

AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF  
THE INTERACTIONAL PATTERNS OF  
GRANDPARENTS AND  
COLLEGE-AGE GRANDCHILDREN

Thesis

presented in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements of  
Master of Science

Department of Management, Housing  
and Family Development  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute  
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College of Home Economics

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to gratefully thank Dr. James F. Keller for his support and assistance during the sometimes exasperating process of developing this thesis. Thanks goes to, Dr. George Hughston for bringing the problems into perspective and to Dr. Harold Stubblefield for providing fresh insight into themes and construction of the thesis. The author also wishes to acknowledge the assistance and co-operation of \_\_\_\_\_ for his much needed assistance with the statistical analyses.

Finally, the author wishes to thank her husband, whose lack of interest in this project provided the spur that I needed to complete the task.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1  
    And Statement of the Problem . . . . . 1  
    Purpose . . . . . 3  
    Definition of Terms . . . . . 4  
    Theoretical Framework . . . . . 5

II. RATIONALE AND HYPOTHESES . . . . . 10

III. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE . . . . . 20

IV. PROCEDURE . . . . . 28  
    Selection of Subjects . . . . . 28  
    Instrument . . . . . 29  
    Analysis of Data . . . . . 30

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION . . . . . 31  
    Subjects . . . . . 31  
    Data Analysis . . . . . 36  
    Tests of Hypotheses . . . . . 36  
    Discussion . . . . . 51  
    Methodological Implications . . . . . 59  
    Theoretical Implications . . . . . 61

VI. SUMMARY . . . . . 63

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . 66

APPENDIX A . . . . . 69

APPENDIX B . . . . . 73

## LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
1. Summary of Selected Demographic Characteristics of Subjects . . . . .	33
2. Mean Age of Subjects, Age of Living Grandparents, Number of Years of School Completed, and Living Grandparents . . . . .	35
3. Absolute and Relative Frequency of the Grandparenting Styles . . . . .	38
4. Reported Health of Grandparents . . . . .	39
5. Grandparenting Style by Grandparent Health . . . . .	41
6. Grandparenting Style by Sex of Grandchild . . . . .	41
7. Grandparenting Style by Grandparent Sex . . . . .	43
8. Most Frequently Contacted Grandparent by Sex and Kinship . . . . .	45
9. Frequency of Contact by Type of Contact . . . . .	46
10. Grandparenting Style by Kinship . . . . .	48
11. Grandparenting Style by Distance from College . . . . .	50
12. Grandparenting Style by Distance from Home . . . . .	50
13. Grandparenting Style by Birth Position of Grandchild . . . . .	52

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Recent growth in the number of older Americans has focused attention on the numerous roles which members of this segment of the population may assume. The concept of grandparenting has traditionally been viewed as one component of a more complex network of inter-relationships of the elderly. Though being a grandparent may carry significance for society in general, it is primarily within the family unit that the full impact of this role is felt. Thus, the emergence of a grandparent role becomes of critical interest to the student of family dynamics.

Boyd and Oakes (1973) reported that 70 percent of the older people (age 65 and over) in their sample of older Americans had grandchildren and 23 percent were great-grandparents. Townstead (1966) found 40 percent of his sample to be great-grandparents. Nimkoff (1961,95) cites the following: "...grandparents of 1960 have fewer living grandchildren than those of 1900. However, grandchildren of 1900 had fewer living grandparents than those of 1960." Demographic trends toward a lowered birth rate with a simultaneous increase in life span, as well as the effects of a smaller completed family size and lower ages at both marriage and first birth, have interacted to create a modern situation where more grandchildren have association with a grandparent than ever before.

If one accepts the thesis that the geographical mobility of the modern nuclear family has not decreased the opportunity for interaction (as supported by Litwak, 1960; Riley, 1968; Albrecht, 1954), one is still faced

with uncovering the form of that interaction. The situation in modern society has its own unique characteristics.

Historically, grandparents have tended to hold a position of authority in the family structure. Evidence suggests, however, that this role has been greatly modified in recent decades. Nimkoff asserts that "the loss by the aged of economic power, deference and authority within the family situation is probably the most important change in their family situation during the past half-century." (1961, 96)

The loss of this authority role has not inevitably condemned the elderly family member to what Burgess describes as a "roleless role." The decline of a formalized, patriarchal, authoritarian family pattern has opened the door for alternative "styles" of grandparenting. Numerous styles have been delineated for the grandparent of the younger grandchild. The definitive work in this area is that conducted by Neugarten and Weinstein (1964) who listed five patterns, or styles, of grandparent behavior. As longevity increases, however, more and more grandparents are surviving to see their grandchildren enter, and even complete, college. Which, if any, of these styles are functional for the older grandchild remains a largely unexplored area. The need for further research in this area has been strongly advocated by previous researchers (Neugarten and Weinstein, 1964; Updegraff, 1968; Kahana and Kahana, 1970).

In addition to the general lack of studies in this area, another gap in the knowledge is evident. Since grandparenting is one activity open to most older people, interest has focused on the grandparent's perception of his role. Relatively little work has been done from the grandchild's perspective. This study was designed to help fill that gap.

Because of the exploratory nature of this study, it was conceivable

that no direct application of the findings would be possible. Instead it was hoped that the findings would serve to verify and extend other research efforts in this single aspect of inter-generational relationships. It is only in this manner that researchers may hope to discover the forces that contribute to the position of the aged in a "youth-oriented" society.

### Purpose

The purpose of this investigation was to categorize the grandparent role as it is perceived by the college-age grandchild, and specifically, it was designed to investigate the effects of specified variables on the grandchild's perception of his grandparent's grandparenting style. The specification of grandparenting style is necessary to achieve this categorization. Therefore, the present study was designed to determine the grandchild's perception of the frequency with which his grandparents presently engage in selected grandparent behaviors, as well as how often and under what circumstances they themselves interact with their grandparents. An attempt was then made to group this data into grandparent styles as conceptualized by Neugarten and Weinstein, utilizing their conceptual model. Changes in the pattern of grandparenting styles (i.e., the proportion of students describing each grandparenting style) as formulated from subject responses were then investigated as a function of the following variables: sex of grandparent and grandchild, kinship of the grandparent, age of the grandparent, perceived health of the grandparent, residential distance from grandparents, and sibling order of grandchild. The following questions are provided as a focus for the current investigation:

- 1) Can the data obtained on the frequency of interaction, occasion for interaction, type of interaction, residential proximity and activities of grandparents be classified into styles of grandparenting within the model provided by Neugarten and Weistein (1964)?
- 2) Do grandparents tend to adopt different grandparent styles for different types of college-age grandchildren (an oldest child, or a granddaughter as opposed to a grandson, for example)? In other words, how do different variables effect the frequency of adoption of a particular grandparenting style?

#### Definition of Terms

The following definitions are relevant to the present study:

- 1) College-age grandchild -- grandchildren between the ages of 18 and 23; specifically, those currently enrolled in college studies.
- 2) Grandparenting style -- the grandparent role as determined by the grandparent behaviors presently engaged in (i.e., advice-giving, financial aid, dispensing of family wisdom, parental guardian), the frequency of grandparent-grandchild contact, the style of such contact (i.e., letters, telephone calls, personal visits) and the occasions of this contact.
- 3) Formal Style -- a grandparenting style characterized by occasional visits (one to two letters a month) or rare telephone calls (one to two times a year). Grandparents provide extras (treats, money, etc.) but do not have full responsibility for the grandchild.

- 4) Parent Surrogate -- a grandparenting style characterized primarily by the adoption of parental responsibility for the grandchild. This style may include very frequent visits, letters, or telephone calls.
- 5) Fun Seeker -- a grandparenting style characterized by its emphasis on leisure. Visits are the primary form of interaction and central to these visits is some form of leisure activity (shopping, sight-seeing, golf, card-playing, etc.).
- 6) Reservoir of Family Wisdom -- a grandparenting style characterized by a traditional, authoritarian pattern. The grandparent generally controls some special skill or wisdom, or may simply act as the dispenser of family news.
- 7) Distant Figure -- a grandparenting style similar to the Formal Style in that grandparents provide treats, etc. However, letters are the primary form of interaction and interpersonal contact occurs only on holidays, special occasions and brief visits (one to two times a year). Generally, the geographical distance between the pair is greater here than in any of the other grandparenting styles.

### Theoretical Framework

In an attempt to organize the expanding volume of literature on grandparenting, Kahana and Kahana (1971) reviewed the available research and summarized the common issues and problems which emerged (1971, 261). Generally, they comment on the tendency of recent research in the area to be pilot studies, and the limited availability of even this type of research. Certain common themes do emerge, however, from a synthesis of the literature.

Primarily, Kahana and Kahana note two broad perspectives on grandparent-

hood--the grandparent's perspective and the grandchild's. Within these perspectives, however, studies appear which are directed at numerous psychological and social aspects of the grandparent role. Studies of grandparenthood have traditionally taken the grandparent perspective. Thus, the majority of data deals with the meaning of the grandparent role to the grandparents themselves. Banedek (1970), for example, reflects upon grandparenthood as an intensely personal experience. Psychoanalytic literature, on the other hand, has focused on the negative effects of some forms of grandparent behavior on the psychological development of the grandchild. These behaviors were seen as originating from the grandparents, however, as interest was generally directed at this participant in the interaction. Numerous other studies have looked to the grandparent's perception of his social role (Neugarten and Weinstein, 1964).

The distinctions between the conceptualizations of grandparenting as a personal experience, a form of interaction and a social role led Kahana and Kahana to distinguish five levels of analysis, each conceptually different (1971, 267). These include:

- 1) Grandparenting seen as a social role which includes the specification of ascribed status and role expectations, with little consideration for the involvement of either participant. Included in this perspective would be, for example, most anthropological studies.
- 2) Grandparenting seen as an emotional state and/or as a highly individualized personal experience, regardless of societal expectations, as exemplified by studies which focus on grandparent satisfaction with their role, or "what being a grandparent means to me."

- 3) Grandparenting seen as a relationship between a younger and an older person, and focusing on the interaction between the two (includes psychoanalytical studies of grandparenting).
- 4) Grandparenting seen as an aspect of family interaction between several generational levels, emphasizing the relationships themselves, the help patterns and the functioning of the family unit. Studies of inter-generational values, socialization patterns and kinship relations would be classified within this level.
- 5) Grandparenting viewed as a symbol of some deeper significance at either the personal or the societal level. Again, studies focused on the status of grandparents may fall within this level.

Of these, the present investigation was focused on Level 3. Specifically, the perspective of the older grandchild was utilized as a basis for an investigation of his perception of the grandparent role, i.e., the behaviors exhibited by his grandparent in interaction with him.

A landmark research effort within the level of analysis relevant to the present study was that conducted by Neugarten and Weinstein (1964). Interviews with grandparents themselves yielded data on both the objective and the subjective aspects of the grandparent role. This data was then categorized into five styles of grandparenting which differ in the extent of role involvement, the meanings of the grandparent role to the grandparent and the intensiveness of the individuals adoption of the role. Preliminary testing of this model revealed that certain styles were more prevalent for younger or older grandparents (over 65). Other investigators have determined the utility of this model for studies of institutionalized grandparents, (Kahana and Coe, 1969) and its consistency over a measure of social class (Kahana,

1969). Generally, however, little use has been made of a model developed as a heuristic tool. (Neugarten and Weinstein, 1964). The present investigation utilized this model as a foundation from which the effects of particular variables on the mode of grandparent-grandchild interaction could be studied. To date, no study has specifically determined the validity of this model for the grandparent of the older grandchild (over age 13). Therefore, for the purposes of this study it was necessary to assume that grandparents of the college-age grandchild do tend to exhibit sets of grandparent behavior which could be conceptualized into one of the five styles of grandparenting.

The basis for the preceding assumption was provided by numerous studies which document that though the form of the grandparent role changes as a function of several variables, grandparent behavior still tends to cluster into identifiable styles (Updegraff, 1968; Cavan, 1968). It seems logical to assume that the styles described by Neugarten and Weinstein may also be functional for the modern grandparent. In this way, a specific test of hypotheses regarding the proportion of grandchildren who report specific styles as a function of particular variables could be made.

The theoretical framework provided by Neugarten and Weinstein also provided the basis for a further assumption of the present study. Among the numerous variables identified as influential in the adoption of a particular style is the age of the grandchild. Neugarten and Weinstein (1964) found that the age of the grandparent was significantly related to the style of grandparenting adopted. On the other hand, little work has been done to investigate the influence of the age of the grandchild on the style of grandparent-grandchild interaction. An exploratory study (Kahana and Kahana, 1971) suggests that the meaning of the grandparent role changes to accommodate the changing cognitive abilities of the developing grandchild (1971, 101).

Their study indicated that the Fun Seeker Style as described by Neugarten and Weinstein was most prevalent for the older grandchild (ages 11-12), while the younger grandchildren tended to describe styles of grandparenting which correspond more closely to the Formal Style. They attribute this change to changing perceptions of the grandchild in regards to his grandparent interactions. Since the period of adolescence in modern society is frequently perceived as a time of dramatically changing values and perceptions, it was assumed that the proportion of grandparents of college-age grandchildren who exhibit a particular grandparenting style would be significantly different than the proportion of grandparents of young grandchildren who exhibit that style. There seemed little reason to expect that while grandparenting styles may vary between the ages of 4 and 12, they become stable over the turbulent adolescent and early adult years.

## CHAPTER II

### RATIONALE AND HYPOTHESES

A review of the available grandparent literature leaves one with the impression that the majority of the research deals with grandparenthood from the perspective of the grandparent. Kahana and Kahana (1970; 98), however, note that "the child's perception of significant adults is instrumental in the formation of attitudes and stereotypes about adults and the aged." If, indeed, more grandparents are in contact with their grandchildren than ever before (Nimkoff, 1960), it then becomes critical to gain some basic understanding of the manner in which grandparents and grandchildren interact.

Grandchildren's perceptions of their grandparents are particularly difficult to assess since they are a function of so many variables. One of these is the age of the grandchild. Since the age span of the sample would, in all probability, not be large enough to yield significant differences within the sample in regards to changing perceptions of their grandparents, this variable was treated in the form of an assumption (i.e., that the styles of grandparenting most commonly described by college-age grandchildren would differ significantly from the styles most commonly described by younger grandchildren). A factor which earlier rated attention from researchers, however, was the age of the grandparent. Grandparents are, in general, becoming younger (Neugarten and Weinstein, 1964; Updegraff, 1968) both in chronological age and in their perceptions of themselves. Neugarten and Weinstein (1964; 200) found that two categories--the Formal and the Fun

Seeker--comprised a large percentage of their sample and they suggest that the Formal Style may be adopted more frequently by older grandparents who lack the physical energy to play the Fun Seeker role. It was assumed that grandparents of college-age grandchildren would be likely to fall into the category of "older grandparent" (over 65), especially if most individuals become grandparents in middle-age. Therefore, it was hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: College-age grandchildren will report patterns of grandparent behavior which can be classified into the Formal Style significantly more frequently than patterns of behavior which can be classified into any of the remaining four styles.

A confounding variable, when one considers the age of the grandparent as a discrete variable, is the health of the grandparent. No research has, as yet, been completed to deal specifically with this variable. Some general statements may be made, however. Several of the grandparenting styles identified by Neugarten and Weinstein require that the grandparent be actively involved with the grandchild (most notably the Fun Seeker and Parent Surrogate). This, in turn, requires that the grandparent be unhampered by serious medical problems. Generally, as age increases, so do the numbers of serious (activity-limiting) health problems confronted by the individual (Riley et al., 1968). Therefore, it appears obvious that the older the grandparent, the more likely he or she is to suffer some activity limitations because of health problems. Since once again, grandparents of college-age grandchildren are likely to be "older grandparents," it seems likely that this group will have a high proportion of members in poor health on the basis of age alone, and who are consequently unable to fulfill requirements for at

least two grandparenting styles.

Additional support for the contention that health factors may limit the form of the grandparent role comes from studies of institutionalized grandparents (Kahana and Coe, 1969). As the length of institutionalization increases, the grandparent role begins to modify as an adaption to the changed environment. After institutionalization, grandparenting styles most similar to the Distant Figure and the Formal Style emerged most frequently. These are among the least "active" (in terms of physical involvement) of all the grandparenting styles. If health is, indeed, a limiting factor, it was logical to hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: College-age grandchildren who report that the grandparent with whom they are in most frequent contact is in poor health will report patterns of grandparent behavior which can be classified into the Distant Figure style significantly more frequently than patterns of behaviors which can be classified into any of the other four styles of grandparenting.

Surprisingly, no research has yet been done to clarify the influence of a third variable--that of the grandchild's sex. Kahana and Kahana (1971, 101) suggest that, among other factors, the grandparent-grandchild relationship is composed of the behavior of the grandchild. It seemed to follow that as socialization into male and female roles continues, the resulting attitude and behavior changes would, in turn, influence the child's interaction with his grandparent. Though sex role identification is established at an early age, this identification is under constant review and modification by the individual. This is particularly true of adolescence and early adulthood. It seemed plausible to suggest that college-age grandchildren would exhibit

sex-appropriate attitudes and behaviors which would influence their behaviors with their grandparents.

Because of a lack of previous research in this area, it was difficult to determine the direction this sex differential would take in relation to grandparenting style. However, since on a fundamental level societal norms traditionally prescribe a dependent, nurturant role for the female and independence for the male, grandparents may react to these characteristics. Ideally, females should describe the Formal Style more frequently than males since this is the "nurturing" style. Males, on the other hand, should describe the more traditional authoritarian pattern (Reservoir of Family Wisdom). In this style, generally adopted by grandfathers, the grandparent maintains a ritualistic relationship with his grandchild, and he is a firm disciplinarian. It was plausible to suggest that the rapidly changing definitions of sex-appropriate behavior has allowed, and even encouraged the female to select from numerous roles once considered to be masculine domain. The social taboos against male intervention into many traditionally female roles have received less attention and appear more resistant to change. In this period of role confusion, males may identify most strongly with that which is most familiar, i.e., the traditional, authoritarian, "masculine" image, and therefore perceive the corresponding grandparent style in their grandparent's behavior (Reservoir of Family Wisdom). Thus, it was hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3: Male grandchildren will report patterns of grandparent behavior which can be classified into the Reservoir of Family Wisdom style significantly more frequently than will female grandchildren.

Further evidence for the existence of a sex differential at the grandchild's level was provided by studies of such a differential at the grandparent level. Neugarten and Weinstein found that the Parent Surrogate role fell primarily to the grandmother, while the Reservoir of Family Wisdom generally was adopted only by the grandfather. In general, however, they conclude that emerging grandparent styles are neuter in nature (1964, 203). A conflicting opinion was advanced by Cavan (1962). She postulates that modern grandparent roles are essentially maternal for both sexes and men must modify their instrumental orientation and assume a more nurturant role (1962, 284). Since little active child care would be required by grandparents of college-age grandchildren, it seemed that the specifically maternal orientation required by the Parent Surrogate style would not be functional for this age group. In addition, other grandparenting styles appeared to be more significantly related to variables other than grandparent sex. Therefore, it was hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 4: The percentages of college-age grandchildren who report patterns of grandfather behavior which can be classified into each of the Formal, Fun Seeker, Reservoir of Family Wisdom or the Distant Figure styles will not differ significantly from the percentages of college-age grandchildren who report patterns of grandmother behavior which can be classified into each of these styles.

A further interacting variable was mentioned by ethnographic studies. Apple (1956) concluded that the degree of formality in grandparent-grandchild relationships is associated with that grandparent's kinship connection to authority (1956, 662). If, indeed, modern grandparents tend to be removed

from an authority role, it was possible that a kinship factor would be irrelevant today. On the other hand, Crass and Hendrickson (1968) rationalized that Americans tend to maintain closer matrilineal than patrilineal ties (1968, 182). Data from the Kahana and Kahana study suggests that young grandchildren do, in fact, report more frequent contact with maternal grandparents, and maternal grandmothers are mentioned more frequently as being the "favorite." (1971, 102) Evidence as to whether or not this differential persists into the older age groups is unavailable. However, it seemed logical to assume that this situation has not been greatly modified in the past five years and furthermore, that patterns of contact such as this tend to persist into adulthood (Litwak, 1960). Therefore, it was hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 5: Over all categories (personal visits, letters and telephone calls), college-age grandchildren will report significantly more incidences of contact with maternal, rather than paternal grandparents.

In addition, however, it was difficult to determine the effects of this differential on the adoption of grandparenting style. In order to explore this potentially fruitful area, the following hypothesis was tested.

Hypothesis 6: The frequency of occurrences (expressed in percent of the total) of each style of grandparenting which can be determined from classification of patterns of grandparent behavior will vary independently of the kinship of the grandparent.

There was also some evidence that grandparenting styles vary somewhat

by social class position of the grandparents. Boyd and Oakes (1973, 31) reported that, in general, as the socio-economic class of grandparents (as measured by occupational category) increased, so did visiting and other forms of social interaction. Since this variable was likely to be highly related to the financial ability to travel, it seemed likely that it was related to the adoption of at least two grandparenting styles (Formal and Distant Figure). Previous researchers dealt primarily with the social class of the grandparents. Limitations of the present study made it impossible to investigate this aspect of the variable of social class, and no work has yet been done to study the effect, if any, of the social class of the grandchild. Litwak (1960) reported that the extended family provides considerable support for the upwardly mobile family. In this case, it may be that interaction with grandparents would be increased if the grandchild was of a higher socio-economic level than the grandparents.

It must be noted, however, that the measurement of social class has come under recent critical attack. Traditional measures of socio-economic position emphasized occupational position and have developed typologies of social class based upon occupational categories. More recent attempts have included life-style, source of income, and housing as indices of class rank. (Rice, 1966). It may be, however, that educational level is a more accurate discriminator of social position in a society in which the income required for particular levels of living are becoming increasingly independent of occupational category. The technological skill required for many high-paying jobs may be isolated from a generalized, formal education. It is assumed that higher levels of formal education are required for those occupations which have traditionally been regarded as middle, or upper class (physician, lawyer, executive, etc.). Few researchers have included

this factor in their indices of social class.

Serious controversy persists, however, on the validity of social class, per se, as an intervening variable. It is possible that social class and socio-economic position are distinct variables. The nature of the present study made it difficult, if not impossible, to accurately obtain a measure of social class, if measured by any of the traditional determinants (occupational status, income, housing, etc.). Thus, neither social class nor socio-economic position was investigated as a discrete variable in the present study. Instead, the level of education of the subjects was taken as an indication of their identification with the middle, or upper class norm for extensive education and the sample was treated as middle class. Thus, no hypothesis directly pertaining to social class or socio-economic position was tested.

It appeared obvious that a major variable in any hypothesized effect of grandparent-grandchild interaction (such as the adoption of a grandparenting style) consists of the extent of this interaction. The problems associated with a lack of interaction are particularly crucial for the college-age grandchild, who, in many cases, is living miles away from home and perhaps even further from his grandparents. This situation is not limited to college-age grandchildren, however. Albrecht (1958, 202) found that fully 10 percent of her sample communicated entirely by letters. Updegraff (1968, 179) relates the low incidence of parental authority in her sample to increased residential distance "allowing less opportunity for the Sunday afternoon visits characteristic of former generations." Nimkoff reports that when grandparents live nearby, they are apt to adopt at least a part-time parental role. Thus, geographical distance is a confounding variable in the adoption of at least one grandparenting style--Parent

Surrogate. As previously suggested, this style is probably not highly common for this age group of grandchildren in any case. However, geographical distance may be intimately related to one other style which may be pertinent to the college-age grandchild. As the child moves out of the family unit, the likelihood that interaction with grandparents may be limited to letters, telephone calls and holiday visits may actually increase. These characteristic limitations describe the Distant Figure style. Thus, as residential distance from grandparents increases, so does the tendency for the grandparents to adopt the Distant Figure style. Therefore, it was logical to hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 7: The frequency of occurrence (in percent) of the Distant Figure style as reported by college-age grandchildren who live less than 250 miles from their grandparents will be significantly less than this same percentage for those grandchildren living more than 250 miles from their grandparents.

Finally, there is one additional variable which is as yet unexplored by any research effort. In spite of the lack of attention, the sibling order (or birth order) of the grandchild may be significantly related to the style of grandparenting adopted. Numerous authors (Anshacher & Anshacher, 1956; Kagan, 1960; Miller & Maruyama, 1976) have documented that firstborn children have significantly different personality characteristics than do later-borns in the same family. If, indeed, the needs of the grandchild are influential in determining the grandparenting style, then it seemed logical to assume that the differing needs of the grandchildren may actually result in different grandparenting styles for each of the grandchildren

according to sibling position. On one hand, research has indicated that older children (by birth position) tend to identify more with parents, and adopt parental values more completely. They are, in fact, somewhat of "quasi-parents". These findings lent impetus to the suggestion that these children may perceive their grandparents as being more staid, or traditional, or in other words, as Formal grandparents in the Neugarten typology. On the other hand, numerous authors have noted that later-born children tend to be more socially oriented, or have better inter-personal skills. Miller and Maruyama (1976) studied primary school children and found that later-borns tended to be more popular than their first-born peers. Jackson (1971) suggests that grandparents may prefer a particular age of the grandchild and that this may influence the feelings of closeness to the child. What may also be occurring is that the grandparent prefers a particular level of social competence for the child. If later-borns are more socially gregarious, the grandparent may reflect this trait by becoming more active and out-going himself (or by adopting the Fun Seeker style). Therefore, it seemed logical to hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 8: Later-born college-age grandchildren will report patterns of grandparent behavior which can be classified into the Fun Seeker style significantly more frequently than will first-born college-age grandchildren.

## CHAPTER III

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A number of researchers have lamented the lack of attention which has been directed toward the investigation of the grandparent role, particularly from the grandchild's perspective. Those studies which have emerged form the nucleus for the present study. Large gaps in the knowledge persist, however.

Groundwork for the large majority of grandparenting studies was laid by Neugarten and Weinstein (1964) who interviewed 70 sets of Midwestern, urban, middle-class grandparents. From these interviews, respondents were classified into one of 5 categories based upon judges interpretations of the meaning of the grandparent role to the individual. These categories included:

- 1) A source of biological renewal and/or continuity
- 2) A source of emotional self-fulfillment
- 3) A sense of acting as a resource person for the grandchild
- 4) Vicarious achievement through the child
- 5) Remote; grandparenting has little effects on the self (Neugarten and Weinstein; 1964, 202).

The majority of grandparents (particularly grandmothers) saw their grandchild as a source of biological continuity. This category was followed closely by those grandparents who felt remote from their grandchildren, however. (Neugarten and Weinstein; 1964, 203).

These categories were then differentiated into 5 styles of grandparenting:

(Neugarten and Weinstein; 1964, 203).

1) Formal Style: The grandparents in this group tend to follow a "prescribed" role. They provide extras and may babysit occasionally, but they are not primarily responsible for the grandchild (nor do they seem to want to be).

2) Fun Seeker Style: This pattern is characterized by its playmate orientation and a sense of informality. Grandparents see their role primarily as a leisure activity and emphasize mutual satisfaction.

3) Surrogate Parent: Adoption of this style involves the complete absorption of caretaker responsibility for the grandchild by the grandparent (generally the grandmother).

4) Reservoir of Family Wisdom: The grandparent here maintains a more traditional, authoritarian pattern in which he or she controls special skills or wisdom. Generally, this style is given to the grandfather.

5) Distant Figure: Though similar to the Formal Style, contact with the grandchildren occurs only on special occasions, holidays and brief visits.

Neugarten and Weinstein found that almost half of all grandparents fell into one of two categories: The Fun Seeker or the Distant Figure. (1964, 204)

Other studies contributed to the conceptualization that the style of the grandparent role is a function of numerous other variables. Of primary importance was the suggestion that the age of the grandchild is a critical determinant of grandparent behavior. Kahana and Kahana (1970) asked children of 3 different age groups to describe the ideal grandparent. They found that perceptions of the grandparent role differed significantly between the youngest and the oldest age groups (1970, 104). A potential limitation of their study was the limitation of the sample to white, suburban, middle-class

children. This was mediated somewhat by Jackson (1971) who investigated various role aspects of the Negro grandparent. She suggests that grandparents may prefer a particular age of the grandchild. It must be noted, however, that this study was conducted from the grandparent's perspective --an important methodological difference from the Kahana and Kahana study (1970). To date, no studies have been done to gather information on the grandparent role from the perspective of the child of other ethnic groups or social classes. In addition, the oldest grandchild in the Kahana and Kahana study was age 12. They concluded that the children tend to devalue the emotionally-expressive grandparent as they mature (1970, 104). A gap in the data from this age to the adult years persists.

Studies of adult grandchildren are exceedingly rare. Robins and Tomanec (1962) asked college students to comment on the affiliation felt for their different family relations. They found that these subjects ranked grandparents above other kin, including aunts, uncles and cousins. No investigation was made, however, of the actual patterns of interaction.

The other noteworthy study of adult grandchildren was conducted by Guilford and Black (1972). They concluded that the opportunity to interact modifies those feelings toward kin which are transmitted by parents (1972, 288). Without such interaction, the relationship tends to take on a ritualistic quality. (1972, 288)

Thus, the opportunity to interact has been cited in the literature as a significant variable in determining the type of grandparent-grandchild role behavior. Obviously, the form and frequency of the interaction is influenced by a variety of other variables.

Albrecht (1954, 202) looked at middle-class grandparents and found that the most common pattern of interaction for grandparents of younger

grandchildren was one of active participation through visits. This supports the suggestion that geographical distance is one confounding variable in the form of interaction which develops. The 10 percent of this sample which depended primarily upon letters as a form of interaction was blamed, in part, on geographical distance, travel costs, and other factors.

Updegraff (1968, 180) obtained data on a sample of 69 junior-high granddaughters, 54 mothers and 17 maternal grandmothers in an effort to investigate changes in the grandmother's role. She notes a trend toward declining authority and increased indulgence. In addition, her data suggests that "residential distance and level of education appear to have no influence on the indulgence relationship" (1968, 180). In contrast with other authors, she found that time spent in child-care duties is increasing, in spite of the fact that the most typical situation in which grandparent-grandchild interaction occurs is on "family occasions and brief visits" (1968, 180). Subjects in this study were living in the family unit, however. What happens to the interactional process when the grandchild leaves home to attend college is still unexplored. It may be that other forms of communication act to supplant personal interaction while maintaining the basis of the relationship. (Litwak; 1960, 159)

Additional studies have reported recent modifications in role behavior which may be directly relevant to changes in grandparenting style. Though most studies have limited their sample to subjects of one social class, Boyd and Oakes (1973) looked at grandparent behavior within the context of social class. Involuntary child care duties and social class were negatively related (1973, 31). However, in general, as socio-economic class of grandparents increased, so did visiting and other forms of social interaction.

An interesting methodological aspect of the Boyd and Oakes review was their analysis of the data by grandparent sex. Over the various classes, the grandmother role was relatively stable. For grandfathers, however, interaction with grandchildren increased as socio-economic status rose (1973, 31).

As previously discussed, literature pertaining to grandparent-grandchild interaction has generally dealt with the younger grandchild. Crass and Hendrickson (1968) used a projective technique (incomplete stories) with children in an effort to establish their perceptions of their maternal grandmothers as compared to mothers. Briefly, grandmothers were perceived to be more child-oriented or indulgent, but less permissive disciplinarians on measures of child-centeredness and permissiveness. Once again, age and sex differences were cited, as well as the effect of residential distance on both variables (child-centeredness and permissiveness). It must be noted, however, that numerous methodological problems exist with the use of projective techniques, as well as the fact that the sample for the Crass and Hendrickson study was limited to middle-class respondents and to pre-teen grandchildren.

Evidence for the operation of additional variables as suggested by this study is derived not only from the grandparent literature, but from the broader areas of child development and social psychology. Sex role differences have long been a matter of speculation and it is impossible to cite the multitude of research findings which have emerged in this brief review. Kagan, in a review of available research, concludes that sex differences in attitudes and behaviors are evident at early ages and persist throughout the life-span (Kagan, 1964). Numerous researchers have demonstrated sex differences in a variety of personality variables (most notable

aggression and dependency). Kagan and Moss (1964), in an early study of adolescents, noted the stability of previous patterns of dependent and independent behavior for females from childhood through adolescence, and the relative instability of these behaviors for males. They cite social pressures which encourage dependent behavior for females and force inhibition of such behaviors in maturing males (1964, 589).

Support for an hypothesized birth order effect is revealed by a growing body of literature on this phenomenon within the realm of social psychology. Preliminary work in this area by Kagan (1964) emphasized the strong effect of birth order position on the personality of the child. He postulated a series of effects of birth order position on the first-born. Support for his postulates that first-borns would tend to be identified more with parents, to be more responsible and more prone to perceive an orderly world came from numerous studies (Koch, 1956; Schacter, 1959). Other researchers have supported the hypothesized difference in social competency, with later-borns being more "sociable." (Schacter, 1959)

More recent efforts by Miller and Maruyama (1976) noted again the greater social skills of the later-borns in a study of 1,750 grade-school children. Later-borns were found to be more popular among their peers by a socio-metric measure and to have a greater command of social skills as reported by teacher ratings. Their study failed to support hypothesized birth order effects on measures of personality factors such as dependence, however, thus illustrating the sometimes contradictory nature of research findings in this area. Edwards and Klemmack (1974) note that these contradictions are often the result of attempts to "oversimplify a complex phenomenon." (1974, 619) Their study of 272 college women provided only limited support for the hypothesis that first-borns tend to be the

"conservators of tradition" (1974, 619) and more frequently choose traditional roles. Thus, though the effect of birth order position may not be as clear-cut as was originally hypothesized, the evidence does suggest an interaction with other variables, particularly in regard to social skills.

Finally, one other study is pertinent to the present investigation. An innovative approach to the study of the perceptions of the older grandchild was utilized by Robertson(1976). She studied a sample of 86 young adult grandchildren from primarily blue-collar backgrounds in an effort to determine the grandchild's perception of the significance of his/her grandparents. A self-administered questionnaire yielded data in 5 basic areas:

- 1) Attitudes and expectations grandchildren hold regarding grandparents.
- 2) Grandchildren's perception of appropriate and/or expected grandparent behavior.
- 3) Grandchildren's perception of the degree of parental influence in their relationship with grandparents.
- 4) The degree of emotional involvement with the grandparents.
- 5) Conceptions of the ideal grandparent (1976, 137).

Robertson concludes that young adult grandchildren, as a group, do not perceive grandparents as useless, old-fashioned or out-of-date, but, instead feel that children would be missing much of life without grandparents (1976, 138). Grandchildren expect emotional gratification from their grandparents and the behaviors associated with grandparenthood are functional in this regard. In addition, grandchildren felt definite responsibilities toward their grandparents, a finding which lends credence to the concept of this age group as being influenced by extended family concerns (1976, 140).

An interesting incongruence between the attitudes of grandchildren and the behaviors expected from their grandparents exists. Thus, though grandchildren expressed the feeling that grandparents were not sufficiently "out-of-touch" to act as helpers, they would not choose to use grandparents as a source of advice. Whether or not this incongruence actually exists in the types of behaviors exhibited by the grandparents was not investigated.

This brief review of the available literature dramatically illustrates the confusion which currently exists in the area of grandparent relationships. Indeed, it has been said that the great majority of studies in the area have been designed to generate, not test, hypotheses (Kahana and Kahana; 1971, 261). This study was designed to expand upon some of the models of grandparent-grandchild interaction and to provide some much needed empirical data in the area.

## CHAPTER IV

### PROCEDURE

Included in this chapter is a description of all procedures utilized in the collection and analysis of the data, as well as a rationale for the application of these procedures (where appropriate).

#### Selection of Subjects

Subjects for this study were obtained through a systematic random sampling of the student population at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (V.P.I. & S.U.). A total of 643 students were selected from the 1976-1977 edition of the student directory, which comprises the most recent listing of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at the Blacksburg campus. The names were selected randomly, using a table of random numbers including consecutively every twenty-first name. This number was also determined by random selection. If the twenty-first student did not list a Blacksburg address, or if the student was judged by this author to be a foreign exchange student, that name was omitted from the final sample. This procedure yielded a final sample size of 643.

#### Procedures

A packet containing a cover letter, questionnaire and a pre-addressed, stamped envelope was mailed to each of the 643 subjects. The university mail service was utilized for those students listed as living on-campus. Students were asked to respond within 5 days to the original mailing. A

total of 251 questionnaires, or 39 percent were returned during this period. Sixty-four questionnaires which indicated that the student had no living grandparents, or were incomplete, were omitted. A final total of 187 usable questionnaires, or 29 percent of the total sample was obtained.

### Instrument

The instrument used in this study consisted of a self-administered questionnaire which included items eliciting demographic information. Information used in the testing of hypotheses was obtained through a series of Likert-type items designed to identify the behavioral correlates of each of the five grandparenting styles identified by Neugarten and Weinstein (1964). Each item could be answered by "Strongly Disagree," "Only Slightly Disagree," "Disagree," "No opinion," "Agree," "Only Slightly Agree," or "Strongly Agree", and received a corresponding score of 1-7. A total of 21 items were developed to identify the grandparenting styles in this manner.

Measures of internal consistency were not directly obtainable for the questionnaire. However, in order to identify the subscales measured by the questionnaire items, a factor analysis was performed. Loadings based on five, four and three factors were evaluated. The criterion for a factor loading on an item was .4000. On the basis of these factor analyses, it was determined that the five factor loading produced the most logical clustering of the items.

The use of the factor analysis was necessary in order to establish the validity of the instrument for the identification of five styles of grandparenting and thus provide support for an assumption of this study (that Neugarten and Weinstein's grandparenting styles would be applicable to the college-age population). Neugarten and Weinstein developed their categories

based upon the classification of a panel of three judges. Judges were asked to base their classifications upon the total grandparent interview. This interview consisted of open-ended questions designed to explore the significance and meaning of the grandparent role to the grandparent themselves. (1964, 200) The use of an objective questionnaire in the present study severely limited the utility of judges' classifications because of the lack of open-ended questions. It was felt by the investigator that factor analysis would provide a more relevant measure of the focus of the questionnaire items. Thus, the factor analysis provided evidence that responses to the questionnaire items did tend to cluster into groups corresponding to the five grandparenting styles developed by Neugarten and Weinstein, and controlled for the effects of the independent variables (information which was also obtained through the questionnaire). Appendix B includes the five subscales and their corresponding grandparent style.

#### Analysis of Data

A total score for each of the five subscales was obtained for each subject by summing the appropriate item responses and dividing by the number of items contained in the subscale. Subjects were then classified into one grandparenting style on the basis of the largest of these subscale scores. For subjects exhibiting two or more identical subscale scores, the original responses were reviewed and a classification made by a judge on the basis of the responses. These classifications were determined by a review of the original responses to each of the items in the subscale and were based upon the investigators interpretation of the strength of these responses. Thus, for example, if identical subscale scores were obtained for the Reservoir of Family Wisdom style and the Distant Figure, and the overall responses

showed weak responses to all items, the Distant Figure style was selected. A forced-choice was then made between the subscales which had identical composite scores. This method allowed the investigator to include those cases in which the composite scores did not reveal a dominant grandparenting style. This method was similar to the judges method employed by Neugarten and Weinstein who recognized that the grandparent "role has multiple meanings for each person and that the categories ...may overlap to some degree." (1964, 200)

Tests of the hypotheses were based upon these final classifications of grandparenting style. The appropriate statistical tests (including chi-square, t-tests and frequency tabulations) were employed for each of the hypotheses. The significance level was set at .05 for all tests. All hypotheses were tested in the null form.

## CHAPTER V

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter V deals specifically with the results of hypotheses tests and a discussion of these results in terms of their implications.

#### Subjects

The final sample consisted of 187 college students currently enrolled at the Blacksburg campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (V.P.I. & S.U.). All subjects were between the ages of 17 and 34. Demographic characteristics of the sample are summarized in Table 1.

The majority of the subjects were male (61.5 percent) with the remaining 38.5 percent females. Undergraduates comprised 84 percent of the sample, the other 16 percent being graduate students, and subjects were evenly split among the nine specified major academic areas. Subjects were primarily Protestant (54.5 percent). Only a minority of subjects were the oldest living child in their family (46.5 percent). Of the total oldest living children, approximately 62 percent were males and 38 percent were females.

Seventy-two percent of the subjects had two or more living grandparents, with a mean number 2.08. As could be expected ( a result of the greater life span of females), living grandmothers (64 percent) were more common than living grandfathers. Table 2 provides a summary of the means and standard deviations of selected variables for the sample, including the age of the subjects, academic levels and age of living grandparents.

TABLE 1  
SUMMARY OF SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS  
OF SUBJECTS

Variable	No.	Percent	Total
<u>Sex (Grandchild)</u>			
Males . . . . .	115	61.5	
Females . . . . .	72	38.5	187
<u>Living Grandparents</u>			
One . . . . .	52	27.8	
Two . . . . .	77	41.2	
Three . . . . .	40	21.4	
Four or more . . . . .	18	9.6	187
<u>Years of School Completed</u>			
Twelve . . . . .	45	24.1	
Thirteen . . . . .	39	20.8	
Fourteen . . . . .	31	16.6	
Fifteen . . . . .	42	22.5	
Sixteen . . . . .	18	9.6	
Seventeen . . . . .	12	6.4	187
<u>Birth Position</u>			
First-born . . . . .	87	46.5	
Males . . . . .	(54)	(62.1)	
Females . . . . .	(33)	(37.9)	
Later-born . . . . .	100	53.5	187
<u>Religion</u>			
Protestant . . . . .	102	54.5	
Catholic . . . . .	37	19.8	
Jewish . . . . .	4	2.1	
Other . . . . .	13	7.0	
None . . . . .	31	16.6	187

TABLE 1--Continued  
 SUMMARY OF SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS  
 OF SUBJECTS

Variable	No.	Percent	Total
<u>Academic Area</u>			
Natural Sciences . . . . .	34	18.1	
Engineering . . . . .	32	17.1	
Agriculture . . . . .	16	8.5	
Humanities . . . . .	26	13.9	
Social Sciences . . . . .	11	5.8	
Home Economics . . . . .	11	5.8	
Architecture . . . . .	12	6.4	
Education . . . . .	15	8.0	
Business . . . . .	31	16.5	187
<u>Living Grandparents by Sex</u>			
Grandmothers . . . . .	249	64	
Grandfathers . . . . .	140	36	389

TABLE 2

MEAN AGE OF SUBJECTS  
AGE OF LIVING GRANDPARENTS,  
NUMBER OF YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED,  
AND LIVING GRANDPARENTS

Variable	Mean	S.D.
Age of Subjects . . . . .	20.2	1.8
Age of Grandparents		
Grandmothers . . . . .	73.3	7.29
Grandfathers . . . . .	75.3	8.61
Number of Living Grandparents	2.1	.93
Years of School Completed . .	14.0	1.8

### Data Analysis

A principle component factor analysis with oblique and orthogonal varimax rotations was performed in an effort to verify the existence of the five grandparenting styles. Loadings based on three, four and five factors were evaluated and it was judged that five factors, or subscales best fit the data provided by the 22 items on the questionnaire. Grandparenting style for each subject was then determined by obtaining an average subscale score. Responses were scored on the basis of "1" indicating a strong disagreement and "7" a strong agreement with the item. The items were worded in such a manner that high values were taken as an indication of the dominance of the grandparenting style. In the case of equal values for two or more subscales, the original responses were re-evaluated by a judge and a style was determined for the subjects on the basis of the overall pattern of responses. Style 1 (Reservoir of Family Wisdom) was represented by Subscale 1. Style 2 through Style 5 corresponded to the Parent Surrogate style, the Formal style, the Distant Figure style and the Fun Seeker style respectively.

### Tests of Hypotheses

It was noted that the number of living grandparents provides a useful indication of the extent of the three-generational family. It is, a misleading figure in that contact may not occur evenly with all living grandparents. Subjects in this study were asked to specify the sex and kinship of the grandparent with whom they are in most frequent contact, and to answer the questionnaire items in terms of this grandparent(s). Tests of hypotheses were conducted using the grandparenting style of this grandparent.

The small number of subjects reporting the Parent Surrogate style

(Style 2) made further tests of hypotheses based upon these cases misleading. Therefore, with the exception of Hypothesis 1, all hypotheses test omitted these cases ( $N = 2$ ) from the computations. All hypotheses were tested in the null form at the .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: College-age grandchildren will report patterns of grandparent behavior which can be classified into the Formal Style (Style 3) significantly more frequently than patterns of behavior which can be classified into any of the other four styles of grandparenting.

A general frequency tabulation was performed for each of the five grandparenting styles and can be seen in Table 3. Style 3 (the Formal Style) did, in fact, occur more frequently than any of the other four styles. Hypothesis 1 could be rejected if the probability of occurrence was greater than .05. Since the probability of occurrence is equal to the relative frequency of occurrence in the population (Roscoe, 1969), the probability of Style 3 occurring was 44.9. Therefore, the null form of Hypothesis 1 could not be rejected, indicating that the Formal Style was not selected more frequently.

The Distant Figure style (Style 4) was reported by 30.5 percent of the subjects. Style 1 (Reservoir of Family Wisdom) and Style 5 (Fun Seeker style) were reported with approximately equal frequency (11.2 percent and 12.3 percent respectively).

The high median age of grandparents in this study (75.2 for grandfathers and 73.9 for grandmothers) suggests the possibility that health factors may significantly effect the adoption of grandparenting style. Subjects were asked to assess the health of their grandparent as being "poor," "average," or "good." Table 4 shows the distribution of the responses. Contrary to expectations, 88.2 percent of subjects reported that their grandparents were in average, or good health. Hypothesis 2 stated that:

TABLE 3  
ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE FREQUENCY  
OF THE GRANDPARENTING STYLES

Style	Frequency	Relative Frequency
<u>Style 1</u>		
(Reservoir of Family Wisdom) . . . . .	21	11.2%
<u>Style 2</u>		
(Parent Surrogate). . . . .	2	1.1%
<u>Style 3</u>		
(Formal Style) . . . . .	84	44.9%
<u>Style 4</u>		
(Distant Figure) . . . . .	57	30.5%
<u>Style 5</u>		
(Fun Seeker) . . . . .	23	12.3%

TABLE 4  
REPORTED HEALTH OF GRANDPARENTS

Response	Frequency	Percent
Poor . . . . .	22	11.7
Average . . . . .	90	40.2
Good . . . . .	75	40.1
	—	
	187	

College-age grandchildren who report that the grandparent with whom they are in most frequent contact is in poor health will report patterns of grandparent behavior which can be classified into the Distant Figure style significantly more frequently than patterns of behavior which can be classified into any of the remaining four styles of grandparenting.

A chi-square test of association was performed. A significant relationship ( $\chi^2 = 12.48$ ,  $df = 6$ ) was found at the .05 level between the variables of grandparent style and reported grandparent health. The interaction of grandparent health and grandparent style is summarized in Table 5.

As can be seen, though some tendency does exist for the grandparent in poor health to be classified into the Distant Figure style (the Distant Figure style accounting for 47.6 percent of the total grandparents reported in poor health), this tendency is not as pronounced when grandparent style is held constant over all categories of health (47.6 percent in poor health as opposed to 34.8 percent in average health and 21.3 percent in good health).

A chi-square goodness of fit was completed as a test of Hypothesis 2. A significant relationship ( $\chi^2 = 10.42$ ,  $df = 3$ ) was found at the .05 level and the null hypothesis was rejected. The data supports the assertion that grandparents in poor health are more likely to be classified as the Distant Figure style.

Hypothesis 3 explored the existence of a relationship between the variables of the grandchild's sex and the grandparenting style.

Hypothesis 3: Male grandchildren will report patterns of grandparent behavior which can be classified into the Reservoir of Family Wisdom style significantly more frequently than will female grandchildren.

Table 6 illustrates the distribution of the various styles broken down by the sex of the grandchild. A chi-square ( $\chi^2 = 8.95$ ,  $df = 3$ ) was sig-

TABLE 5  
 GRANDPARENTING STYLE BY GRANDPARENT HEALTH

Style	Percent Responding		
	Poor	Average	Good
Reservoir of Family Wisdom	19.0	12.4	8.0
Formal Style	33.3	40.4	54.7
Distant Figure	47.6	34.8	21.3
Fun Seeker	0.0	12.4	16.0

TABLE 6  
GRANDPARENTING STYLE BY SEX OF GRANDCHILD

Style	Sex of Grandchild	
	Males	Females
Reservoir of Family Wisdom	14.9%	5.6%
Formal Style	37.7%	57.7%
Distant Figure	35.1%	32.9%
Fun Seeker	12.3%	12.7%

nificant at the .05 level. It appears from the table that males are, in fact, more likely to report the Reservoir of Family Wisdom style than are females. The null form of Hypothesis 3 was rejected, therefore, it can be said that the data revealed a marked difference between the sexes within the Reservoir of Family Wisdom style. The data also shows some evidence of a differential within the Distant Figure style, with females somewhat less inclined to report this particular style.

Hypothesis 4 stated that:

The sum of the percentage of grandfathers who are classified into each of the Formal, Fun Seeker, Reservoir of Family Wisdom or the Distant Figure styles will not differ significantly from the same percentage figure for grandmothers who are classified into these styles.

A t-test for independent samples was performed over each of the styles of grandparenting. The computed "t" ( $t = -1.76$ ) was not significant at the .05 level. The null form of Hypothesis 4 could not be rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that grandparent sex was not a significant factor in the determination of grandparenting style for this sample.

Table 7 shows the distribution of grandparenting styles by grandparent sex. As can be seen, the division of grandparenting styles by sex does show strong trends in the hypothesized direction. Two of the styles show strong tendencies to be adopted by one sex or the other (the Reservoir of Family Wisdom for males and the Formal style for females). As could be expected if grandparenting styles were neuter in nature (Neugarten and Weinstein, 1964), the remaining two styles show little difference between the sexes in frequency of adoption. This seems to suggest that there still exists a degree of

TABLE 7  
GRANDPARENTING STYLE BY GRANDPARENT SEX

Style	Grandfathers		Grandmothers	
	No.	%	No.	%
Reservoir of Family				
Wisdom . . . . .	10	20.8	3	4.2
Formal . . . . .	21	43.8	41	56.9
Distant Figure . . .	11	22.9	19	26.4
Fun Seeker . . . . .	6	12.5	9	12.5

sexual differentiation between grandparenting styles, particularly in those styles which do not depend primarily on the frequency or style of interaction for their definition.

Hypothesis 5 explores the influence of grandparent kinship relationship on grandparenting style.

Hypothesis 5: Over all categories (personal visits, letters and telephone calls) college-age grandchildren will report significantly more indices of contact with maternal, rather than paternal, grandparents.

Table 8 shows the distribution of subject responses to the item requesting the sex and kinship of the grandparent most frequently contacted. A calculated "t" value was not significant at the .05 level ( $t = .85, df = 2$ ). The null hypothesis could not be rejected. It was concluded that the kinship of the grandparent was not a major factor in determining the grandparent most frequently contacted. In spite of the non-significant "t," however, Table 8 reveals a trend toward more contact with maternal, rather than paternal grandparents. Maternal grandparents accounted for 60.2 percent of the subjects who expressed a differential in contact, with paternal grandparents accounting for only 39.8 percent.

Table 9 shows the breakdown of the various patterns of contact with grandparents. Subjects were asked to specify the frequency of contact with grandparents in each of three areas: personal visits, letters and telephone calls. These areas were further broken down by the initiator of the contacts (i.e., did the grandchild call the grandparent, or visa versa?). Responses were scored on the following scales: 1--less than once per year; 2--two to five times per year; 3--three to ten times per year; 4--approximately

TABLE 8  
 MOST FREQUENTLY CONTACTED GRANDPARENT  
 BY SEX AND KINSHIP

Kinship	Males		Sex		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Maternal . . . . .	31	26.5	60	39.7		
Paternal . . . . .	19	12.6	41	27.2		

TABLE 9  
 FREQUENCY OF CONTACT BY TYPE OF CONTACT

Type of Contact*	1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Grandchild														
Visits GP	65	35	37	20	35	19	14	8	7	4	5	4	24	13
Grandparent														
Visits GC	92	49	41	22	23	12	5	3	7	4	6	3	13	7
Grandchild														
Calls GP	70	38	32	18	26	14	17	9	4	6	12	6	17	9
Grandparent														
Calls GC	81	44	34	18	26	14	12	7	12	7	5	3	17	9
Grandchild														
Writes GP	73	39	49	26	28	15	15	8	9	5	6	3	7	4
Grandparent														
Writes GC	73	39	41	22	34	18	12	6	14	7	7	4	6	3

Percent rounded to the nearest whole percent.

once per month; 5--one to two times per month; 6--two to three times per month; 7--three or more times per month. As can be seen, grandchildren in the present sample do maintain a considerable degree of contact with grandparents, with 27 percent reporting that they visit their grandparents at least once per month.

In order to explore further the impact of grandparent kinship on grandparenting style, Hypothesis 6 states:

The frequency of occurrence of each style of grandparenting will vary independently of the kinship of the grandparent.

Table 10 represents the distribution of grandparent styles by kinship affiliation. Comparison between the sexes (controlling for kinship) can be found in Table 7. Since this data does not control for the absence of a specific grandparent, comparisons between the sexes among the kinship groups would be misleading.

The computed chi-square was not significant at the .05 level ( $\chi^2 = 1.30$ ,  $df = 3$ ), and it was concluded that there is no significant difference between the various grandparenting styles on the variable of grandparent kinship. Table 10 does show a trend toward the adoption of the most active grandparenting style (the Fun Seeker) by paternal, rather than maternal grandparents.

The distance between the grandparent and grandchild was hypothesized to affect the style of grandparenting exhibited by the grandparent.

Hypothesis 7: The frequency of occurrence (in percent) of the Distant Figure style as reported by college-age grandchildren who live less than 250 miles from their grandparents will be

TABLE 10  
GRANDPARENTING STYLE BY KINSHIP

Style	Maternal		Paternal	
	No.	%	No.	%
Reservoir of Family				
Wisdom . . . . .	8	11.1	5	10.4
Formal Style . . . . .	38	52.8	24	50.0
Distant Figure . . . . .	19	26.4	11	22.9
Fun Seeker . . . . .	7	9.7	8	16.7

significantly less than this same percent figure for those grandchildren living more than 250 miles from their grandparents.

Distance from grandparents while at college was distinguished from distance from grandparents while at home since it was thought that these might have unique influence on the style of grandparenting. Distance from grandparents in both cases was coded according to the following: 1--less than 99 miles; 2--100 to 248 miles; 3--250+ miles. A tabular representation of grandparenting styles broken down by distance from college may be found in Table 11.

The computed chi-square was not significant at the .05 level ( $\chi^2 = 9.66$ ,  $df = 6$ ). The null form of the hypothesis could not be rejected when distance was defined as "distance from college."

Table 12 illustrates the distribution of grandparenting styles by distance from the student's home address. The computed chi-square using this definition was highly significant at the .05 level ( $\chi^2 = 20.72$ ,  $df = 6$ ) and the null hypothesis was rejected. The distance between the residence of the grandparent and the subject's home address was a significant factor in the determination of grandparenting style in that as distance increased, so did the frequency of the Distant Figure style. For those grandparents living within 100 miles of the student's home, the Formal style was predominant. The Reservoir of Family Wisdom styles appears independent of distance since approximately the same percentage of those grandparents living less than 100 miles or more than 250 miles were classified into this style (Table 12). Fun Seeker grandparents tended to live closer to the students home. Table 12 also shows a trend toward the assumption of the Distant Figure style by grandparents living more than 250 miles from their grandchildren. The Formal

TABLE 11

## GRANDPARENTING STYLE BY DISTANCE FROM COLLEGE

Style	Distance					
	0 - 99		100-249		250+	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Reservoir of Family Wisdom	3	30	6	11	12	10
Formal Style	3	30	26	48	55	46
Distant Figure	1	10	14	26	42	35
Fun Seeker	3	30	8	15	12	9

TABLE 12  
GRANDPARENTING STYLE BY DISTANCE FROM HOME

Style	Distance					
	0-99		100-249		250+	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Reservoir of Family Wisdom	9	11	1	4	11	13
Formal Style	41	52	17	68	26	32
Distant Figure	15	19	6	24	36	44
Fun Seeker	14	18	1	4	8	11

and the Fun Seeker styles, on the other hand, exhibited a reverse of this trend. The Reservoir of Family Wisdom style did not exhibit any distinct pattern.

This study also undertook to explore one additional area.

Hypothesis 8 states:

Later-born grandchildren will report the Fun Seeker style of grandparenting significantly more frequently than will first-born grandchildren.

Table 13 represents grandparenting style broken down by the birth order of the subject. A computed chi-square was significant at the .05 level ( $\chi^2 = 9.38$ ,  $df = 3$ ). Thus, birth order position did significantly affect the grandparenting style reported by the grandchild. The pattern exhibited, however, did not correspond precisely to the hypothesized trend. The difference between first-borns and later-borns within the Fun Seeker style was not as strong as the differences within any of the remaining styles in that there is less percentage difference between first-borns and later-borns within this style (2 percent) than in the Reservoir of Family Wisdom style (6 percent), the Formal style (16 percent), or the Distant Figure (16 percent). The data does show a trend for grandparents of later-borns to exhibit either of the two less expressive styles (the Reservoir of Family Wisdom or the Distant Figure) while the grandparents of first-borns appear more likely to adopt the Formal style.

## Discussion

Data from the present study reveals significant trends in grandparent

TABLE 13  
 GRANDPARENTING STYLE  
 BY BIRTH POSITION OF GRANDCHILD

Style	Birth Position			
	Oldest		Not Oldest	
	No.	%	No.	%
Reservoir of Family				
Wisdom . . . . .	7	8	14	14
Formal Style . . . . .	47	55	37	37
Distant Figure . . . . .	19	22	38	38
Fun Seeker . . . . .	13	15	10	11

interaction with the college-age grandchild. Most generally, the study provides limited verification of the heuristic value of the Neugarten and Weinstein model of grandparenting styles (1964). Factor analysis of the behaviorally oriented questionnaire items resulted in the specification of five subscales corresponding to the five grandparenting styles. The usefulness of this model for discussion of grandparent-adult grandchild interaction thus received support. Though prior studies had determined the utility of the model for grandparents of pre-teen grandchildren (Kahana and Kahana, 1969), the present study was the first to apply the model to college-age grandchildren.

Using the Neugarten and Weinstein model, it was then possible to proceed with the tests of the hypotheses. The prediction that college-age grandchildren would report the Formal grandparenting style received only limited support since there was no significant difference between the frequencies of any of the five grandparenting styles. It appears, however, that a strong tendency for the predicted pattern does exist. This finding suggests that interaction between grandparents and the college-age grandchild is not dramatically altered over the turbulent adolescent years. Kahana and Kahana (1971) found that the grandparenting style most reported over the pre-teen years was the Formal style, and they attribute this change (from the Fun Seeker style which is prevalent for the younger grandchild) to the changing cognitive abilities of the grandchild. The absence of any dramatic change in grandparenting style over the teen years which is evidenced by the present study might suggest that changes in grandparenting style are more directly related to changing socio-emotive needs of the grandchild, rather than cognitive abilities. The fact that the second most frequently occurring grandparenting style was the Distant Figure suggests that the grand-

child does not desire or encourage very active interaction (typically of the Fun Seeker or the Parent Surrogate styles), and responds instead to a more traditional, stereotyped role. The broadening of the social world may contribute to a decline in the degree of interaction with kin, and particularly grandparents. This decline results in the adoption of either the Formal style, in which a considerable degree of emotional closeness persists despite a lack of extensive interaction, or the Distant Figure style in which the grandparent is both physically and emotionally remote.

Previous work by Neugarten and Weinstein (1964) led to the hypothesis that the health of the grandparent would be a significant factor in the determination of grandparenting style. This hypothesis was strongly supported by the data, with grandparents in poor health tending to adopt the Distant Figure style. The Distant Figure style requires the least physical interaction of all the styles and would be ideally suited for grandparents in poor or failing health. The relatively high percentage of the Distant Figure style in each of the other health classifications (35 percent--fair, 21 percent--good), and the general tendency in grandchildren to report their grandparents in good health, suggests, however, that while grandparent health may be a significant factor, additional variables are operational. Again, socio-emotive factors common during the college-years may prescribe a less active form of grandparent-grandchild interaction. On the other hand, the physical distances separating grandparents and grandchildren may contribute to a more formalized and less personal form of interaction.

The relationship between grandparenting style and the sex of the grandchild has received surprising little attention. The present study found significant differences between the sexes in regards to the frequencies of the grandparenting styles. These differences were most pronounced, as pre-

dicted, in the Reservoir of Family Wisdom style and additionally in the Distant Figure style. It is plausible to suggest that these differences are due, in part, to the sex-appropriate attitudes and behaviors exhibited by the grandchild which influence their interaction with their grandparent. Males do tend to report the most traditional, authoritarian style (Reservoir of Family Wisdom) more frequently than do females. Females, on the other hand, tend to report the Distant Figure style less frequently than do males. These patterns may be a consequence of the social roles attributed to males and females--i.e., the traditional, authoritarian or "masculine" role for males. Female grandchildren, on the other hand, seem to conform to a norm which delegates to them the maintenance of a degree of extended family cohesiveness.

In addition to the sex of the grandchild, the present study investigated the influence of the sex of the grandparent on grandparenting style. The literature in the area tends to concur in the belief that grandparent sex is a significant factor, but differs considerably in the interpretation of that effect. Data provided by this study supports Neugarten and Weinstein in that, with the omission of the Parent Surrogate style, no difference was found in grandparenting styles when controlling for grandparent sex. They postulate that the emerging grandparent styles are neuter in nature, and can be adopted with equal ease by either sex. The differences which do occur appear to be more directly attributable to variables other than grandparent sex (particularly grandparent health, kinship affiliation and sex of the grandchild).

Data from the present study shows that college-age grandchildren do maintain a considerable degree of contact with grandparents, in spite of the large percentage of subjects reporting the Distant Figure style. Contact

occurs primarily in the form of personal visits, however, letters and telephone calls were also utilized by both grandparents and grandchildren. Approximately 27 percent of the grandchildren reported that, while at college, they visited their grandparents at least once per month, and 12.8 percent visited four or more times per month. Telephone calls at least once per month were reported by 30.5 percent. In both of these instances, the grandchild appears to be initiator of the contacts since the proportion of grandparents who visited or called the grandchild at least once per month was 16.6 percent and 24.6 percent respectively. It appears that letters were exchanged reciprocally, since 19.9 percent of the grandchildren reported that they wrote their grandparents once per month or more, while 20.9 percent of the grandparents wrote with the same frequency.

The predominance of visits, however, is perhaps a spurious finding, however, in that the nature of the V.P.I. & S.U. student population include a significant percentage who regularly commute home on weekends. The present investigation included no way to ascertain the distance between V.P.I. & S.U. and the student's home address, and it may be that visits to grandparents are a regular part of home visits since 39.9 percent of students reported that their grandparents lived less than 50 miles from their home address.

In addition to the general frequency of contact, the present investigation reveals a tendency for the contact to be initiated by grandchildren, as opposed to grandparents (Table 9). For personal visits, this pattern may be a result of the greater mobility of college students, particularly since 51.9 percent of students reported that their grandparents lived more than 150 miles from V.P.I. & S.U. The inverse of this trend, visible to a lesser degree within the other categories, lends some credence to the

hypothesis that grandchildren feel some responsibility toward their grandparents and endeavor to maintain a degree of contact with them. It is difficult to draw particular conclusions, however, since the relative importance of the various types of contact was not explored. It is conceivable, particularly for this college population, that letters and telephone calls are supplementary forms of contact, with personal visits assuming a primary role in the maintenance of grandparent contact. Finally there appears to be some indication that the sex of the grandchild interacts with at least one type of contact. Female grandchildren were more than twice as likely to report that they wrote their grandparents at least once a month than were males (29.1 percent and 13.8 percent respectively).

The prediction that, over all forms of contact, grandchildren would report more interaction with maternal, rather than paternal grandparents, was not supported. This finding is most probably a result of several factors. Kahana and Kahana(1971) found that more contact with maternal grandparents occurred for younger grandchildren, when both sets of grandparents were living. This contact included a form of the Parent Surrogate style. For the present population of older grandchildren, it is possible that kinship factors become less important as grandparents age and die. Preference for a particular grandparent may be more directly related to personality and health factors. Geographical distance is most probably a confounding factor. Female subjects with two or more living grandparents reported a "most frequently contacted grandparent" less often than did males. Older female grandchildren may feel more social pressure to maintain an equilibrium in family relationships and thus interact with all grandparents equally. This position supports Kahana and Kahana's (1971) finding that the oldest grandchildren in their study were more reluctant to cite a "favorite" grandparent,

reasoning that "you must love everyone equally." (1971, 102)

The effect of the kinship variable was explored in greater depth with the prediction that grandparenting style would vary independently of the kinship of the grandparent. This prediction received strong support, thus leading to the conclusion that kinship was not a primary factor in the determination of grandparenting style. The data does suggest a trend toward the adoption of certain active grandparenting styles (Fun Seeker etc.) by paternal grandparents, but it is logical to conclude that the kinship of the grandparent is not a critical determinant of grandparenting style.

The geographical distance between grandparent and grandchild was hypothesized by Neugarten and Weinstein (1964) to account for a significant number of cases of the Distant Figure style. Data from the present study suggests that for the college-age grandchild, the distance between the grandparent's residence and the home address is a much more influential factor than the distance from college to the grandparent's residence. This in turn suggests that the exhibited grandparenting style is not a drastic modification of the grandparenting style which was exhibited prior to the student's entrance into college. In other words, the grandparenting style developed prior to the freshman year is generally maintained in spite of the distance separating the two parties. Thus, it is possible that the emotional "remoteness" expressed by Neugarten and Weinstein's Distant Figure styles was not primarily a result of distance in this college-age population, but is a result instead of certain personality and social characteristics of the two groups. The assertion of the student's independence from the nuclear family which is characteristic of the college period may relegate the grandparent to a primarily non-involvement role. Again, however, it is necessary to note that a combination of factors are

operational in determining grandparenting style.

The final variable investigated by the present study is based upon literature which reveals that first-born children differ significantly from later-borns on numerous personality characteristics. Since grandparenting style has been hypothesized to be directly related to the personality and social competence of the child (Jackson, 1971), it was hypothesized that the most active and out-going grandparenting style would be reported more frequently by later-born grandchildren. A significant difference in grandparenting styles for first-borns and later-borns was found, however, the pattern exhibited differed considerably from the predicted pattern. In this case, the grandparent of later-born children was more likely to adopt one of the more reserved and less emotionally interactive roles (Reservoir of Family Wisdom and the Distant Figure). The slight difference between the two groups for the Fun Seeker style was in direct opposition to the predicted pattern in that grandparents of first-borns were slightly more apt to assume this style. Since later-borns have been shown to have superior social skills, and be more socially gregarious than first-borns (Miller and Maruyama, 1976) it is possible that college-age later-borns focus their social needs and skills within the peer groups. Grandparents thus tend to revert to the background to a greater degree than would be true for first-borns who maintain a strong identity with parents.

#### Methodological Implications

Several methodological limitations of the present study should be noted. The limitation of the sample to college students limits the applicability of the conclusions which were drawn to this particular population. It is conceivable that different patterns of grandparenting styles would be

evidenced by a population of "college-age" (18-23) grandchildren who are not enrolled in college studies. It is possible that these individuals maintain different patterns of contact with the extended family and grandparents of these individuals would exhibit a different pattern of interaction. Studies of other ethnic groups and "social classes" would also increase the generalizability of the results.

The instrument utilized in the study was developed by the investigator and was used for the first time in the actual gathering of data. Neugarten and Weinstein used personal interviews to obtain their data. The present investigation depended upon an objective questionnaire. Based upon subject responses to the instrument, the interview method may have allowed for more in-depth exploration of grandparent behaviors. Limitations on time and personnel dictated the use of the objective questionnaire in the present study. It is noted however, that personal interviews held in conjunction with the use of the objective questionnaire may have provided significant insight into the rationale behind the interactional patterns and the grandparenting style described, as well as allowed for more intensive investigation into the reasons for the patterns exhibited.

Finally, it is noted that additional analysis should be completed to further correlate the grandparenting style classifications made by the judge with those classifications made by objective criterion. The small number of items used to determine grandparenting style precluded the possibility of a completely objective classification system, and the use of a judge was necessary to classify those cases where subscale scores did not clearly identify a dominant grandparenting style. The inclusion of additional items in the classification criterion might eliminate the necessity for any subjective judgements and improve instrument validity. In any case, future

use of the instrument should include a measure of the judges reliability as compared to objective classification systems.

### Theoretical Implications

Within specific limitations, the present study provides additional support for the basic premises advanced by Neugarten and Weinstein (1964). It is an extension and modification of both this work and the work done by Kahana and Kahana in that it is the only study available which investigates the functional nature of grandparenting styles for the college-age grandchild. As such it is a test of a heuristic model provided by Neugarten and Weinstein and the limitations of the study are primarily dictated by methodological considerations.

The present investigation utilized a college population in the gathering of data. The nature of the phenomenon under study however, and the numerous factors which can influence this phenomenon would suggest further work to establish the validity of the conclusions presented here for other sub-populations of this age group. A broadening of the population base would allow for greater generalization of the results.

An additional perspective which would increase the scope of the present study is that of the grandparents. The present investigation was designed to focus on the grandchild's perception of his grandparent's behaviors. An extension of this study involving data obtained from both grandparent and grandchild would provide interesting insights into the degree of congruence between the two perspectives. It is conceivable that grandparents of college-age grandchildren perceive their role differently than do the grandchildren.

Despite the mentioned limitations, the present investigation does provide supporting evidence for the position that grandparenting is a role,

with resulting clusters of behaviors. It does not investigate the possibility that grandchildren perceive grandparenting as a role, or dwell on the functions of this role for the individuals involved. Additional study is recommended to ascertain the degree to which the grandchild can perceive a grandparenting style and additionally, the degree to which the perceived grandparenting style corresponds to the style determined by objective analysis.

In conclusion, the present investigation supports several positive conclusions in regards to grandparent-adult grandchild interaction. Generally, college-age grandchildren do tend to maintain contact with their grandparents, often initiating this contact (though little can be said concerning the motives for these contacts). It appears that patterns of interaction established prior to college tend to persist throughout the college years. In addition, though these patterns (or grandparenting styles) are influenced by a variety of variables (distance from home, sex and health of the grandparents, etc.) the influence of the various personalities involved should not be underestimated. The preceding study has laid the groundwork for additional studies of this type, and these studies are recommended to further clarify the influence of grandparents on their grandchildren over the life span.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY

The present investigation was designed to investigate the grandparent role from the perspective of the young adult grandchild and, more specifically, to investigate the effects of specified variables on the grandchild's perception of his grandparent's grandparenting style.

A random sample of college students currently enrolled at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University completed a self-administered questionnaire. Undergraduates comprised 84% of the sample and 61% were males. All subjects had at least one living grandparent, with a mean number of 2.08. The instrument included items eliciting demographic information, as well as a series of Likert-type items developed to identify the behavioral correlates of the five grandparenting styles identified by Neugarten and Weinstein (1964). Factor analysis of the data revealed five subscales, each corresponding to one of the identified grandparenting styles. Individual subscale scores were obtained for each subject and the subject was then classified into one of the five groups on the basis of the largest of these scores. In the case of tied scores, an independent judge was used to classify the subjects.

Tests of the hypotheses were based upon these final classifications of grandparenting style. Appropriate statistical tests (including chi-square, t-tests and frequency tabulations) were employed to test each of eight hypotheses regarding the relationship between perceived grandparenting style and particular variables.

The results did not confirm the hypothesis that the Formal Style of grandparenting would be described significantly more often by the students in that the difference between the frequencies of the styles was not significant at the .05 level. However, the Formal Style was the most frequently identified (44.9%), followed by the Distant Figure style (30.5%). The prediction that grandparent health, as well as sex and sibling position of the grandchild would significantly influence grandparenting style were supported by the data. Grandparents in poor health tended to be classified into one of the least active grandparenting styles (the Distant Figure) significantly more frequently than any of the remaining four styles. Male grandchildren were more likely to report the traditional, authoritarian style (the Reservoir of Family Wisdom) than were female grandchildren. Finally, later-born grandchildren were more likely to report the less affective styles (Reservoir of Family Wisdom, Distant Figure) than were their first-born peers. All results were significant at the .05 level.

The results also confirmed the hypothesis that sex of the grandparent would not be a significant factor in the incidence of a grandparenting style. Partial support was found for the prediction that the kinship relationship of the grandparent would influence the style of grandparenting described. A trend toward more incidences of contact with maternal, rather than paternal, and a concurrent trend toward the adoption of the most active grandparenting style (Fun Seeker) by paternal grandparents were revealed by the data. These trends were not, however, significant at the .05 level.

A final prediction that grandparenting style would be significantly affected by the residential distance between grandparent and grandchild was also partially supported. When distance was defined as "distance from

college," no significant difference was found between the frequencies of the various grandparenting styles. When distance was defined as "distance from home", however, as distance increased, so did the frequency of the Distant Figure style.

Generally, the results confirm the existence of functional grandparenting styles for the grandparent of the college-age grandchild. It therefore serves to verify and extend previous research efforts in this area and contribute to a more complete understanding of the variables operational in this aspect of inter-generational relationships. Additional research is advocated in order to explore the underlying factors which influence grandparent-grandchild interaction at all age levels.

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APPENDIX A

GRANDPARENTING QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions pertain to your relationship with your grandparents as it is now. Please answer the following questions as they relate to your situation while you are in residence at V.P.I. All answers are to remain strictly confidential.

I.D. \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex M F Major \_\_\_\_\_

Years of School Completed .12 13 14 15 16 17+

Religious Preference

Protestant Catholic Jewish Other None

- 1) Are you the oldest child in your family? Yes No
- 2) How many grandparents do you have who are now living? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What relationship to you are they?
 

_____ Mother's mother	_____ Father's mother
_____ Mother's father	_____ Father's father
_____ Other (please specify)	
- 4) While attending V.P.I., how far away from your grandparents do you live?
 

_____ 10-15 miles	_____ 201-250 miles
_____ 51-100 miles	_____ 251-300 miles
_____ 101-151 miles	_____ over 300 miles
_____ 151-200 miles	
- 5) While living at home, how far away from your grandparents do you live?
 

_____ 10-50 miles	_____ 201-250 miles
_____ 51-100 miles	_____ 251-300 miles
_____ 101-150 miles	_____ over 300 miles
_____ 151-200 miles	
- 6) Do you have more contact with one grandparent than the other(s)?  
For instance, when visiting a set of grandparents, do you do more things or visit slightly more with one grandparent or another?



- \_\_\_ 15) My grandparent gives me presents on occasions other than Christmas, birthdays, etc.
- \_\_\_ 16) My grandparent gives me "extra" money for my personal use.
- \_\_\_ 17) My grandparent acts as a "go-between" between my parents and I.
- \_\_\_ 18) My grandparent keeps me informed of family news, heritage, etc.
- \_\_\_ 19) My grandparent takes me places.
- \_\_\_ 20) My grandparent practically raised me.
- \_\_\_ 21) My grandparent gives me advice on impersonal topics (career, books, etc.)
- \_\_\_ 22) My grandparent gives me advice on personal topics (dating, etc.)
- \_\_\_ 23) My grandparent has very little impact on my life.
- \_\_\_ 24) My grandparent and I talk a lot about how it used to be.
- \_\_\_ 25) My grandparent is a strong influence in my life.
- \_\_\_ 26) I am not very close "emotionally" to my grandparent.
- \_\_\_ 27) My grandparent takes very personal pride in my accomplishments.
- \_\_\_ 28) My grandparent is too busy to spend much time with me.
- \_\_\_ 29) Most of the time, I see my grandparent only on holidays.
- \_\_\_ 30) My grandparent has taught me skills or knowledge that I can use today.
- \_\_\_ 31) My grandparent and I are usually doing something when we are together, instead of just talking (playing cards, shopping, golf, etc.)
- \_\_\_ 32) My grandparent knows me better than my parents do.
- \_\_\_ 33) My grandparent is more like a friend than an elder.
- \_\_\_ 34) My grandparent and I have a lot in common.
- \_\_\_ 35) My grandparent hears about me mostly through my parents.
- \_\_\_ 36) My grandparent is a strong disciplinarian.
- \_\_\_ 37) I would like to see more of my grandparent, but he/she lives too far away.

APPENDIX B

ITEM CLUSTERS

Subscale 1

## Reservoir of Family Wisdom

- 1) My grandparent keeps me informed of family news, heritage, etc.
- 2) My grandparent gives me advice on impersonal topics (career, books, etc.)
- 3) My grandparent gives me advice on personal topics (dating, etc.)
- 4) I usually act on my grandparent's advice.
- 5) My grandparent and I talk a lot about how it used to be.
- 6) I ask my grandparent for advice before making major decisions.
- 7) My grandparent has skills or knowledge that I can use today.
- 8) My grandparent has expressed values that are similar to the ones I believe in.

Subscale 2

## Parent Surrogate

- 1) My grandparent acts as a "go-between" between my parents and me.
- 2) My grandparents assume more than 50 percent of the responsibility for raising me.
- 3) I sometimes tell my grandparents my plans before I tell my parents.
- 4) My grandparent still has some responsibility for me.

Subscale 3

## Formal Style

- 1) My grandparent gives me presents on occasions other than Christmas, birthdays, etc.
- 2) My grandparent gives me "extra" money for my personal use.
- 3) I express my emotional feelings for my grandparents to them.
- 4) My grandparent expresses a very personal pride in my accomplishments.

Subscale 4

## Distant Figure Style

- 1) Most of the time, I see my grandparent only on holidays.
- 2) My grandparent hears about me mostly through my parents.
- 3) My grandparent uses strong disciplinary measures.

Subscale 5

## Fun Seeker Style

- 1) My grandparent takes me places.
- 2) My grandparent is quite busy with a variety of activities.
- 3) My grandparent and I are usually doing something when we are together instead of just talking (playing cards, shopping, etc.)

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AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF THE INTERACTIONAL  
PATTERNS OF GRANDPARENTS AND THEIR COLLEGE-AGE GRANDCHILDREN

by

Nancy G. Britton

(Abstract)

A random sample of one hundred-eighty seven college students currently enrolled at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (V.P.I. & S.U.) with living grandparents was utilized in an attempt to verify the existence of various styles of grandparenting and to test the relationship between reported grandparenting style and specified variables. Verification of the existence of distinct grandparenting styles was determined from factor analysis of selected item responses. Five distinct grandparenting styles were identified, corresponding to the five styles described by Neugarten and Weinstein(1964). The Formal Style was most frequently identified, however, this difference was not statistically significant at the .05 level. Grandparent health, as well as sex and sibling position of the grandchild were found to significantly influence the adoption of particular grandparenting styles. Hypotheses pertaining to the influence of kinship and sex of the grandparent were not supported. General patterns and modes of contact between grandparent and grandchild were also investigated.