

THE LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN  
GRANDPARENTS AND ADOLESCENT  
GRANDCHILDREN

By

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## INTRODUCTION

The role of grandparents has gone through many changes. In the early 1900's, grandparents were often not around because they did not live long enough to spend time with their grandchildren. Through technological advancements, life expectancy has continually increased making it possible for "multigenerational family networks" which may include a fifth and even sixth generation (Hodgson, 1992, p. 209). This increase in the life-span may also increase the opportunity for grandparents to spend time with family members. Research indicates the role of the grandparents has changed from the historical relationship of "dictatorial, authority, and power" to one of "indulgence, warmth, and pleasure without responsibility" (Wilcoxon, 1987, p. 289).

### Roles of Grandparents

Collectively, data has shown grandchildren benefit "from the (grandparent) relationship affectively, cognitively, and materially" (Kalliopuska, 1994, p.1083). Affectively, grandchildren can develop close emotional ties with their grandparents. Most grandparents are known for their unconditional positive regard which is so important to a developing grandchild. Materially, parents become so entangled in their role as provider for the best home, clothes and schools for their children that they often put aside the nurturing and listening role as a parent. The pressure is not as focused for a grandparent to provide for the needs of the child as it is for parents.

Further, grandchildren and grandparents can enjoy each other because there is not an ongoing power struggle. Many grandparents embrace this role for the child and literally become the child's playmate (Kornhaber, 1996). Grandparents are willing to give

their time, money, and talents to give a grandchild a “sense of trust, responsibility and dependability” on themselves (O'Brien, 1990, p.42).

The study of gerontology has sparked an interest in grandparenting, but cross generational studies of adolescent grandchildren and the communication level between relationships with their grandparents remain limited. The early research by Galbo, as cited in a literature review (Scales & Gibbons, 1996), examined adolescents' perceptions of significant adults in their lives. The research found that adolescents' chose same-gender adults more often than opposite-gender adults and that the number of nonparental adults selected decreased with the adolescents age. Nonparental significant adults included institutional representatives, caretakers and extended family members such as grandparents. Scales & Gibbons (1996) described significant others in adolescents' lives to “... include extended family members, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles older cousins, and the mother of their boyfriend, and unrelated adults, such as teachers, neighbors, coaches, clergy, and other youth workers” (p. 368). Galbo's subsequent research (as cited in Scales & Gibbons, 1996) suggested that relatives were the most significant adults, other than parents, in the lives of adolescents as compared to other nonrelated adults mentioned.

Research on the adolescents perception of significant persons in their lives was addressed through extensive studies by Blyth et al. (as cited in Scales et al.) of young white middle class adolescents. Through adolescents self-report over seventy-five percent of respondents listed at least one extended family member, and sixty percent listed a nonrelated adult, as significant persons in their lives. The study also reported girls listed



more extended family members than boys, and communication exchanges declined in number by both groups as the teens aged.

In more recent reports, Hendry et al. (1992) asked adolescents to list the most important person in the family and the most important person outside the family. As expected, a parent was named the most important family member and a same gender friend for the nonrelated figure; however, eight percent of the adolescents listed an adult from the extended family as the most important familial adult.

Thus, grandparent relationships are second only to that of a parent-child relationship in importance. Grandparents and grandchildren sharing a supportive relationship create a bond of the kinship that “functions as a resource for the individuals and the families as a whole by helping to absorb family pressures and provide assistance” (Langer, 1990, p. 101). Grandparents give love and acceptance that allow their grandchildren to develop into their own person. They give recognition that helps foster the grandchild's feelings of self-worth. They give support, care, and provide a safe environment in which the grandchild can feel secure. Grandparents pass down knowledge and give hope for the future by showing the grandchildren that change is something that should be embraced not feared. “All in all, grandparents can assist in the personal development of a grandchild's sense of identity, confidence, values, goals, and security” (Kennedy, 1992, p.225). Grandparents give grandchildren a multitude of gifts that the grandchild, as well as society, may only realize later in life.

### Styles of Grandparenting

Grandparents are standing in the gap left by many parents who cannot balance all their other responsibilities with those of their family life. Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986)

note the variation in the kinds of relationships American grandparents have with their grandchildren as a “life-course of grandparenting” while others (Neugarten & Weinstein, 1964; Wood & Robertson, 1976; Robertson 1975) have labeled styles of grandparenting. Grandparents in life’s course may choose to have an active (45%), passive (29%), and very distant role (26%) (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985). Research has found “a diversity of responses that form a continuum from substantial involvement to remoteness” (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985, p.98). Along this continuum, grandparents may follow different styles (roles) with different grandchildren.

### Grandparent Interaction

Grandparent relationships vary among the same family from grandchild to grandchild (Eggebeen, 1992). During the transition from late adolescence to young adulthood, the grandchildren tend to focus on themselves and relationships outside of the family (Roberto & Stroes, 1992). The study cited the average frequency of interaction of grandparents and grandchildren was once a month or less. In Nussbaum and Bettini (1994) “forty-three percent of the students reported contact with a grandparent only on holidays and special occasions, forty percent on a monthly basis, and seventeen percent reported more frequent contact” (p.73). However, in earlier research by Gladstone, 1988 and Johnson, 1988 (as cited in Nussbaum and Bettini, 1994), Gladstone’s study of grandmothers reported an increased level of contact with the grandchildren through increased personal advice after their adult child’s divorce. Johnson’s 1988 data showed that grandmothers, except for those over the age of sixty-five, also increased their contact with their grandchildren following a divorce of the adult child. These studies support the idea that grandparents can take a more functional role in times of family crisis. And with

the divorce rate increasing, grandparents may become more supportive to the parents and grandchildren. Yet, few studies make the vital connection and emphasize the importance of the connectedness between adolescents and their grandparents and the functional role grandparents may play during times of family crisis. Grandmothers tend to initiate more contact with grandchildren, but grandfathers prefer interacting with their grandsons (Kornhaber, 1996). Grandparents will often have different relationships depending on the age of the grandchild and their own age (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985; Williams et al. 1996).

Cherlin and Furstenberg's (1985) study examined 510 relationships of grandparents and teenage grandchildren over the course of twelve months on frequency of contacts and depth of communication exchanged. The study examined the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren for the supportiveness and assistance shared in the relationship. Data collected for this study was grandparents of teenage grandchildren, and therefore, they had been a grandparent longer than a new first time grandparent. The interview measured responses to the following questions:

- 1) "Over the past 12 months, has (the child) asked for your help with something (s/he) was doing or making?"
- 2) Run errands or chores for you?"
- 3) Over the past 12 months, have you asked (the child) for help with something you were doing or making?"
- 4) Helped (the child) with (his/her) errands or chores?" (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985, p.100).

A scale was developed and findings reported about one-third of grandparents responses were positively related to at least three of the four questions of grandparent supportiveness and assistance and about one-sixth answered positively to all four (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985).

The Cherlin and Furstenberg (1985) research also measured the extent to which the grandparents were able to exert the type of influence over the grandchild that is typically reserved for parents. The interview questions allowed responses to be scored from zero to five on parental behaviors; zero was the most common response with five the least common, reflecting the lack of authority grandparents possess. Still, nearly half of the respondents scored three or more, and more than one-fourth scored four or more positively related responses (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985); this indicates participants were satisfied with the type of influence grandparents had with their grandchildren.

#### Adolescent communication

Adolescent communication patterns are often difficult to interpret as an adult. Whether the adult is the parent, teacher, sibling, or grandparent, we often misinterpret what teens communicate. For the purpose of this study, an exchange represents contact in a variety of manners, such as joking, and reminiscing, and may include a variety of ways for the contact, such as a personal visit, letter, phone conversation, and e-mail. When communication is exchanged between people, many of the exchanges are misinterpreted due to barriers. One of those barriers may result from the intergenerational gap between the grandparent and teen as well as whether the grandparent and teen are receptive to the others' message during an exchange. For example, a grandparent in a passive role may not be willing to listen to a teen grandchild.

For most teens the period of adolescence causes intensive changes in communication patterns. They no longer choose to confide and share information with their parents. Peers are preferred. The adolescent experiences confusion in all aspects of his or her life. Peer groups and their viewpoints become very important to an adolescent. In early adolescence, the segregation of interaction by sexes begins to dissolve (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987; Feiring & Lewis, 1987). The disintegration of cross-sex interaction barriers occurs at a time when the social networks of young people are expanding rapidly (Feiring & Lewis 1991; Clark, 1994) and when talking with peers becomes the most common and most satisfying activity for adolescents (Berndt, 1982). Within the grandparent/grandchild relationship same-sex and cross-sex linkages have conflicting results; some research shows no gender differences (Van Ranst et al. 1995), other studies favor the grandmothers for a relationship with grandchildren (Roberto & Stroes, 1992; Thomas, 1989; Nussbaum & Bettini, 1994), while yet another Williams et al. (1996) favors the grandfathers. As society and family science professionals, we notice the stress adolescents undergo when gender role identities begin changing; the shift from family to peers for support makes adolescence a stressful period in teens life.

Yet, we know that individuals seek interaction with others for a broad range of reasons that go beyond the sharing of feelings and the offering and seeking of support (Hill, 1987). Support for teens during a crisis comes from many different individuals, including family members, teachers, friends, and other trusted individuals. In analyzing conversations more specifically, Rubin et al. (1988) isolated a number of motivations that individuals have for communicating. These included pleasure, affection, inclusion, escape,

relaxation and control. Grandparents can and do provide that needed support and interaction for some adolescent grandchildren.

#### Relationship closeness

One of the reasons for the lack of communication in a grandparent/grandchild relationship may be distance. This distance may be a result of proximity or actual miles between the two individuals or families especially in later adolescence when the grandchild leaves for college. Distance may also be present in another form, the lack of emotional support, due on the part of the teen grandchild to a lack of maturity resulting from adolescent turmoil. Teens tend to distance themselves from others, including grandparents and parents, with the feeling they are too old to continue the previous relationship they had as a young child. Often times both, grandparents and grandchildren do not know how to evolve their relationship through the adolescent period into adulthood. Grandparents and parents tend not to understand the priority given to needs, wants, and crises of adolescents in spite of their recognition both that teens are confused and that they as adults may place less importance on issues that teens perceive to be crucial. This study asked the adolescents to provide the information rather than asking the grandparent or parent for their perceptions of the grandparent/grandchild relationship; this will reveal a different perspective on satisfaction level of the relationship.

## Theoretical Framework

### Family Stress/Crisis Theory

Family stress/crisis theory evaluates the total picture of family and/or individual structure by examining the adaptability of one's self to a changing situation. Family stress/crisis theory gives the best framework for defining the relationships and interactions of family members during times of life changes and crisis (Farrington, & Chertok, 1993). In Hill's (1949) study three variables are at work when determining whether a given event becomes a crisis for any given family:

- 1) the hardships of the situation or event itself,
- 2) the resources of the family, its role structure, flexibility and previous history with crisis,
- 3) the definition the family makes of an event.

(See Appendix E for Figure 1)

According to the family stress theory several variables interact to create a crisis (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). This interaction is represented by the  $ABC=X$  model. Variable 'a' is the stressor event, which is defined as any occurrence that creates change and disruption within the family social system, and typically can be such things as boundaries, structures, goals, processes, roles, or values. This stressor/crisis event interacts with two other variables to create a crisis. The second of the variables 'b' is the family's available resources. Family in this instance expands beyond the nuclear family members and reaches the extended family members and their pool of resources. The variable 'b' is a family's ability to prevent a stressor event in the family social system from creating some crisis or disruptiveness by utilizing existing resources. The last variable 'c' is

the family's subjective interpretation of the event. The definition of the event is varying and probably depends on whether the family defines the change in the system as easy, difficult, or at some point in between these two extremes. All of the variables together equal 'x', the crisis or amount of change in the system. (See appendix E figure 2 for model of theory.)

Previous research on grandparent/grandchild relations indicated that parents often mediate the relationships between grandchildren and their grandparents (Henry, Ceglian & Matthews, 1992; Barranti, 1985; Robertson 1975). Wide variations have been found in how grandparents enact grandparenting roles (Blieszner, 1986). In addition, differences have been found in the separate interactions of grandmothers and grandfathers with their grandchildren (Hagestad, 1985). In order to address the complexity of intergenerational communication patterns and still consider the multitude of variables and family concepts the Double ABCX Model needs to be addressed. In this model, McCubbin, Cauble & Patterson (1982) identified a second variable 'A', which incorporates additional stressors from both family development and family's efforts to cope with the stressor(s).

When the second variable 'A' contributes to the crisis, the situation is known as stress pile up. The period of adolescence entails change constantly occurring in a teen's life. Stress pile up may occur that begins to make every stressor a crisis from an adolescents' point of view. Teens may use their resources or utilize family members, peers, and friends resources. Variable 'B' encompasses the original resources utilized plus any new resources made available to help cope with the change. Coping resources may be personal, family and social strengths in the family system. Grandparents often lend support to families in all three of these areas. Variable 'C' is the family's perception of the



original crisis and the new stressor and resources available. The adolescents' perception of themselves and their grandparents may affect the level of communication within their relationship. Variable 'X' in the Double ABCX model includes the concept of family adaptation over the course of the adjustment following the crisis. Adaptation involves the processes of stimulus regulation, environmental control, and balancing to achieve a level of functioning, that preserves family unity, and enhances the family system and member growth and development. Families experiencing the individual growth of adolescents must balance the various dimensions of family life with assimilation, accommodation, and compromise.

Families sharing experiences and interpreting situations of change as a stress/crisis begins the adaptation process. Key leaders are the parents, and family members define the event, then provide or deny available resources. The grandparents and other extended family members either adopt an active or passive role in this family process. Frequent contacts in a grandparent/grandchild relationship allows sharing of resources among family members. This process can provide family members the experience to adapt to stress/crisis. Family members model problem solving skills to younger members and lend direction for future generations.

#### Research Questions

Change is inevitable for everyone and especially for adolescents. Adolescence is a period in one's life that takes direction by the choices or pathways of opportunity.

Important decisions are made about education, career, marriage, and family. The physical and social development issues of adolescence can be considered crises by teenagers. The main research questions this study addressed were:

- (1) What are the frequency levels of communication exchanged between a nonresidential grandchild and a grandparent?
- (2) Has the frequency level of communication exchanges changed since the adolescent grandchild experienced a crisis?
- (3) Which grandparent does the adolescent grandchild seek to communicate with the most? Maternal or Paternal kinship? Same sex or opposite sex?

The researcher was also interested in learning whether communication exchanges were between the same sex or opposite sex grandparent. It was also hypothesized that the maternal kinship will have the most exchanges with grandchildren due to availability and proximity with the maternal parent of the grandchild. It is hoped that this research can give other researchers and family therapists a better understanding of the intergenerational gap between grandparent and grandchild and the importance of grandparent involvement in the grandchild's life.

### Methodology

This study examined the importance of communication exchanges and the closeness of the grandchild's relationship with grandparents. Second, the study examined the alteration of communication level with grandparents when adolescent grandchildren experience a crisis; finally, the study explored differences in communication exchanges and relational status of the grandparents in relation to gender of the grandparent and participants.

### Participants

Participants were teenage grandchildren (n=92) between the ages of 14 and 19 years. The data collected for this study was self-reported by the teens from their

perspective of their relationship with a grandparent. Categories on the questionnaire were labeled to make it easy for adolescents to identify family structure. The adolescents' families were comprised of single parent (6%), mother and father (two-parent) (81%), parent with step parent (9%), mother with boyfriend (1%), mother with other relative, (2%) and teens living alone (1%). The adolescent grandchild had at least one or more grandparents living. The participants represented all four districts of the state of Oklahoma, and attended a state 4-H Teen Leaders Camp, Leisure Lab, April 18-20, 1997. Age guidelines for attending State Leisure Lab were set by the Oklahoma State 4-H staff. The sample included only those adolescents enrolled in an Oklahoma 4-H program, which included twenty-eight of seventy-seven counties who sent a total of 114 representatives. Gender distribution of Leisure Lab participants was sixty-nine females and forty-five males. Those who had parental and assent forms completed comprised fifty females (56 %) and thirty-nine males (44 %); of the camp participants (n=89) had usable questionnaires which were coded for data entry.

### Procedure

The researcher selected a 4-H sample in order to find a group of adolescents in another setting besides school. Parental consent forms were sent in packets to 4-H delegates along with the other consent and medical forms required by the state 4-H office. This allowed parents and delegates to have prior notice and choose to participate in the research study. At Leisure Lab registration, consent forms were collected. All delegates came to the cafeteria area and the researcher announced the data collection procedures. Only delegates who had parental consent participated; if teens did not have parental

consent or chose not to participate, they exited to another room for an educational video on nutrition.

The researcher distributed the assent forms (see Appendix F) and pencils for the teens to sign, then distributed the questionnaires about the communication and relationship with a grandparent. The researcher remained in the room for directions or questions by the teens and to insure confidentiality among teens. After teens completed the questionnaire, the forms were collected in a box near the exit of the room. Collection of data by this method potentially increased the return rate; 92 of 114 (81%) adolescents attending the State Leisure Lab completed the assent and questionnaire forms and had parental permission to participate.

#### Instrument

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher to collect demographics of gender and age but additionally to cluster the responses of teens with their selected grandparent. Other questions included besides demographics: which grandparent you communicate with the most; the proximity of the grandparent to the grandchild; whether the grandparent is a maternal or paternal kinship; and, if the grandparent was the same or opposite sex to that of the grandchild.

The adolescent provided information about the amount of exchanges per month between grandparent and grandchild and whether the exchanges increased or decreased during a crisis. The instrument used to assess grandparent/grandchild relational closeness included a scale of eleven Likert-type statements (on a 4-point scale) to measure satisfaction with the number of communication exchanges and the respondents' perceptions of the quality of the relationship. For each statement, responses ranged from

strongly disagree to strongly agree values: SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree. (Buerkel-Rothfuss, et al. 1995).

### Null Hypothesis of Study

Three null hypothesis are given for this research: There will be no difference in the maternal or paternal side in the amount of communication exchanges between an adolescent grandchild and grandparent. Second, no difference will be measured in the frequency of contact in communication exchanges after an adolescent grandchild experiences a crisis. Third, there will not be a preference for an adolescent grandchild's choice of a grandparent by kinship or gender.

### Analysis

Participants were grouped by: Same sex, maternal relationship; same sex, paternal relationship; opposite sex, maternal relationship; and opposite sex, paternal relationship. Frequency count and percentages were used to analyze demographic information. The cross tabulation procedure in Statistical Package for Social Sciences X, (SPSSx) examined the amount of exchanges and if frequency of contacts altered during a crisis by increasing, decreasing or remaining the same. The Chi Square statistic was used to analyze how the expected values compared to the data and to test the null hypothesis.

### Results

Frequency data reported forty-three percent of respondents indicated 10 or more communication exchanges per month with their chosen grandparent. A personal visit was the most frequent choice of communication exchange; 81% of teens visited in person with their grandparent. Other responses included phone calls 17% and written letters 2%. E-mail was not selected as a response. (See Table I in Appendix A).

The adolescent participants were allowed to choose which living grandparent with whom to assess their communication relationship; all participants had at least one living grandparent. Frequency data reported participants chose a grandmother eighty percent of the time and grandfathers twenty percent. However, these findings support the importance of the maternal connection in the literature of Nussbaum & Bettini (1994), Roberto & Stroes (1992), Thomas (1989) and Kornhaber (1996).

The amount of communication exchanges after a crisis occurring in the adolescent's life showed no significant difference (chi sq. .65, df=6,  $p>.05$ ) (See Table II in Appendix A). The cross tabulation procedure was used to examine alteration in number of exchanges between grandparent and adolescent grandchild who experienced a crisis. Results were: 11% communicated more with the grandparent; 12% communicated less and 76% of communication exchanges remained the same. Thus, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Adolescent grandchildren selected the maternal grandparents sixty-three percent of the time as compared to thirty-seven percent selecting paternal kinship. Comparing the proximity of the adolescent respondent to the residence of grandparent for the maternal cluster of respondents, 55% lived in the same county, 36% lived out of the county, and only 9% lived out of the state of Oklahoma. For the paternal group, 59% lived in the same county, 9% lived out of the county, and 13% lived out of the state of Oklahoma. Eighty-one percent of participants lived with their mother and father within the same household. Only one relational satisfaction item of 'time talking about thoughts or feelings' approached significance (chi sq. value 15.6, df=9,  $p<.07$ ).

Adolescent grandchildren's measurement of the grandparent with the relational satisfaction items were all of low probability but not significant. The overall satisfaction of the adolescent with the grandparent relationship depending on gender and kinship rejects the null hypothesis (chi sq. value 26.4,  $df=9$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The question for 'how close do you feel to this grandparent' also rejects the null hypothesis and shows a difference between groups depending on gender and maternal or paternal kinship with the intergenerational relationship satisfaction (chi-sq. value 17.9,  $df=9$ ,  $p<.03$ ). Caution must be used in interpreting the results because of the number of cells with less than five responses.

### Discussion

The purpose of the study was to determine the communication level between grandparents and adolescent grandchildren. Participants' communication exchanges typically occurred as a personal visit with the grandparent ten or more times per month as opposed to once a week (Van Ranst, Verschueren, & Marcoen, 1995), once a month, or only on holidays and special occasions (Nussbaum & Bettini, 1994). Participants lived with their mother and father and in close proximity to their grandparent. Living in the same county, participants had availability to the grandparent without the barrier of physical distance. The frequency of ten or more visits per month for a grandparent and grandchild to interact provided the opportunity for the individuals to share more experiences. Specifically, the item which measured "time spent talking about thoughts or feelings" approached significance with same sex maternal and opposite sex maternal kinship clusters, showing a close positive relationship. Findings showed the "overall, how satisfied are you with your grandparent relationship" varied significantly with the group according to gender and kinship. In measuring closeness the adolescent felt towards the

grandparent, the research supports relationship satisfaction and closeness at significant levels. (See Table III in Appendix A).

#### Frequency of communication

There was no significant difference in the frequency of communication exchanges with a grandparent after the participants experienced a crisis. The options more, less, or the same amount of communication exchanges were listed for participants in measuring this item. Participation in communication exchanges with grandparents were higher than expected with ten or more times a month. It would be difficult to increase the amount of exchanges with the grandparent since the frequency for the group averages more than two times a week.

The majority of the adolescents' households were comprised of a mother and father, which may have influenced the high frequency of communication exchanges. Physical distance for most grandchildren's accessibility to their grandparent was within the same county; county lines were utilized in order to avoid some teens misperception of distance/mileage. Families select the emotional closeness of sharing experiences and interpreting situations of change. The flexibility, available resources and structure of the family guide the adaptation to the event. Through this process of adaptation and accommodation the family interprets the change as a crisis or not. Family members, including grandparents participate in active or passive roles of this family process.

#### Kinship of Grandparent

The results of this study show adolescent grandchildren's choice of the maternal or paternal grandparent was not significantly different in the number of communication exchanges. However, Roberto and Stroes (1992) reported that grandchildren interacted



with their grandparents once a month or less. Miller and Bengston (1991) reported grandparents are perceived by family members as alternative adult role models and providers of a continuity with the past. Adolescents' relationships with their grandparents may be their only relationship with an elderly person(s). Grandparents may be a valuable resource that teens, parents, and researchers need to be aware of in providing support and educational programs for families.

There are a small number of cross-sectional studies that report adolescents are positively affected by relationships with extended family members and unrelated adults. However, there is a need for further empirical assessment of positive relationships with adults, particularly relationships with nonparental adults. These adults act to promote young adolescents' optimum development and to reduce the likelihood of their engaging in risky behaviors (Scales & Gibbons, 1996).

### Implications

Research on grandparents and adolescents can enable other researchers and family professionals to have a better understanding of the intergenerational gap and the importance of grandparents being involved in the child's life. Knowing the adolescent expands their communication field beyond parents and peers provides a foundation for building positive relationship skills. Adolescents place an importance on the closeness and satisfaction level with other adults. These adults, related and nonrelated, may provide a support system with a larger pool of resources for adaptation to stressors/crisis for the adolescent. Adolescent grandchildren, in this study interacted with grandparents more than once a month on special occasions. These teens had an impressive amount of contact with their grandparents and program needs for teens, parents, grandparents and families

need to take notice of such a support system when planning and implementing programs for youth and families

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Appendix A

Table 1

## Frequency of Communication Exchanges with Grandparent

---

<u>Contacts per month</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0	4	04%
1-3	24	27%
4-6	16	18%
7-9	7	08%
10 or more	38	43%

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n=89



Table II  
Communication Exchanges After Crisis by Same or Opposite Sex,  
Maternal or Paternal Grandparent

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Chi Square Value	df	p
4.19	6	.65

Number of missing observations: 3

Significance is  $p < .05$

Table III  
 Relational Satisfaction Items by Same or Opposite Sex,  
 Maternal or Paternal Grandparent

Item number	Chi Sq. Value	df	p
time spent doing things together	12.03	9	.21
time talking about thoughts or feelings	15.68	9	.07
time spent talking about impersonal topics	14.13	9	.11
number of times verbally expressed affection	7.71	9	.56
number of times nonverbally expressed affection	9.66	9	.37
willingness to listen to your problems	8.10	9	.52
concern for your well-being	13.15	9	.15
ability to express affection for you	6.20	9	.71
willingness to listen to your problems, concern	4.91	9	.84
overall satisfaction with grandparent relationship	26.44	9	.001**
how close you feel to this grandparent	17.96	9	.03 *

\*p< .05

\*\*p< .001

Appendix B

## Chapter 1

### Statement of the Problem

Grandparents can and do provide that needed support and interaction for some adolescent grandchildren. One of the reasons for the lack of communication in a grandparent/grandchild relationship may be distance. This distance may be a result of proximity or actual miles between the two individuals or families especially in later adolescence when the grandchild leaves for college. Distance may also be present in another form, the lack of emotional support, resulting on the part of the teen grandchild from a lack of maturity due to adolescent turmoil. Teens tend to distance themselves from others, including grandparents and parents, with the feeling they are too old to continue the previous relationship they had as a young child. Often times both, grandparents and grandchildren do not know how to evolve their relationship through the adolescent period into adulthood. Grandparents and parents tend not to understand the priority given to needs, wants, and crises of adolescents in spite of their recognition, both that teens are confused and that they as adults may place less importance on issues that teens perceive to be crucial.

### Purpose of the Study

Research conducted in the area of adolescence often pertains to the negative aspects of teenagers. Countless research studies have examined the sexual activity, suicide, drug and alcohol abuse problems of teens. This research examined the period of adolescence by looking at the level of communication patterns of adolescent grandchildren with their grandparents. The study asked for the adolescents to give the information rather than the grandparent or parent being the source of information, which will give a

different viewpoint of the satisfaction level of the relationship. This study examined if there is a difference in frequency of communication exchanges between an adolescent grandchild and a grandparent when a grandchild experiences a crisis/stressor (X). This study also examined how exchanges may be altered, increased, decreased or remain the same during crisis.

This research examined which grandparent, maternal or paternal grandparent had the most frequent communication exchanges and how the pattern of exchange relate to the variables of proximity, family structure and same or opposite sex of adolescent grandchild.

#### Limitations of the Study

This study examined only 4-H teens at Leisure Lab which may limit the application of the findings to a larger population. The frequency of communication exchanges and the relational satisfaction items were measured, but this is not necessarily an indication of the quality of each exchange. The questionnaire did not include whether the adolescent has two or more grandparents living, in order to determine if the participant had a choice of which grandparent was selected. The researcher planned to send a questionnaire to the grandparent the adolescent had selected but decided against such an action since the teen would have had to supply a correct address for the grandparent. The research presented the adolescent grandchild's perspective. Future research needs a random sampling of a larger population of both the adolescent grandchild's and grandparent's satisfaction with value for their relationship.

#### Definition of Terms

Communication exchanges involves verbal and nonverbal forms of communication

through sharing of thoughts and feelings involving all forms of interaction between at least two individuals.

Crisis/stress is the point of identification by the adolescent that creates change and disruption for themselves or within their family.

Emotional closeness is measured by the grandchild's self reported satisfaction with the closeness/distance of the relationship between the chosen grandparent and the grandchild.

Kinship is maternal or paternal side of one's family.

Physical distance for the purpose of this study, is measured by actual proximity of the chosen grandparent to the grandchild, whether they live in the same county, in another county in Oklahoma or in a different state.

Relationship satisfaction is the self reported measure of being pleased with the grandparent/grandchild interaction.

## Appendix C

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### Identification of Self

Generally, the family is considered an important framework for the development of a child's self-concept (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). Small (1988) stated that high self-esteem is the foundation for all positive communication and interaction in the family. If parents are to raise their children to be competent, capable individuals who have a strong sense of self-worth, then parents themselves must feel good about who they are and possess a high self-esteem (Small, 1988). Parental behavior that indicated evaluation of the child, such as support, participation and interest in the child's self-esteem enhanced the child's self-concept. The extent to which parents grant autonomy to their adolescent offspring should also have positive consequences for adolescent self-esteem (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). Self-esteem for adolescents is a process beginning with identity formation. "As a consequence both of their physical and cognitive development and of changing social expectations, adolescents begin to reevaluate and reorganize the skills and identifications of childhood" into a new formation of self (Cooper et al., 1983, p.46).

In a study of youths attitudes and perceptions of parents, Parish and Necessary (1993) found significant differences between college and high school students. College students (n=64) reported that their parents loving actions were significantly correlated with college students' self-concepts, but not the adolescent's evaluation of parents (Parish & Necessary, 1993). In contrast, 174 high school students' evaluations of parents were significantly correlated with the parents loving actions , but not the high school students' self-concepts. Personal Attribute Inventory (PAI) was completed by both sets of students;



however, the high school students completed three separate inventories for self, mothers, and fathers. College students completed one inventory on themselves for self-concept. The researchers, Parish and Necessary (1993) suggested the difference was due to a developmental stage of adolescence between high school students and college students entering young adulthood. Further studies of Necessary and Parish (1996) “suggest that family members should be attentive to the messages they convey through their actions and attitudes, and seek to be as positive as possible if they wish to benefit all concerned”(p.749).

For identity formation to progress the adolescent must develop a viewpoint and be able to differentiate his or her own views from another person’s view (Cooper et al., 1983). Within the family system, extended family members cooperate amongst the differences of individuals for a common family goal. Adolescents may hold a different perception of other family members.

#### Perception of grandparent relationship

As for adolescents’ perception of the grandparent/grandchild relationship, Cherlin and Furstenberg’s (1985) study examined 510 relationships of grandparents and teenage grandchildren over the course of twelve months on frequency of contacts and depth of communication exchanged. The study examined the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren for the supportiveness and assistance shared in the relationship. Data collected for this study was grandparents of teenage grandchildren, and therefore, they had been a grandparent longer than a new first time grandparent. The interview measured responses to the following questions:

- 1) "Over the past 12 months, has (the child) asked for your help with something (s/he) was doing or making?
- 2) Run errands or chores for you?
- 3) Over the past 12 months, have you asked (the child) for help with something you were doing or making?
- 4) Helped (the child) with (his/her) errands or chores?" (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985, p.100).

A scale was developed and findings reported about one-third of grandparents responses were positively related to at least three of the four questions of grandparent supportiveness and assistance and about one-sixth answered positively to all four (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985).

The Cherlin and Furstenberg (1985) research also measured the extent to which the grandparents were able to exert the type of influence over the grandchild that is typically reserved for parents. The interview questions allowed responses to be scored from zero to five on parental behaviors; zero was the most common response with five the least common, reflecting the lack of authority grandparents possess. Still, nearly half of the respondents scored three or more, and more than one-fourth scored four or more positively related responses (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985); this indicates participants were satisfied with the type of influence grandparents had with their grandchildren.

#### Grandparents parenting

The grandparent influence has altered for some families to one of parental responsibility. Children living with grandparents is not a new situation, but the number of children being parented by grandparents continues to escalate. The Census Bureau

estimated in 1991, approximately 3.3 million children in the United States lived with grandparents (Jendrek, 1993). This figure refers to homes maintained by grandparents and does not include grandchildren whose parents maintain the home, though a grandparent lives with them. The 3.3 million figure represents a forty-four percent increase since 1980, in the number of grandchildren living with grandparents (Jendrek, 1993).

The media refers to some grandparents as “the silent saviors, the second line of defense, and the safety net” (Jendrek, 1993, p.613). For family professionals the concern lies in determining how these grandparents’ lives are affected in raising their children’s children and consequently, how the children’s lives are affected by a grandparent raising them, as opposed to their own parent.

#### Functions of grandparents

Apfel and Seitz (1991) report grandparents serve many important functions in the lives of their children. For example, grandparents may serve as baby-sitters, giving relief to the parent, spend time with the grandchild, and also as a surrogate, replacing the absent parent for brief periods. Some grandparents may act as mediators of parental influence, countering the effect of an abusive parent, while modeling appropriate parent-child interactions. In contrast, grandparents can produce negative effects on the grandchild by modeling an abusive or negligent style of parenting. A grandparent can expect their grandparental interaction to be in categories of either formal, fun-seeker, surrogate parent, reservoir of family wisdom, or distant figure (Millu & Cavanaugh, 1990).

Williams et al. (1996) made a connection between grandfathers’ involvement in childrearing and the school performance of Ojibwa grandchildren. This study of nineteen Native American Ojibwa families examined the relationship between quantity and quality

of grandfather involvement in rearing grandchildren and the grandchildren's academic and social school performances. The tool to measure quantity involvement was a modified version of the "Paternal Involvement in Child Care Index for grandfathers (GF-PICCI);" scores were averaged and given for the father, mother and grandfather. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for internal consistency. The alpha value was (.55) for grandfather involvement, which is a reflection of higher grandfather involvement. To measure the quality or degree of grandparental nurturance, an adapted version of the Parent Perception Inventory (Hazzard et al., 1983) was included in the interview. The inventory was individually scored by the mother, father, and grandfather. It included seven questions:

"How often does the child's grandfather [sic]

- 1) tell the child when he likes what the child did?; [sic]
- 2) have a good conversation with the child?; [sic]
- 3) let the child help figure out problems?; [sic]
- 4) do things with the child that the child likes to do?; [sic]
- 5) say nice things to the child?; [sic]
- 6) help the child when the child needs it?; [sic] and
- 7) tell the child stories?" (Williams et al., 1996, p.167)

A Pearson product moment correlation indicated mother and father views of grandfather nurturance were significantly correlated,  $r = .68, p < .05$ . The Cronbach alpha coefficient was .95 for mother's view and .93 for father's view (Williams et al., 1996). In this study, the grandfather's response is averaged with the mother's and father's response, so an individual score of the grandfather is unknown and does not allow the reader to determine any difference there may be between the grandfathers' self-report and the

parent's report. In addition, the Head Start teachers did not complete any forms on the preschool grandchildren as they did complete for the school age children. The dependent variables the researchers identified were (1) variables which assessed children's academic functioning; and (2) variables which assessed children's social functioning. Ojibwa grandfathers show the importance of Native Americans passing on the traditional rules and behaviors to their grandchildren (Williams et al.).

### Expectations

Mobility has changed the family life style in the availability of family members to form relationships with each other. The grandparent/grandchild may be one relationship that is affected by mobility/distance. Strom and Strom (1990) developed a class in child and adolescent development for grandparents to increase their involvement in family activities. The researchers goals were to:

- increase the satisfaction of being a grandparent;
- improve the performance of their role as a grandparent;
- enlarge the scope of teaching provided by grandparents;
- lower the frustrations of being a grandparent; and
- increase awareness of personal success as a grandparent.

The sample included 400 grandparents, over the age of fifty, in either a control or experimental site. Weekly classes were given to the grandparent experimental groups with discussion on topics of peer pressure, self-esteem, drugs, sexuality, goals and education. The classes involved group discussions and homework on self evaluation. The Grandparent Strengths and Needs Inventory (GSNI) was given before classes started, when classes ended, and three months afterwards. The GSNI was administered to three

generations—grandparent, adult child, and grandchild (age 7-18). The instrument focused on grandparent development in the areas of satisfaction, success, teaching, difficulty, frustration and informational needs (Strom & Strom, 1990).

All three generations assigned favorable scores on the pretest. Both post evaluations (immediately following and three months after the class) indicated all three generations assigned higher scores for grandparents growth in potentials and concerns. However, the control group did not show any gains in the same time period.

Educational programs can equip grandparents to contribute to the individuals of the family as well as themselves. Grandparents benefit from gaining a new perspective, being mentally stimulated, increasing self-esteem, enabling their communications, strengthening the family unit, and understanding that their role is ever changing. This research demonstrates the need for implementation of grandparent education programs on the behalf of all family members, grandparents, parents and grandchildren.

#### Stress/crisis in families

Stress occurs when the anticipated role and the actual role are different. Jendrek (1993) explained the expected pattern was first, become a parent and raise children. Then the children would form their own nuclear families, bear and raise their own children. Grandparents should not assume the parenting responsibilities in relation to grandchildren. When the grandparent assumes a parenting role for the third generation, the pattern becomes violated. The pattern violation affects the grandparents individual life expectations and their social support network.

The family stress/crisis theory was supported in Henry's (1994) research of adolescents satisfaction with family life. Family stress/crisis was supported by the

commonality of families with adolescents facing a variety of stressors/crisis: illness, finances, separation and divorce. The ability of adaptation varies among families and family members. The level of flexibility in one's family system may be differently interpreted by the individual family members. Henry (1994) continues to support the stress/crisis theory with studies using the family system characteristics and subsystems of a parent-adolescent dyad. In addition she examines other theories that focus on the behaviors occurring in specific parent-adolescent dyads, which have little consideration for the overall family system. The family stress theory allowed for variance between family members individual characteristics. The research represented the patterns of time and routines within the overall family system, in the dyadic relationships, and as specific individuals. Results of a hierarchical multiple regression show a correlation between the demographic factors of adolescents' age and family form and the adolescent family life satisfaction. Adolescents who perceived their family as flexible reported higher family life satisfaction. And as teens incur more responsibility within the family, the satisfaction level continues to increase through the application of parental behaviors within the parent-adolescent subsystems (Henry). Family stress/crisis theory demonstrated how an exchange of information within the family system allowed for the adaptation, assimilation and compromise. The key was to effectively communicate the information to another member, whether it is the parent, grandparent, or adolescent.

Concerns lie in determining how grandparents' and adolescent grandchildren's lives are affected by the relationship the two share. A positive relationship with a grandparent can be a valuable resource; however a non-existent or negative relationship could damage the individual's identity and the family as a whole. Individual's expectations

direct the pathway for these intergenerational relationships. Stress becomes involved due to the roles ever changing amongst the development of self and as a part of the family system. Educational programs that encourage the strengths of families focus on identifying self concept, sharing of knowledge, and expanding communication for family members.



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## Appendix D

## Chapter 3

### Research Questions

Change is inevitable for everyone and especially for adolescents. Adolescence is a period in one's life that takes direction by the choices or pathways of opportunity.

Important decisions are made about education, career, marriage, and family. The physical and social development issues of adolescence can be considered crises by teenagers. The main research questions this study addressed were:

- (1) What are the frequency levels of communication exchanged between a nonresidential grandchild and a grandparent?
- (2) Has the frequency level of communication exchanges changed since the adolescent grandchild experienced a crisis?
- (3) Which grandparent does the adolescent grandchild seek to communicate with the most? Maternal or Paternal kinship? Same sex or opposite sex?

The researcher was also interested in learning whether communication exchanges were between the same sex or opposite sex grandparent. It was also hypothesized that the maternal kinship will have the most exchanges with grandchildren due to availability and proximity with the maternal parent of the grandchild. It is hoped that this research can give other researchers and family therapists a better understanding of the intergenerational gap between grandparent and grandchild and the importance grandparent involvement in the grandchild's life.



### Null Hypothesis of Study

Three null hypothesis are given for this research: There will be no difference in the maternal or paternal side in the amount of communication exchanges between an adolescent grandchild and grandparent. Second, no difference will be measured in the frequency of contact in communication exchanges after an adolescent grandchild experiences a crisis. Third, there will not be a preference for an adolescent grandchild's choice of a grandparent by kinship or gender.

### Procedure

The researcher selected a 4-H sample in order to find a group of adolescents in another setting besides school. Parental consent forms were sent in packets to 4-H delegates along with the other consent and medical forms required by the state 4-H office. This allowed parents and delegates to have prior notice and choose to participate in the research study. At Leisure Lab registration, consent forms were collected. All delegates came to the cafeteria area and the researcher announced the data collection procedures. Only delegates who had parental consent participated, if teens did not have parental consent or chose not to participate, they exited to another room for an educational video on nutrition.

The researcher distributed the assent forms (see Appendix F) and pencils for the teens to sign, then distributed the questionnaires about the communication and relationship with a grandparent. The researcher remained in the room for directions or questions by the teens and to insure confidentiality among teens. After teens completed the questionnaire, the forms were collected in a box near the exit of the room. Collection of data by this method potentially increased the return rate, 92 of 114 (81%) adolescents

attending the State Leisure Lab completed the assent and questionnaire forms and had parental permission to participate.

#### IRB Approval

Federal regulations and Oklahoma State University policy require review and approval of all research studies that involve human subjects before research can begin. The Oklahoma State University Office of University Research Services and the Institutional Review Board conduct this review to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in biomedical and behavioral research. In compliance with the above mentioned policy, this study was reviewed and given permission to proceed.

Appendix E

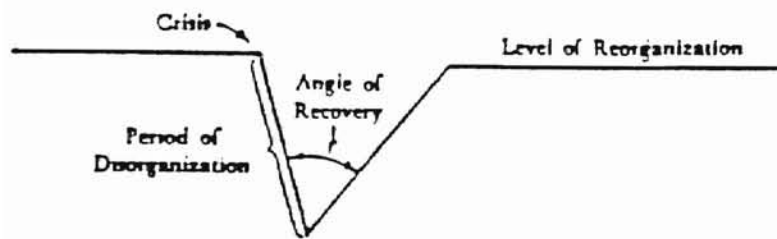


Figure 1. Hill (1949) profile of adjustment to crisis.

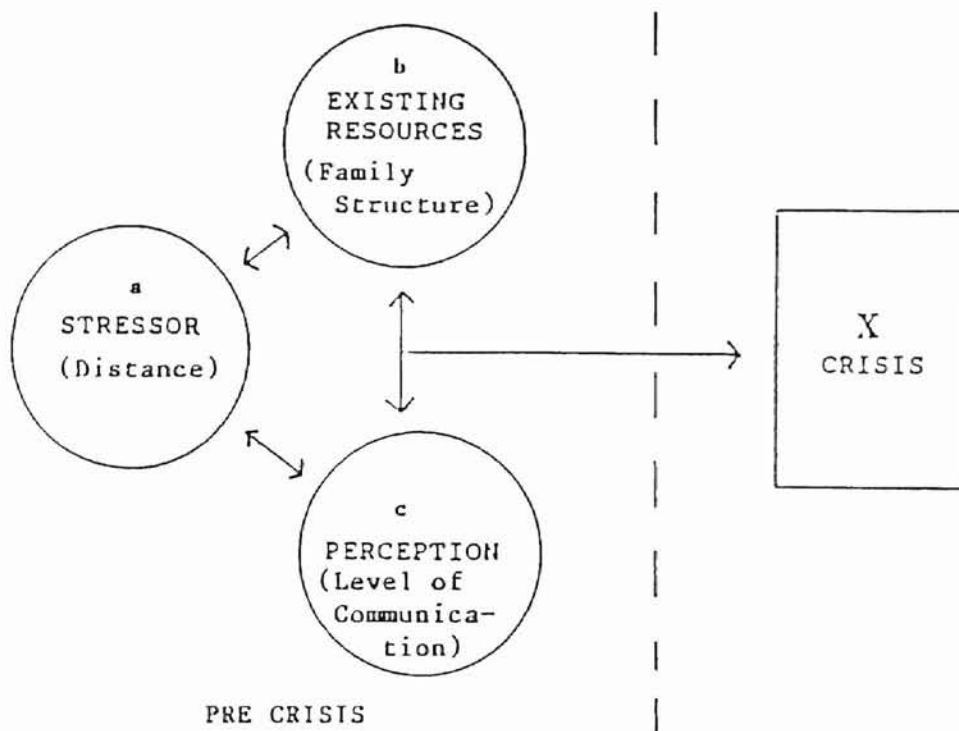


Figure 2. Hill (1949) model to examine the level of communication intergenerational through the Family Stress Theory.

Appendix F

## Informed Consent Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (parent or guardian), hereby voluntarily give consent for \_\_\_\_\_ (son/daughter) to complete the Teen Communication with Grandparent survey given to my son/daughter at the state 4-H Leisure Lab Camp. I authorize Angela A. Howard, Dr. Kay Murphy, and other trained researchers of their choosing to record information from the questionnaires for the purpose of reporting on the grandparent relationship with their adolescent grandchildren.

I understand that this informed consent form will be kept in a locked cabinet along with the questionnaires to ensure confidentiality and the only persons who will have access to these materials will be the researchers and their trained assistants. I understand that I may request a free copy of the study results even if I do not chose to participate. Furthermore, I understand that one possible benefit to participating in this research study is to help researchers understand more about the grandparent relationship with their adolescent grandchildren.

This is done as part of an investigation entitled "The Level of Communication Between Grandparents and Adolescent Grandchildren."

The purpose of the procedure is to report the frequency of communication exchanges with a grandparent, and if that is altered when the adolescent experiences a crisis.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty or fear of it affecting my child's current 4-H involvement.

I may contact Angela Howard at telephone number (918)-689-7772 or Dr. Kay Murphy at (405) 744-8353 for questions or comments about the research. I may also contact Gay Clarkson, executive secretary of University Research Services, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; Telephone: (405) 744-5700.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I voluntarily sign it and give permission for my son/daughter to participate. A copy has been given to me.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ (a. m./p. m.)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
parent or legal guardian

To the participant:

My name is Angela A. Howard and I am a County Extension Agent and a graduate student at Oklahoma State University. As part of my Masters studies, I am conducting a study of adolescent grandchildren and their relationship with their grandparents. The focus of the study is to measure the amount of communication shared with the chosen grandparent.

In order to maintain confidentiality, please do not sign the form. Researchers will not try to match the responses to any individual persons. I understand that this informed consent form will be kept in a locked cabinet along with the questionnaires to ensure confidentiality and the only persons who will have access to these materials will be the researchers and their trained assistants. I understand that I may request a free copy of the study results even if I do not chose to participate. Furthermore, I understand that one possible benefit to participating in this research study is to help researchers understand more about the grandparent relationship with their adolescent grandchildren. This is done as part of an investigation entitled "The Level of Communication Between Grandparents and Adolescent Grandchildren."

The purpose of the procedure is to report the frequency of communication exchanges with a grandparent, and if that is altered when the adolescent experiences a stress/crisis.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty or fear of it affecting my current 4-H involvement.

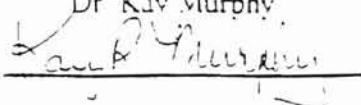
I may contact Angela Howard at (918)689-7772 or Dr. Kay Murphy at (405)744-8353 for questions or comments about the research. I may also contact Gay Clarkson, executive secretary of University Research Services, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; Telephone (405)744-5700.

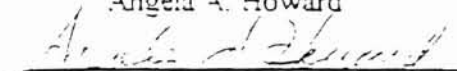
I have read and fully understand the consent form and am voluntarily signing it.

Attached is the questionnaire dealing with teens and grandparents. I would appreciate it if you would now complete each item. When you are finished, please place the questionnaire in one of the boxes located at the door. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
of participant

Sincerely,

Dr. Kay Murphy  


Angela A. Howard  




## Teen Communication with Grandparent Questionnaire

Check one:

1.  male or  female

2. Age  13  14  15  16  17  18  19

3. Check the one that describes who you live with most of the time:

mother only

father only

mother & father

father & step parent

mother & step parent

father & grandparent

mother & grandparent

father & other relative

mother & other relative

father & girlfriend

mother & boyfriend

father & other

mother & other

other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you have at least one or more grandparents living?  yes or  no

5. Which grandparent do you communicate with the **most** a:  grandmother **OR**  grandfather

6. Is this grandparent:  Maternal (your mother's side) **OR**  Paternal (your father's side)

*For the purpose of this study please only answer considering the one grandparent you just marked above for the remainder of the survey. Thanks.*

7. Which way do you communicate with your grandparent most often (check only one)

visit in person  written letter  phone  e-mail

8. How many times a month on a average, do you communicate with this one grandparent:

0  1-3  4-6  7-9  10 or more

9. How close do you live to this grandparent.  in the same county  in a different county  
 out of the state.

Now think back to a time when you were experiencing a crisis (*with friends ex:* peer pressure/value conflicts, dating; *with parents ex:* divorce, household responsibility; *with school ex:* exams, discrimination.)

10. Did you discuss the crisis at all with your grandparent? \_\_\_yes or \_\_\_no

11. During the crisis did you communicate with your grandparent \_\_\_more or \_\_\_less \_\_\_same?

Please circle the response closest to your response with the grandparent selected above. Use the following scale: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree

12. Relational Satisfaction Items:

How satisfied were you with the...	SD	D	A	SA
time spent doing things together?	1	2	3	4
<b>time talking about thoughts or feelings?</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
time spent talking about impersonal topics (school, sports etc.)?	1	2	3	4
<b>number of times verbally expressed his/her affection for you?</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
number of times nonverbally expressed affection for you?	1	2	3	4
How satisfied are you with your grandparent's...				
<b>willingness to listen to your problems?</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
concern for your well-being?	1	2	3	4
<b>ability to express his/her affection for you?</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
willingness to listen to your problems, concerns?	1	2	3	4
Overall, how satisfied are you with your grandparent relationship?	1	2	3	4
Rate how <u>close</u> you feel to this grandparent				
Using the scale of not close (1) to very close (4)				
How close do you feel to this grandparent	1	2	3	4

*Thank you for your participation!*

Adapted from Buerkel-Rothfuss, Fink, Buerkel (1995)

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 02-28-97

IRB#: HE-97-044

Proposal Title: THE LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN  
GRANDPARENTS AND ADOLESCENT GRANDCHILDREN

Principal Investigator(s): Kay R. Murphy, Angela A. Howard

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
AT NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING  
THE APPROVAL PERIOD.

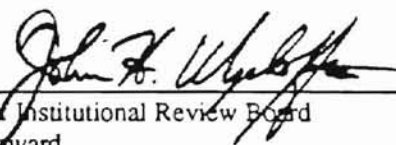
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR  
PERIOD AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE  
SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR  
APPROVAL.

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Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:



Chair of Institutional Review Board

cc: Angela A. Howard

Date: March 10, 1997

## VITA

Angela A. King Howard

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis. THE LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GRANDPARENTS  
AND ADOLESCENT GRANDCHILDREN

Major Field: Family Relations and Child Development

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Amber-Pocasset High School, Amber, Oklahoma in May 1986; received Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Home Economics from Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma in May 1990. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University in July, 1997.

Experience: Employed by Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service as an Extension Home Economist, McIntosh and Okfuskee Counties, September 1990 to July 1991; Extension Home Economist & 4-H agent, McIntosh and Okfuskee Counties, July 1991 to February 1993; Extension Home Economist & 4-H agent, McIntosh County, February 1993 to present.

Grants and Awards: Oklahoma Traffic and Safety grant 1992, increase usage of child safety seats and seat belts; Bicycle Helmet Safety grant 1995, 1996, provide bike safety rodeo and bike helmets to McIntosh county children; Child Care Aware grant 1994-95, 1996-97, awareness and promotion of choosing quality child care to parents; Healthy Families America 1996-1999, model site parent education program for home visitation for first time parents McIntosh & Muskogee Counties.

Professional Memberships: Oklahoma Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, Epsilon Sigma Phi.