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**Study Title:** *The Influence of Human Capital on the Parenting Style of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and the Well-Being of the Grandchildren in Their Care*

**Term of IRB Approval:** December 4, 2010 – December 3, 2011 (modification/continuation through August 2, 2012)

**Study Completed:** November 2012 (date of dissertation defense)

**Summary or Abstract:** The purpose of this research study is to learn how the parenting styles of grandparents raising grandchild impact the behavior and academic performance of the grandchildren they are parenting. Study participants are grandparents who are the primary caregivers for their grandchild either through an informal arrangement, licensed as relative foster parents, or have legal custody of the child. This descriptive, cross-sectional research study examines the relationships between human capital variables (e.g., educational attainment, income), grandparents' parenting styles (e.g., authoritarian, permissive) and child well-being variables (e.g., child's academic achievement, negative and positive social behaviors).

The sample is a combination of a random sample and a convenience, non-probability sample of grandparents who are the primary caregivers for child clients who have either come through the child welfare system (e.g., Child Protective Services) or who are collecting benefits (TANF, Medicaid) in a child-only case. The grandparents are providing full-time care for a grandchild (or children) ages 3-17 years and who have been parenting the child a period of 1 to 10 years. [VDSS assisted with the identification of potential subjects through its administrative databases.] Grandparent participants have voluntarily agreed to participate in the research study (an incentive was offered to participate) after informed consent. Additional subjects may have been recruited through direct referrals from the services side of local DSS agencies. Participants were recruited through social services agencies throughout the state, but primarily from the Eastern region. Subjects include grandparents from all socio-economic groups, educational levels, ethnic groups, and occupations and employment status.

Participants (grandparents) were individually interviewed in-person at a community setting or in the participant's home. Data was collected using the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).

The study seeks to answer four theoretical questions: (1) How does human capital influence the parenting style of grandparents raising grandchildren; (2) How does the grandparent's parenting style influence the grandchild's well-being; (3) Is there a correlation between the parenting styles of grandparents raising grandchildren and the parenting styles used with their children; and (4) How do human-capital factors and the parenting styles of grandparents raising

grandchildren influence the grandchild's well-being. The study involved interviewing grandparents. The results of the study will be used for the development of policies and services that are beneficial to the needs of grandparents raising grandchildren and the grandchildren who are raised by grandparents.

The study was conducted to fulfill a dissertation requirement of the PI's doctoral program. The findings of the study are published in the PI's dissertation, of which the abstract is attached to this description.

## **ABSTRACT**

The focus of this cross-sectional research study was to examine the human capital factors that influence the parenting styles of grandparents who are raising their grandchildren and the influence the grandparents' parenting styles had on the well-being of the grandchildren in their care. Second, there was a comparison of the grandparent's current parenting style with the parenting style they had used with their children. This study used a non-probability sample of 134 grandparents who were raising their grandchildren and who resided in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Through a correlational research design, this study examined the parenting styles of grandparents raising grandchildren using the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ). Also examined was the grandparent's perception of the various dimensions of their grandchild's well-being using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. Additional demographic and descriptive data were collected through the use of the Grandparent Caregiver Questionnaire. Findings through the use of bivariate analysis, multiple regression analysis and path analysis show there was significant correlation between authoritative parenting style of the grandparent and both the negative behavior of the grandchild and the pro-social behavior of the grandchild. However, the results also indicated that the human capital factors of education attainment of the grandparent and income have a limited effect on the well-being of the grandchild. Implications of the present findings are discussed in addition to suggestions for future research.

