Accessed 13 December 2023).
- Zantsi, S. and Bester, B. J. 2020. Dynamism in rural households' income sources, food preference, daily activities and investment strategies: Insights from Ndabakazi villages in Butterworth, Eastern Cape, South Africa. *South African Review of Sociology*, 51(2): 42-60. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21528586.2021.1929438> (Accessed 15 August 2024).
- Zelalem, A., Gebremariam Kotecho, M. and Adamek, M. E. 2021. "The ugly face of old age": Elders' unmet expectations for care and support in rural Ethiopia. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 92(2): 215-239. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091415020911900> (Accessed 30 July 2023).
- Zeng, Y. and Wang, Z. 2018. Dynamics of family households and elderly living arrangements in China, 1990–2010. *China Population and Development Studies*, 2(2): 129-157. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42379-018-0010-3> (Accessed 12 August 2023).
- Zhang, L., Zeng, Y., Wang, L. and Fang, Y. 2020. Urban–rural differences in long-term care service status and needs among home-based elderly people in China. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(5): 1701. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17051701> (Accessed 01 December 2023).

- Zhao, D., Zhou, Z., Shen, C., Ibrahim, S., Zhao, Y., Cao, D. and Lai, S., 2021. Gender differences in depressive symptoms of rural Chinese grandparents caring for grandchildren. *BMC Public Health*, 21, 1-17. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11886-3> (Accessed 07 September 2024).
- Zhou, J., Mao, W., Lee, Y. and Chi, I. 2017. The impact of caring for grandchildren on grandparents' physical health outcomes: The role of intergenerational support. *Research on Aging*, 39(5): 612-634. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0164027515623332> (Accessed 30 November 2023).
- Zhu, D., Hopper, P. and Kulaixi, G. 2020. Heritage language maintenance among second-generation Chinese-American children in a small Chinese community. *International Journal of Education, Culture and Society*, 5(5): 100-114. Available: <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijecs.20200505.13> (Accessed 11 January 2024).
- Zou C., Liu J., Liu B., Zheng X, and Fang Y. 2019. Evaluating Poverty Alleviation by Relocation under the Link Policy: A Case Study from Tongyu County, Jilin Province, China. *Sustainability*, 11(18): 5061. Available: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11185061> (Accessed 01 August 2023).

## **Appendix A (1)**

### **Interview guide (Individual interview)**

1. What are the circumstances that lead to you heading a household?
2. What is it like to be the head of the household as a grandmother?
3. Where are the parents of the children that you are raising?
4. What are some of the challenges that you have personally encountered while raising your grandchildren?
5. What behavioural challenges have you observed in the children living in your household?
6. How is the overall psychosocial wellbeing of the children living in your household?
7. What kind of support do you receive from family members?
8. What kind of support do you receive from community members?
9. What do you do in order to cope with the challenges of raising your grandchildren?
10. What strategies do you think the community members, the government and community stakeholders employ to assist families living in grandmother headed households?

## **Appendix A (2)**

### **Umhlahandlela weNkulumoluhlolo (yamuntu ngamunye)**

1. Ngabe iziphi izimo ezikuholele ekutheni uhole ikhaya njengo gogo?
2. Kunjani ukuba ngumholi wekhaya ukhulisa abazukulu?
3. Bakuphi abazali babantwana obakhulisayo?
4. Iziphi izigqinamba ongathi wena ngokwakho uke wabhekana nazo njengoba ukhulisa abazukulu?
5. Ngabe ukuphi ukuziphatha okuyinselele oseke wakuqaphela kubazukulu abahlala ngaphansi kwekhaya lakho?
6. Ngabe banjani bona abazukulu masingabheka ukuphila kwabo ngokwengqondo?
7. Uluphi uxhaso ongathi uyalithola emndenini wakho?
8. Uluphi uxhaso ongathi uyalithola kubantu bakulomphakathi?
9. Yini olusizo oyenzayo ukuze ubhekane nezingqinamba zokukhulisa abazukulu?
10. uluphi uxhaso kanye namasu ocabanga kuthi abantu bomphakathi, uhulumeni kanye nabaphathi bomphakathi okumele baluveze ukuze kuzosizakala imindeni ehlala eimizini ephethwe ogogo?

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview guide (Focus group discussion)**

1. Based on your observations and professional knowledge, what circumstances would you say led to grandmothers headed households in this community?
2. What are some of the challenges faced by families living in grandmother headed households
3. How are the living conditions of the families living in grandmother headed households?
4. What kind resources do you think grandmothers heading households in this community need?
5. What psychosocial challenges do you think these grandmothers are facing?
6. What psychosocial challenges are children living in these households facing?
7. What behavioural challenges do these children display?
8. What has been your greatest challenge when trying to help families living in these households?
9. What support have you received from the government and community stakeholders that has enabled you to assist these families?
10. What community strategies do you think can be put in place to assist families living in grandmother headed households?

## Appendix C (1)



14 June 2023

Councillors Officers  
Ndwedwe

### Request for Permission to Conduct Research

Dear

My name is Inamandla Gumede. I am a master's student in the Child and Youth care programme at the Durban University of Technology. The research I wish to conduct for my master's dissertation is an exploratory study of the challenges faced by grandmother headed households in rural Ndwedwe

I am hereby seeking your consent to conduct this research study, involving grandmothers living in grandmother headed households in this community, further I would like to seek your consent to use the community hall when conducting interviews (where necessary).

I have provided you with a copy of my proposal which includes copies of the data collection tools and consent forms to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee (DUT-IREC).

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me [0677692497 and 21512578@dut4life.ac.za]. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Inamandla Gumede  
Durban University of Technology

## Appendix C (2)



14 June 2023

Tholimpilo organisation  
Ndwedwe

### Request for Permission to Conduct Research

Dear Sir

My name is Inamandla Gumede. I am a master's student in the Child and Youth care programme at the Durban University of Technology. The research I wish to conduct for my master's dissertation is an exploratory study of the challenges faced by grandmother headed households in rural Ndwedwe

I am hereby seeking your consent to conduct this research study, involving child and youth care workers working in this organisation. Further I would like to seek your consent to use the community hall when conducting interviews (where necessary).

I have provided you with a copy of my proposal which includes copies of the data collection tools and consent forms to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee (DUT-IREC).

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me [0677692497 and 21512578@dut4life.ac.za]. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Inamandla Gumede  
Durban University of Technology.

## Appendix C (3): GATEKEEPER APPROVAL FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

**To: Inamandla Gumede**

**Department of Community Health Studies  
Durban University of Technology**

**Date: 31/10/2023**

**RE: Permission to Conduct Research**

Dear Inamandla Gumede,

For your research project titled "An exploratory study on the challenges faced by grandmother headed households in rural Ndwedwe," I am delighted to grant you permission to interview community members in the Ndwedwe Mission area.

In addition to granting you permission, I want to assure you that I will support you wholeheartedly in recruiting study participants. I will offer you their contact information as soon as I obtained their consent.

Kindly do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further assistance supporting your study.

Kind regards

---

Councillor LS Moahloli

Ndwedwe Mission Area

Private bag X503  
Ndwedwe, 4042  
KwaZulu-Natal

## APPENDIX C (4): GATEKEEPER APPROVAL FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

*To: Inamandla Gumede*

*Department of Community Health Studies  
Durban University of Technology*

**Date: 31/10/2023**

**RE: Permission to Conduct Research**

Dear Inamandla Gumede,

For your research project titled "An exploratory study on the challenges faced by grandmother headed households in rural Ndwedwe," I am delighted to grant you permission to interview child and youth care workers in the Tholimpilo organisation.

In addition to granting you permission, I want to assure you that I will support you wholeheartedly in recruiting study participants. I will offer you their contact information as soon as I obtained their consent.

Kindly do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further assistance supporting your study.

Kind regards

Mr TC Mfajola

Tholimpilo organisation

Private bag X503  
Ndwedwe, 4042  
KwaZulu-Natal

## Appendix D (1)



### LETTER OF INFORMATION (INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW)

**Title of the Research Study:** An exploratory study on the challenges faced by grandmother headed households in rural Ndwedwe.

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:** Inamandla Gumede (BC: Child and Youth Care)

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:** Professor R. Bhagwan (PhD in Community development)

#### **Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:**

Greetings. I hope that you are well.

I am a master's student at DUT (Durban University of Technology) doing research for my master's degree in child and youth care.

I would like to invite you to participate in the study of my research.

#### **What is Research?**

Research is defined as the application of new knowledge or the creative use of pre-existing knowledge to the generalization of new concepts, processes, and understandings. This can require combining and analysing prior research to the point where it yields original and new results.

Your participation in this study will be highly valuable because it will advance existing knowledge. You are not compelled to take part in this research. Your participation in the study is completely voluntary, and you are free to revoke your consent at any moment. Should you have any questions after reading this study, feel free to do so. You will be given a consent form to express your agreement to take part in the study, however you are not required to complete the interview if you feel uncomfortable.

#### **Outline of the Procedures:**

The challenges faced by grandmother-headed households in rural Ndwedwe will be investigated in this study using a qualitative research methodology. The aim of this study is to understand the challenges faced by grandmother headed households and to develop strategies that can be implemented to strengthen family life in these households. It also seeks to understand the factors that led to grandmothers heading households in Ndwedwe, to

understand what support is required to enable grandmothers to cope better with the adversities they face and to inquire what community strategies must be in place to better support grandmother headed households in Ndwedwe.

You are expected to give your honest views and experiences on this topic as it will enable the researcher to explore how you view the issues faced in grandmother headed households as well as how these families living in these households can be assisted. The sample on this study will consist of at least 12 grandmothers. Semi-structured interviews will be used to gather the required data up until data saturation is reached. Each participant's interview will be about 30-45 minutes. As a participant, you will be required to produce the consent letter before the interview begins. Individual interviews will be conducted from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. For time management purposes, the individual interviews will last for two days because there will be a group allocation of two groups, including time for breaks and refreshments.

### **Objectives**

1. To understand the factors that led to grandmothers heading households in Ndwedwe
2. To inquire what challenges are faced by grandmothers in these households.
3. To understand what coping mechanisms grandmothers require to function better in their homes.
4. To inquire what community strategies must be in place to better support grandmother headed households in Ndwedwe.

### **Sample 1:**

#### **Inclusion**

- Grandmothers residing in the Ndwedwe rural area of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa;
- Grandmothers raising at least two or more children under the age of 18;
- Grandmothers who are the primary caregivers;
- Grandmothers without significant health issues.

#### **Exclusion**

- Grandmothers not located in the Ndwedwe rural area;
- Grandmothers who are not the primary caregiver;
- Grandmothers without any grandchildren under the age of 18;
- Grandmothers with significant health issues; and
- Grandmothers who were not able to provide informed consent

#### **Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:**

No risks or discomfort are anticipated during the course of this study.

#### **Explain to the participant the reasons he/she may be withdraw from the Study:**

Anytime you feel pressured, uncomfortable, or sensitive throughout the study or interview, you have the right to withdraw from it. If there is non-compliance, illness, unpleasant reactions, etc., the study may be terminated early.

#### **Benefits:**

During the research you will not receive any benefits. However, In future should this research

study be recognized, it will be beneficial in that community stakeholders, community members and child and youth care workers can be more knowledgeable about various and strategies that they can utilise to best assist grandmother headed households. Additionally, grandmothers will learn from the community child and youth care workers how to cope in their adversities.

**Remuneration:**

No remuneration will be awarded to you (i.e no payment)

**Costs of the Study**

This study will not require you to cover any costs.

**Confidentiality:**

To guarantee confidentiality and protect your identity, researchers will keep all information obtained secure. Additionally, assurance will be given to you that your personal information will not be disclosed and that your confidentiality will be maintained. USB and other devices that researchers will use will be encrypted, requiring the researcher's codes. Your names will not be revealed; instead, you will be assigned a name that differs from your original name to preserve your identity. Researchers will only have access to the information gathered.

**Results:**

The results will be out on a journal/ article so that the participants get to see the findings.

**Research-related Injury:**

There are no injuries anticipated. This study does not involve anything clinical. It will only be discussions done; hence it is a qualitative inquiry.

**Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings:**

It is the researcher's obligation to safeguard research data by storing electronic data in a password-protected file and copying it to a USB drive. The researcher who will have access to the data will be held accountable for this research. To maintain safety, hard copy research will be kept in a safe, and data will be kept for 5 years. Following that, all data from tape recordings and USB drives will be wiped, and all hard copies of data will be shredded and discarded.

**Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:**

Please contact the researcher (tel no 0677692497), my supervisor (tel no. 0313732197) or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the acting Director: Research and Postgraduate Support on [researchdirector@dut.ac.za](mailto:researchdirector@dut.ac.za).

## Appendix D (2)



### INCWADI YOLWAZI

**Isihloko socwaningo:** Ucwangingo oluhlola izinselele ezibhekana nemizi ephethwe oGogo emakhaya ase Ndwedwe.

**Umcwangingi/ umcwangingi oyinhloko:** Inamandla Gumede (BC: Child and Youth Care)

**Ophethe/ongumqondisi walolucwangingo:** uProfesa R. Bhagwan (PhD in Community development)

Ngiyabingelela, ngithembe uphilile.

Ngingmufundi owenza izinqo zeMastazi kumkhakha weChild and Youth care. Ngifunda eDUT (Inyuvesi yobuchwepheshe eThekwini). Ngizokwenza inkulumoluhlolo maduze, ngisacela isizo lwakho ukuze ngithole imininingwane ebanzi kulolucwangingo.

Ngingathanda ukukumema ukuthi uhlanganyele nami kulolucwangingo

### Luyini ucwangingo?

Ucwangingo ukudalwa kolwazi olusha noma usebenzise ulwazi olukhona ngendlela ewubuciko ukwakha umqondo noma izisho ezintsha.

Ngokukhulu ukuzithoba, uyacelwa ukuba ube yingxenye yenkulumoluhlobo. Ukubamba kwakho iqhaza kulolucwangingo kuzoba ligugu ngokuba lizoqhuba phambili ulwazi oluvele lukhona ngalolucwangingo. Awuphoqelekanga ukuba yingxenye yalolucwangingo. Ukuba yingxenye kulolucwangingo kuzoba ngokuzithandela kwakho. Ukhululekile ukuhoxisa imvume yakho yokuba yingxenye inoma ingasiphi isikhathi. Uma kukhona imibuzo emva kokufunda okumayelana nalolucwangingo, ungabuza. Uzothola incwadi yemvume okudingakala ukuthi uyigcwalise lapho uzoshona ukuthi uyavuma ukuba yingxenye yocwangingo, kepha awuphoqelekile ukuqedela inkulumoluhlobo uma uzizwa ungakhululekile.

### uHlelo lwezinqubo:

Izinselele ezibhekana nemizi ephethwe oGogo emakhaya aseNdwedwe yizo ezizophenywa kulolucwangingo ngokusebenzisa ucwangingo lekhwalithi. Inhloso yalolucwangingo ukuqonda izingqinamba ezibhekana nemizi ephethwe oGogo, kanye nokuthola amasu angasetshenziswa ekutheni kuthuthukiswe, kuphinde kuqiniswe izimpilo zemindeni ehlala kulemizi. Phezukwalokho, lolucwangingo lihlosa ukuqonda izici eziholele ekutheni kube khona imizi ephethwe oGogo eNdwedwe. Okokugcina, luhlose ukuqonda ukuthi uluphi uxhaso

nokwesekwa okudingekalayo ukusiza ogogo babhekane kancono nezimo ezibakhathazayo.

Abahlanganyeli balindeleke ukuba babe neqiniso uma beveza imibono ngababhekane nakho okumayelanya nalolucwaningo. Lokhu kuzosiza umhloli abheke ukuthi abahlanganyeli banayiphi imibono ngezingqinamba zemizi ephethwe ogogo nokuthi iziphi izindlela imindeneni ephila kulemizi engathola ngalo uxhaso. Isampula lalolucwaningo lizoba nogogo abayishumi nambili nogogo abayishumi

Izinkulumoluhlobo ezihleliwe zizosetshenziswa ukuhlanganisa ulwazi oludingakalayo kuze kufika la ekugcwaliseka khona ucwaningo. Inkulumoluhlobo yabahlanganyeli besampula lokuqala izophela emva kwemizuzu engu 30-45. Izinkulumoluhlobo zamuntu ngamunye zizokwenzeka ngo 09:00 kuya 13:00. Abantu bazohlulaniwa bebe amaqembu amabili. Izinkulumoluhlobo zabantu abazobe benza ngamunye zizokwenziwa izisuku ezimbili. Umcwaningi uzokwenza lokhu ngenxa yokuqhapha iskathi. Abahlanganyeli bazothola nento yokuphuza nekhefu.

### **Izinjongo zocwaningo (OBJECTIVES)**

1. Ukuqonda izici eziholele ekutheni ogogo baphathe imizi eNdwedwe.
2. Ukuhlola ukuthi iziphi izinselele ogogo abaphethe imizi ababhekene nazo.
3. ukuqonda ukuthi iziphi izindlela abangabhekana nezimo abakuzo ogogo.
4. ukuhlola ukuthi imaphi amasu umphakathi, uhulumeni kanye nabaphathi bomphakathi abangaqhamuka nawo ukuze beseke kancono ogogo.

### **Imibandela yokufakwa nokukhishwa**

#### **Sampula 1:**

#### **Imibandela yokufakwa**

- Ogogo abaphethe imizi eNdwedwe.
- Ogogo abangenazi izinkinga zobuthaka benyama empilweni.
- Ogogo abahlala nabazukulu ababili kuyaphezulu.

#### **Imibandela yabadlungwayo**

- Ogogo abangabona abaphathi bemizi eNdwedwe.
- Ogogo abanezinkinga zobuthaka benyama empilweni.
- Ogogo abahlala nomzukululu oyeda kuphela
- Ogogo abangayiniki imvume yokubamba iqhaza kucwaningo.

**Izingozi noma ukuphazamiseka komhlanganyeli:** Azikho izingozi empilweni noma okunye ubungozi ngezikhathi zezixoxo.

**Izinzuzo:** Ngenkathi lusaqhuba lolucwaningo, angeke uze uzuze lutho. Khepha, ngokuhamba kwesikhathi uma lolucwaningo luqashelwa izikhulu, lizosiza ekutheni abaphathi bomphakathi, amalunga omphakathi kanye nabantu abasebenza ngezingane kanye nentsha babe nolwazi olubanzi ngezindlela zokusiza imizi ephethwe ogogo. Ngaphezukwalokho, ogogo bazofunda kubantu abasebenza ngezingane kanye nabantu abasha izindlela zokubhekana nezimo abakuzo.

**Isizathu/ ukuthi kungani umhlanganyeli angase akhishwe esifundweni:** uma kwenzeka

ukufuna ukuhoxa ngeke kube nemiphumela emibi ngokuba ukubamba iqhaza kungokuzithandela.

**Iholo:** Alikho iholo elizotholakala ngoba ukubamba iqhaza kungokuzithandela.

**Izindleko zocwaningo:** Azikho izindleko ozothweswa zona ngalolucwaningo

**Okuyimfihlo:** igama lizobe liyimfihlo kuzosebenziswa ikhodi endaweni yegama.

**Ukulimala okuhlobene nocwaningo:** Akukho ukulimala okulindelekile kulolucwaningo, yonke into ezobe inokuphepha.

**Ukubekwa kokuqoshiwe emaphephe/emanhukwini nasemakhompuyetheni:**

Izingxoxo zizoqoshwa nge peni nange phepha, ngenxa yeskhathi ezinye zizoqoshwa ngekompuyutha ngezinhloso zokuhlaziywa. Imininingwane izobe igcinwe kahle ebhukwini nakhona kwi khompuyutha evikelwe nge password futhi namazwi a recodiwe sizowafaka kwi usb senzele inkulumo ingalahleki futhi ivikeleke. Lemininingwane sizoyiphephisa iyaziwe abantu engenabo kanye nomphathi wami futhi nale mininingwane esbhukwini sizoyivalela kahle ekhabethweni elino khiye owodwa futhi ozohlala kithi esenza lolucwaningo. Yonke lemininingwane kanye nezinkulumo sizozigcina iminyaka emihlanu kuphela mase siyaqiniseka ukuthi sikucekela phansi konke. Ekupheleni kocwaningo, sizoziniseka ukuthi alikho igama elizophuma futhi zonke izinto ezisisize senza lelucwaningo ngeke zishiwo ngamagama ngisho nezindawo.

**Abantu ongaxhumana nabo uma kungenzeka ukuba unenkinga noma unemibuzo:** (iosiza ukuqondisa mphenyi oyinhloko) Ngicela uxhumane nomphenyi (inombolo 0677692497) Osizana nomphenyi (iNombolobo 0313732197) noma sikhungo socwango (Research Ethics Administrator) ku 031 373 2375. Izinkinga zingabikelwa uMphathi (Acting Director): [Research and Postgraduate Support on researchdirector@dut.ac.za](mailto:ResearchandPostgraduateSupport@researchdirector@dut.ac.za).

## Appendix E



### LETTER OF INFORMATION (FOCUS GROUP)

**Title of the Research Study:** An exploratory study on the challenges faced by grandmother headed households in rural Ndwedwe

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:** Inamandla Gumede (BC: Child and Youth Care)

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:** Professor R. Bhagwan (PhD in Community development)

#### **Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:**

Greetings. I hope that you are well.

I am a master's student at DUT (Durban University of Technology) doing research for my master's degree in child and youth care.

I would like to invite you to participate in the study of my research.

#### **What is Research?**

Research is defined as the application of new knowledge or the creative use of pre-existing knowledge to the generalization of new concepts, processes, and understandings. This can require combining and analyzing prior research to the point where it yields original and new results.

Your participation in this study will be highly valuable because it will advance existing knowledge. You are not compelled to take part in this research. Your participation in the study is completely voluntary, and you are free to revoke your consent at any moment. Should you have any questions after reading this study, feel free to do so. You will be given a consent form to express your agreement to take part in the study, however you are not required to complete the interview if you feel uncomfortable.

#### **Outline of the Procedures:**

The challenges faced by grandmother-headed households in rural Ndwedwe will be investigated in this study using a qualitative research methodology. The aim of this study is to understand the challenges faced by grandmother headed households and to develop strategies that can be implemented to strengthen family life in these households. It also seeks to understand the factors that led to grandmothers heading households in Ndwedwe, to understand what support is required to enable grandmothers to cope better with the adversities they face and to inquire what community strategies must be in place to better support grandmother headed households in Ndwedwe.

You are expected to give your honest views and experiences on this topic as it will enable the researcher to explore how you view the issues faced in grandmother headed households as well as how these families living in these households can be assisted. This sample will be a focus group of child and youth care workers employed by the Tholimpilo organization in Ndwedwe. Semi-structured interviews will be used to gather the required data up until data saturation is reached. The focus group discussion will last about 1 hour and 30 minutes. As a participant, you will be required to produce the consent letter before the interview begins. The focus group discussion will most likely last from 10:00 am to 11:30 am on a single day, including time for breaks and refreshments.

### **Objectives**

1. To understand the factors that led to grandmothers heading households in Ndwedwe
2. To inquire what challenges are faced by grandmothers in these households.
3. To understand what coping mechanisms grandmothers require to function better in their homes.
4. To inquire what community strategies must be in place to better support grandmother headed households in Ndwedwe.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion criteria**

#### **Sample 2:**

#### **Inclusion**

- Child and youth care workers working in Ndwedwe;
- Child and youth care workers who provide direct care and support to grandmother-headed households;
- Child and youth care workers who had been working in the community for at least 2 years.

#### **Exclusion**

- Child and youth care workers not working in the Ndwedwe rural area.
- Child and youth care workers who do not provide direct care to grandmother-headed households.
- Child and youth care workers with less than 2 years of experience working in the community.

#### **Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:**

No risks or discomfort are anticipated during the course of this study.

#### **Explain to the participant the reasons he/she may be withdraw from the Study:**

Anytime you feel pressured, uncomfortable, or sensitive throughout the study or interview, you have the right to withdraw from it. If there is non-compliance, illness, unpleasant reactions, etc., the study may be terminated early.

#### **Benefits:**

During the research you will not receive any benefits. However, In future should this research study be recognized, it will be beneficial in that community stakeholders, community members and child and youth care workers can be more knowledgeable about various and strategies that they can utilise to best assist grandmother headed households. Additionally, grandmothers will learn from the community child and youth care workers how to cope in their adversities.

**Remuneration:**

No remuneration will be awarded to you (i.e no payment)

**Costs of the Study**

This study will not require you to cover any costs.

**Confidentiality:**

To guarantee confidentiality and protect your identity, researchers will keep all information obtained secure. Additionally, assurance will be given to you that your personal information will not be disclosed and that your confidentiality will be maintained. USB and other devices that researchers will use will be encrypted, requiring the researcher's codes. Your names will not be revealed; instead, you will be assigned a name that differs your original name to preserve your identity. Researchers will only have access to the information gathered.

**Results:**

The results will be out on a journal/ article so that the participants get to see the findings.

**Research-related Injury:**

There are no injuries anticipated. This study does not involve anything clinical. It will only be discussions done; hence it is a qualitative inquiry.

**Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings:**

It is the researcher's obligation to safeguard research data by storing electronic data in a password-protected file and copying it to a USB drive. The researcher who will have access to the data will be held accountable for this research. To maintain safety, hard copy research will be kept in a safe, and data will be kept for 5 years. Following that, all data from tape recordings and USB drives will be wiped, and all hard copies of data will be shredded and discarded.

**Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:** Please contact the researcher (tel no 0846594703) my supervisor (tel no. 0313732197) or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the acting Director: Research and Postgraduate Support on [researchdirector@dut.ac.za](mailto:researchdirector@dut.ac.za)

**Appendix F (1)**



**LETTER OF CONSENT**

**Full Title of the Study: An exploratory study on the challenges faced by grandmother headed households in rural Ndwedwe**

**Names of Researcher/s: Inamandla Gumede**

**Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:**

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Inamandla about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: 191/23,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Full Name of Participant</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Signature/Right Thumbprint</b>
---------------------------------	-------------	-------------	-----------------------------------

I, Inamandla herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Inamandla Saphiwokuhle Gumede \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Full Name of Researcher</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
--------------------------------	-------------	------------------

\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Full Name of Witness (If applicable)</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
---	-------------	------------------

\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
--	-------------	------------------

## Appendix F (2)



### INCWANI YEMVUME

**Isihloko socwango:** Ucwango oluhlola izinselele ezibhekana nemizi ephethwe ogogo eNdwedwe

#### **Igama lomcwani: Inamandla Gumede**

#### **Isitatimende sesivumelwano soku bambiqhaza kucwango**

- Ngiaqinisekisa ukuthi ngazisiwe umcwani ngulnamandla ngesimo, ukuziphatha, inzuzo nengozi yocwango
- Ngitholile, ngafunda, ngaqonda, izincwadi ezibalwe ngaphezulu (incwadi yolwazi ngeqhaza engizolibamba) ezimayelana nocwango
- Ngiyazi ukuthi imiphumela engizoyithola kucwango ekubala imininingwane emayelana nobulili, iminyaka, usuku lokuzalwa, iziqalo, nokuxilongwa kuzoba imfihlo umangabe sekushiwo umbiko wocwango.
- Uma sibuka izidingo zocwango siyavumelana nokuthi ulwazi esilitholayo umasenza ucwango sizoliqhuba ngendlela yekhompuyutha yo mcwani
- Kungenzeka kwesinye isigaba ngaphandle kokubandlulula ngikhiphe imvume yami bese ngibamba iqhaza kucwango.
- Sengithole isikhathi esanele sokubuza imbuzo esuka ngaphakathi kumina ngiyazibophezela ukuthi ngizobamba iqhaza kucwango.
- Ngiaqonda ukuthi imiphumela ebalulekile ingaqhamuka ngisenza ucwango ingaba nomthelela ekubambeni kwami iqhaza.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Igama eliphelele lomhlanganyeli**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Usuku**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Iskhathi**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Isiginesha/Isigxivizo sesithup**

Mina, Inamandla ngiaqinisekisa ukuthi umhlanganyeli simazisile ngokuphelele ngemvelo, ukuphatheka nezingozi ezingaba kulolucwango

Inamandla Saphiwokuhle Gumede  
**Igama eliphelele lomcwani**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Usuku**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Isiginesha**

## Appendix G: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Institutional Research Ethics Committee  
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Berwyn Court  
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus  
Durban University of Technology  
P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001  
Tel: 031 373 2375  
Email: [lavishad@dut.ac.za](mailto:lavishad@dut.ac.za)  
[http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional\\_research\\_ethics](http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics)  
[www.dut.ac.za](http://www.dut.ac.za)

4 December 2023

Ms I S Gumede  
Department of Community Health Studies  
Faculty of Health Sciences  
Durban University of Technology

Dear Ms Gumede

**An exploratory study on the challenges faced by grandmother headed households in rural Ndwedwe**  
**Ethics Clearance Number: IREC 191/23**

The DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your notification regarding the piloting of your data collection tool.

Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

In addition, the DUT-IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letters.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.



**It is compulsory for a student or researcher to apply for recertification on an annual basis. The failure to do so will result in withdrawal of ethics clearance. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the supervisor to apply for recertification.**

**Please note that you are required to submit a Notification of Completion of Study form together with an abstract to the DUT-IREC office on completion of your study.**

Yours Sincerely

---

Prof J K Adam  
Chairperson: DUT-IREC

 DUT INAMANDLA GUMED... 

Match Overview
✕

9%

<
>

1	<a href="http://jeed.sesric.org" style="color: #c00000;">jeed.sesric.org</a> Internet Source	2%	>
2	<a href="http://openscholar.dut.ac.za" style="color: #c00000;">openscholar.dut.ac.za</a> Internet Source	2%	>
3	<a href="http://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za" style="color: #c00000;">researchspace.ukzn.ac...</a> Internet Source	1%	>
4	Lenard W. Kaye. "Hand..." Publication	1%	>
5	Mduduzi Nkosinathi Gl... Publication	1%	>
6	Submitted to Durban U... Student Paper	1%	>
7	Knox, Xavier. "Exploring..." Publication	1%	>
8	Submitted to University...	1%	>

MS PREM COOPOO

 **PC Proofreading**

+27 83 645 7466  
pcoopoo@gmail.com

**EDITING AND PROOFREADING SERVICES**

BA Social Work, BA Honours (Psychology), M Med.Sc Social Work (UKZN, South Africa);  
Certificate in Strategic Quality Planning (Kangan Batman Tafe, Australia).

---

8 December 2024

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Ms Inamandla Gumede: Student Number 21512578

This confirms that I edited the Master's degree dissertation of Ms Inamandla Gumede, a registered student in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Durban University of Technology, KwaZulu-Natal.

I provided her with a clean copy and an edited version of tracked changes.

Sincerely,

  
**Prem Coopoo**