

IT IS A SATISFACTION TO TAKE CARE OF MY GRANDCHILDREN: INFORMAL CARE OF *CUCU* AMONG MALAY GRANDMOTHERS IN KUCHING

Jamayah Sali, Edris Aden*

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development, University Malaysia Sarawak
Kota Samarahan, Malaysia

Siti Norazilah Mohd Said

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development, University Malaysia Sarawak
Kota Samarahan, Malaysia

Nor Hasniah Ibrahim

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development, University Malaysia Sarawak
Kota Samarahan, Malaysia

*Corresponding author

E-mail: sjamayah@fcs.unimas.my

ABSTRACT

Despite the relatively high degree of research in formal care settings or licensed services, there remains lack of research on issues faced by the informal care providers. Grandparents are by far the greatest providers of informal child care, yet little is known about their experiences or factor associated with this type of care and its implications. The rise in the number of maternal employment is seen as being among the most significant changes to have affected family organisation. There are several popular assumptions that may be held by general public: that grandmothers are overburden and stress looking after their *cucu*. This study sought to determine the profile and the prevalence of grandmothers providing extensive care for grandchildren. Using a sample of three grandmothers aged 58, 62 and 65 years old, this paper explores the voices of grandmothers in taking care of their grandchildren. This paper thus highlights some of the experiences of the grandmothers including the thoughts of the descendents, the rewarding side and the roles and expectations. As the informal care by grandparents is increasingly popular, the research outcomes will have important implications to the extant literature on grandparents taking care of their grandchildren.

Keywords: Grandparents, Childcare, Grandchildren, Grandparenting, Career

INTRODUCTION

Over the past ten years, the percentage of women in the workforce increased slowly to 47% in 2013. According to Malaysian population and family survey 4, a type of support mostly needed by working women in Sarawak is child care centre which comprised of 43% other than supporting in term of subsidy on child care cost of 23% (Aminah, Anjili & Ismahalil, 2008). Previous study by Surena (2012) shown that almost half of the professional women did get support from parents (60%), close relative (25%) and in laws (15%).

Grandparents are by far the greatest providers of informal child care, yet little is known about how grandparents view this role. Insights into grandparents' experiences have the potential to inform child providers and family policy makers. Child care falls into the categories of formal and informal care. Formal care refers to licensed services; informal care encompasses, among other things, care by relatives and, in particular, by grandparents. Surprisingly, despite the relatively high degree of research in formal care settings, there remains lack of research on issues faced by the informal care providers.