

Grandparent-Grandchild Relationships from the Children's Perspective: Shared Activities and Socialization Styles

Paz Viguer¹, Juan Carlos Meléndez¹, Sandra Valencia², M^a José
Cantero¹, and Esperanza Navarro¹

¹Universidad de Valencia (Spain)

²Universidad de Armenia (Colombia)

The objective of this study is to describe the relationships between grandchildren and their favourite grandparents, by studying the socialization styles used by latter and the shared activities undertaken. The participants were 360 children between 10 and 12 years old, who completed the grandparent-grandchild relationship questionnaire of Rico, Serra and Viguer (2001) and the socialization questionnaire of Rey and Ruiz (1990). The results demonstrate the importance of gender and family line in the selection of the favourite grandparent, differences being shown in the types of shared activities and in socialization styles. It is concluded that in the majority of cases the profile of the favourite grandparent is the maternal grandmother, retired or a house wife, aged between 60-70, who lives in the same city as his/her grandchild, and who has contact with them several times a week. Furthermore, favourite grandparents get more involved with granddaughters than with grandsons, both in support and care activities and in cultural-recreational activities, and they primarily employ a democratic style. However, there are differences depending on the gender of the grandchild, with democratic principles being used more with girls and authoritarian ones with boys.

Keywords: grandparent-grandchild relationships, grandparent role, activities, socialization styles.

Este trabajo tiene como objetivo describir las relaciones entre los nietos y sus abuelos favoritos, a través del estudio de los estilos de socialización utilizados por los abuelos y de las actividades compartidas por ambos. Los participantes, 360 niños/as de 10-12 años, cumplimentaron el cuestionario sobre relaciones abuelos-nietos de Rico, Serra y Viguer (2001) y el cuestionario de estilos de socialización de Rey y Ruiz (1990). Los resultados mostraron la importancia del género y la línea familiar en la selección del abuelo favorito, observándose diferencias en los tipos de actividad compartida y en los estilos de socialización. Se concluyó que el perfil del abuelo/a favorito es mayoritariamente el de abuela materna, jubilada o ama de casa, de entre 60-70 años, que vive en la misma ciudad que su nieto/a, y mantiene contacto con él/ella varias veces a la semana. Además, los abuelos/as favoritos se implican más con las nietas que con los nietos tanto en actividades de ayuda y cuidado como en las lúdico-culturales y utilizan básicamente el estilo democrático. No obstante, se obtienen diferencias según el género del nieto, empleando en mayor medida principios democráticos con las niñas y autoritarios con los niños.

Palabras clave: relaciones abuelos-nietos, rol de abuelo, actividades, estilos de socialización.

The study of grandparent-grandchild relationships is a subject of growing importance, and falls within two emerging areas of psychological research: family and aging. First of all, the emergence of new family types and women's permanence in the workplace have changed this relationship in certain ways (Flaquer, 1998; Valero, 1997). In addition, demographic changes such as decreased birth and death rates, increased life expectancy, and an aging population have established new developmental parameters for elderly adults. These changes have brought about a new concept of the respective roles of grandparent and grandchild, allowing for new styles and functions, and changing the characteristics of this relationship.

One of the most important aspects of this evolution has been the change in the role of grandparent toward, together with school, contributing to the child's education. Simultaneously, grandparents also spend a great deal of time with their grandchildren, and do various activities with them. This has transformed a child's grandparent into a meaningful agent of socialization for him or her (Pinazo, 1999a, Pineda & Ruiz, 1996).

Socialization is a function usually left to school and family; the latter transmits from generation to generation, over the course of the child's development, customs, values and cultural richness, as well as strategies for the child to adapt to different situations arising in his or her environment. In addition, the child learns to effectively participate as a member of a social group.

During the process of socialization, grandparents teach their grandchildren practical abilities and provide them with information about their family and their past. They also provide them with care and support, and act as role models and sources of ideas and reflection about human life (Pinazo, 1999b). The specific role a grandparent adopts in his/her grandchild's life is influenced by variables such as the grandparent's and grandchild's age and gender, and whether the grandparent is maternal or paternal (Triadó, Villar, Solé, Osuna & Celdrán, 2006). As agents of their grandchildren's socialization, grandparents are significant and contribute to their cognitive, moral (Kohlberg, 1992; Pineda & Ruiz, 1996), and socioaffective development (López & Cantero, 1999). This creates a close relationship between children's development and the roles played by their grandparents within the web of family relationships. However, by participating in the socialization process, grandparents may exert not only a positive influence over their grandchildren, but also a negative one, depending on the socialization style they adopt (Adams & Jones, 1983; Grotevant, 1983). With this in mind, and based on Baumrid's early studies (1967, 1971), an important vein of research has been developed that dedicates itself to analyzing family educational styles and their developmental consequences. The majority of research has concluded that family discipline is mainly determined by two dimensions: control and affection (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), which may be understood as

the behavior that tries to make children act desirably, and the behavior that makes children comfortable with their caretakers and lets them know they are accepted.

Maccoby and Martin (1983), combining those two dimensions, proposed four different socialization styles: the democratic style, which applies to parents characterized by high levels of control/demands as well as affection/communication; the authoritative style, in which parents exercise a high level of control but low levels of affection and communication; the indulgent style, where parents are very affectionate but exercise very little control; and finally the indifferent style, which is characterized by low levels of both control and affection. Research has shown that the democratic style is the most beneficial to child and adolescent development, and children educated in this style are distinguished for their social competency, maturity, high self-esteem and capacity for self-control and independence (Parke & Buriel, 1998; Steinberg & Silk, 2002).

Jiménez and Muñoz (2005), on the other hand, point out that the concept of educational style has crucial limitations because of the one-directional, direct influence of parents' behavior on the psychological development of their children. This view does not take genetic influences or circumstances outside the family into account, though, and it underestimates parents' understanding of educational situations, as well as the child's role in contributing to their own development. It is reductionistic in this way, boiling the process of socialization down to children linearly internalizing their parents' practices. With these limitations in mind, in recent decades, it has been considered important to analyze both grandchildren's and grandparents' perceptions about the latter's role in socialization, which at least captures the view of two people involved in this process.

Tyszkowa (1991) concluded that, from grandchildren's perspective, their grandparents influence them in various ways. Grandparents participate in providing support and care, giving them information about the world, they are role models, and they are a source of ideas and reflection about human life. Meanwhile, children are aware of the negative impact their grandparents can have when their attitudes are extremist. Triadó, Martínez and Villar (2000) conducted a study of adolescents in which they found that elderly grandparents above all play the role of reconciler, and they suggested that roles are distributed between grandfathers and grandmothers. The results of this study showed that, as in the Van Ranst, Verschueren and Marcoen (1995) study, grandfathers are perceived as providers of information and as guides, while grandmothers are perceived as providers of affection and care. Also, according to Osuna (2006) and similar to the findings of numerous other studies, advice, education and reflection are more frequently attributed to grandfathers (Aiken, 1998), while affectionate relationships and care are attributed to grandmothers. Grandmothers also tend to be more involved, emotionally speaking, to have

more intimate, warm relationships, and to act as substitute mothers when need be (Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981; Troll, 1983). A study by Ruoppila (1991) confirmed that from the perspective of the grandparents, they believe their role to be significant. They get to help their children during the transition into parenthood and be an important source of psychological, social and financial support to their grandchildren. Very few people do not see the special meaning of being a grandparent, are not involved in their grandparents' lives, or rarely show them support (Pinazo, 1999b).

The grandparent-grandchild relationship during socialization may vary first, according to the child's developmental stage, and second, depending on whether he or she lives with their parents or grandparents.

Regarding developmental stage, while the grandchild is young, the grandparents' main roles are helping with his or her care, developing play behaviors, and stimulating them cognitively and emotionally, thus contributing to their affective, cognitive and social development (Clarke-Stewart, 1978; Parke & Tinsley, 1981; Power & Parke, 1982). According to Triadó et al. (2006), as the dyadic relationship changes and the child gets older, its less positive aspects become particularly important. This is especially true when children reach adolescence. As young people gain their independence, their frequency of contact with their grandparents stops depending as much on their parents or the grandparents themselves, and starts becoming more voluntary. This tends to decrease but not eliminate this contact (Roberto & Stroes, 1992). The grandparents, too, lend new focus to this interaction such as giving them company, advice, being supportive in parent-child relationships, helping when they need it, and mediating any conflicts with the parents. The grandparent role, then, may serve the function of friendship, companionship, camaraderie or solidarity (Ochaíta & Espinosa, 1995). Also, studies by Triadó et al. and Celdrán, Triadó and Villar (2009) report that there is an evolutionary pattern to the grandparent-grandchild dyad in which during adolescence, both perceive a change in frequency of contact, but only grandparents perceive an emotional distance.

Regarding the issue of whether the child lives with his or her parents or grandparents, when the grandchild lives with either or both parents, the relationship with their grandparents tends to be more indulgent and complacent. This is because while the grandparent participates in socializing and caring for the child, he or she is not responsible for the child's upbringing (Rico, Serra & Viguer, 2001). Recent studies have shown that when grandparents are responsible for raising their grandchildren, they do not use very demanding parenting strategies. On the contrary, adolescents and their grandparent guardians perceive greater affection and communication than criticism and rejection in their relationship. Also, they mainly use inductive techniques to establish the rules, as opposed to rigid or indulgent ones, which are associated with having fewer behavioral

problems (Fuentes & Bernedo, 2009; Fuentes, Bernedo & Fernández, 2007). A study by Bernedo, Fuentes and Fernández (2008) focused on the perception of behavioral problems in children raised by their grandparents and found that the majority of boys and girls were in the normal range on scales of externalization and internalization, as well as overall behavioral problems, though some differences were observed as a function of sex and age. Last, on the subject of spending time together, the dyad does different recreational activities together that tend to develop affective links and generate satisfaction. This tends to improve the quality of their relationship and develop long-lasting ties for the duration of the grandparent's life as well as that of the grandchild (Kennedy, 1992a). Of course, doing these activities depends on the influence of several variables such as age, the gender of the grandchild, ethnicity, family structure, birth order, geographical proximity, the size of the community the grandparent lives in, and social strata (Pineda & Ruiz, 1996; Rico, Serra, Viguer & Meléndez, 2000). According to Osuna (2006), age is one predictor of the enforcement style chosen by grandfathers and grandmothers. Studies by Robertson (1977) and Cherlin and Furstenberg (1985) indicate that younger grandparents are more likely to be active and committed to their grandchildren, while grandparents over 65 tend to be more distant.

Kennedy's study (1992a) concluded that older grandparents participate in activities that do not require much physical force, and also observed differences related to gender such that grandmothers focused on family care activities, community activities and social activities, while grandfathers do more activities outdoors and more task-related activities. Furthermore, granddaughters tend to share more with their grandparents.

In any case, direct influence is largely related to the level of involvement of the grandparent, the influence being greater the closer the relationship the two have, and when grandparents act as substitute parents. Grandparents who participate in various activities with their grandkids, and offer support during the many crisis situations they are faced with resolving have more power and influence over them. When this occurs, it allows for value structures with greater generational perspective (García, Ramírez & Lima, 1998). Along those lines, several studies have reported that among grandparents, grandmothers have greater influence over the development of their grandkids' values, mainly those related to interpersonal matters such as family ideals and religious beliefs (Roberto & Stroes, 1992). Similarly, according to Osuna (2006), grandmothers tend to participate in the most important activities, while going for walks and conversing are done by both grandmothers and grandfathers. As grandchildren grow up, activities at home and ongoing activities diminish in favor of more sporadic and public ones. Furthermore, classic studies on this subject observed that the two maternal grandparents play a more significant role in their grandchildren's lives

than their paternal grandparents (Cherlin & Fustenberg, 1985; Hagestad, 1982; Kahana & Kahana, 1970; Mathews & Sprey, 1985; Van Ranst et al., 1995). Also, a more recent study by Castañeda, Sánchez, Sánchez and Blanc (2004) reported that adult grandchildren perceive that they have learned more from their maternal grandparents than their paternal ones.

The objectives of this study are, first, to describe from the boys' and girls' perspectives the characteristics of the grandfathers and grandmothers they consider their favorites. Next, we will analyze the relationship between the favorite grandparent and the help, care, and recreational-cultural activities they do with their grandchildren, as well as their democratic versus authoritarian socialization styles. Finally, this study will analyze the activities children do with their favorite grandparents, as well as the grandparents' socialization styles.

Method

Participants

A total of 360 boys and girls in 5th and 6th grade in elementary school from Valencia (Spain) participated in this study. They were between the ages of 10 and 12 years old with a mean of 10.92 years, and a standard deviation of .73; 52.5% were boys. 16% reported being an only child, while 56.5% had one sibling and 27.5% had two or more. 84.6% of participants came from homes where they lived with both parents.

A simple random sampling was performed and data was collected by administering individual, self-report surveys. We obtained the prior informed consent of the children's parents and teachers.

Instruments

The following instruments were employed:

1. Rico et al.'s (2001) Grandparent-grandchild Relationship Questionnaire. Three sections from this questionnaire were used: one about the child's sociodemographic information (age, sex, number of siblings) and family (family structure and number of grandparents), one where they identify their favorite grandparent (age, gender, family of origin, where they reside and frequency of contact), and one about participation in certain activities. As for the activities, the questionnaire gathers information about the favorite grandparent's participation in nineteen different activities with their grandchildren, as evaluated by the child in terms of frequency (never, little, often). The activities are grouped into two categories: help and care, and recreational-cultural. The help and care activities include bringing them to or picking them up from school, going for a walk or to the park together, bringing them to or picking them up from extracurricular activities, talking about the family, taking them to the doctor, talking about their studies, taking care of them, eating together, and helping them with their schoolwork. The recreational-cultural activities were the following: telling stories, attending religious celebrations, talking about the past, playing together, explaining things, listening to music, reading together, watching television or videos, going to the movies, theater or circus together, and going on excursions, going camping or going to the beach. The average frequency score was calculated for each set of activities, with 1 being the minimum and 3 being the maximum.
2. Rey and Ruiz's (1990) Socialization Styles Questionnaire. This consists of 34 items on a 4-point Likert scale, and it evaluates democratic and authoritarian socialization styles. Each socialization style consists of three dimensions, each of which is divided into various educational techniques. Each technique corresponds to a particular item (Graphic 1 summarizes this information). The democratic style includes the dimensions democratic principles, reflection and unconditional affection; the authoritarian style includes the dimensions authoritarian principles, use of power and manipulation of affection.

The questionnaire's validity was examined through exploratory factor analysis with Oblimin rotation, which yielded a score of .879 on the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test, and a level of significance of .001 on Barlett's Test of Sphericity. The analysis confirmed the existence of two factors: the democratic socialization style factor, which explained 22.47% of variance and had a Cronbach's alpha value of .90, and the authoritarian socialization style factor, which explained 12.88% of variance and had an alpha of .815. Adequate indices of reliability were obtained according to dimension. The democratic principles dimension yielded an alpha of .67, while it was .83 for reflection, .86 for unconditional affection, .66 for authoritarian principles, .58 for use of power and .74 for manipulation of affection.

Results

1. The profile of the favorite grandparent.

Descriptive analyses were performed to determine the profile of the favorite grandparent. The grandparents selected as favorite, by percentage, were the following: maternal grandmother 49.7%, paternal grandmother 22.8%, maternal grandfather 15.6% and paternal grandfather 11.9%. 11.9% of favorite grandparents were under 60 years old, 44.9% were between 60 and 70, and 43.2% were over 70.

Graphic 1
Socialization Styles: Dimensions and Techniques

Democratic Style		Authoritarian Style	
Dimension	Technique	Dimension	Technique
Democratic Principles	1. Consensus in decision-making	Authoritarian Principles	1. Hierarchical decisions
	2. Consensus in the rules		2. Hierarchy in the rules
	3. Flexibility in punishments		3. Rigid punishments
	4. Evaluation of criticism		4. Valuing submission
Reflection	1. Explanation	Use of Power	1. Threat of physical punishment
	2. Analysis Generation		2. Physical punishment
	3. Generation of Group Reflection		3. Depriving one of their privileges
	4. Immitation		4. Scolding
	5. Self-evaluation		5. Imposing order
	6. Expression of personal values		6. Increasing work or tasks
Unconditional Affection	1. Unconditional care in the face of transgressions	Manipulation of Affection	1. Gestures or words of rejection
	2. Unconditional esteem for the other person in the face of transgressions		2. Generating low self-esteem
	3. Expression of trust		3. Delegating responsibility to people with more authority
	4. Expression of understanding		4. Expressing loss of affection
	5. Expression of pride		5. Demonstrating anger
	6. Demonstrating affection		6. Ignoring the child
	7. Demonstrating support		7. Generating blame through retribution

52.2% of favorite grandparents were reported to have daily contact with their grandchildren while 28.1% see them on weekends. Last, 74.4% live in geographical proximity to their grandchildren; of these, 39.6% live in the same city, 27.9% live in the same neighborhood, and 7% live in the same house.

2. Relationship between the favorite grandparent and the activities he or she does with their grandchildren.

First of all, descriptive analyses were done to analyze the information provided by children about the frequency with which they engage in certain activities with their favorite grandparents (Table 1). The grandchildren indicated the most frequent activities were taking care of them (72.5%) and eating together (63%), while the least frequent were going for a walk or to the park together (44.7%), telling them stories (44.7%) and talking about the past (42.6%). They indicated they never did certain activities; these included bringing them to or picking them up from extracurricular activities (64.3%), listening to music together (53.3%) and bringing them to or picking them up from school (48.6%).

Subsequently, we analyzed the relationship between the variables type of activity, grandchild's gender, and favorite grandparent's family of origin through two 2x4 ANOVAs.

Grandchild's gender and favorite grandparent categories were considered independent variables, while help-care and recreational-cultural activities were considered dependent variables. The geographical distance variable was introduced as a covariate in both analyses. Statistically significant differences were found for help and care activities between grandsons and granddaughters, ($F_{(1, 350)} = 14.39; p < .001; \eta^2 = .04$), and between the favorite grandparent categories, ($F_{(3, 350)} = 3.01; p < .05; \eta^2 = .03$), as well as the covariate, ($F_{(1, 350)} = 8.8; p < .01; \eta^2 = .03$). Significant differences were not found, on the other hand, in the interaction between the two independent variables, ($F_{(3, 350)} = 1.14; p > .05; \eta^2 = .01$). Also, favorite grandparents are involved in more help and care activities with their granddaughters ($M = 2.12; SD = .41$) than grandsons ($M = 1.97; SD = .41$). With respect to the variable favorite grandparent categories, *post hoc* tests demonstrated statistically significant differences in two of the comparisons: maternal grandmothers ($M = 2.07; SD = .41$) are involved in more care activities than paternal grandmothers ($M = 1.94; SD = .40$). In addition, maternal grandfathers ($M = 2.08; SD = .48$) are more often involved in these activities than paternal grandmothers ($M = 1.9; SD = .40$).

Concerning recreational-cultural activities, statistically significant differences were found between grandsons and granddaughters, ($F_{(1, 350)} = 11.14; p < .01; \eta^2 = .03$), and in

Table 1
Frequency of Grandparents Participating in Activities with Their Grandchildren

	Never	Little	Often
1. Bringing them to or picking them up from school	48.6	38.6	12.8
2. Bringing them to or picking them up from extracurricular activities	64.3	27.3	8.4
3. Taking them to the doctor	46.9	35.8	17.2
4. Taking care of them	6.9	20.6	72.5
5. Telling them stories	31.4	44.7	23.9
6. Talking with them about the past	14.5	42.6	42.9
7. Playing together	20.8	36.9	42.2
8. Listening to music together	53.3	31.7	15
9. Explaining things to them	11.7	29.8	58.5
10. Reading together	46.4	36.9	16.7
11. Watching television or videos together	10.6	34.5	54.9
12. Going to the movies, theater or circus together	45.3	37.2	17.5
13. Taking a walk or going to the park together	18.6	44.7	36.7
14. Taking excursions, going camping, going to the beach	35	39.2	25.8
15. Attending religious celebrations	33.1	32.3	34.5
16. Helping them with their schoolwork	38.1	37.5	24.4
17. Talking about the family	16.7	41.2	42.1
18. Talking about their studies	27.9	37.4	34.6
19. Eating together	4.7	32.3	63

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations for the Variables "Help and Care Activities" and "Recreational-cultural Activities" as a Function of the Grandchild's Gender and the Favorite Grandparent's Family Lineage

Gender	Help and Care Activities		Recreational-cultural Activities	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Grandsons	1.97	.41	1.95	.42
Granddaughters	2.12	.41	2.11	.42
Favorite Grandparent's Family Lineage				
Maternal Grandmother	2.07	.40	2.04	.46
Paternal Grandmother	1.94	.40	2.01	.37
Maternal Grandfather	2.09	.48	2.03	.39
Paternal Grandfather	2.07	.43	2.02	.41

the covariate, ($F_{(1, 350)} = 5.5; p < .05; \eta^2 = .02$), yet none were found between the categories of favorite grandparent, ($F_{(3, 350)} = .28; p > .5; \eta^2 = .002$), or in the interaction between the two variables, ($F_{(3, 350)} = .59; p > .05; \eta^2 = .005$). Also, grandparents were found to more often participate in recreational-cultural activities with their granddaughters ($M = 2.11; SD = .42$) than with their grandsons ($M = 1.95; SD = .42$), yet no differences were found between the 4 favorite grandparent categories in average number of recreational-cultural activities done. Table 2 summarizes these results.

3. Relationship between the favorite grandparent and socialization style.

The relationship between the variables favorite grandparent's family of origin, grandchild's gender, and socialization style was analyzed by performing a 2x4 MANOVA. Grandchild's gender and favorite grandparent categories were deemed independent variables, while the two socialization styles being studied presently were evaluated as dependent variables. Multivariate contrasts indicated there are statistically significant differences between grandsons and granddaughters when it comes to

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations for the Variables “Democratic Socialization Style” and “Authoritarian Socialization Style” as a Function of the Grandchild’s Gender and the Favorite Grandparent’s Family Lineage

Gender	Democratic Socialization Style		Authoritarian Socialization Style	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Grandsons	50.9	10.7	24.7	6.6
Granddaughters	54.5	8.8	23.0	5.3
Favorite Grandparent’s Family Lineage				
Maternal Grandmother	52.9	9.9	24.2	6.7
Paternal Grandmother	52.7	9.9	24.2	5.9
Maternal Grandfather	52.0	10.5	23.9	5.5
Paternal Grandfather	52.4	10.1	22.2	3.7

their favorite grandparents’ socialization styles, ($\lambda = .95$; $F_{(2, 334)} = 8.06$; $p < .01$; $\eta^2 = .05$), but not in favorite grandparent categories, ($\lambda = .99$; $F_{(6, 668)} = .73$; $p > .05$; $\eta^2 = .007$), or in the interaction between the two variables, ($\lambda = .97$, $F_{(6, 668)} = 1.45$; $p > .05$; $\eta^2 = .01$).

Univariate contrasts suggest statistically significant differences between grandsons and granddaughters in the democratic socialization style, ($F_{(1, 335)} = 15.01$; $p < .01$; $\eta^2 = .043$), yet not for the authoritarian style, ($F_{(1, 335)} = 2.7$; $p = .10$; $\eta^2 = .01$). Furthermore, favorite grandparents were more democratic with their granddaughters ($M = 54.5$; $SD = 8.8$) than with their grandsons ($M = 50.9$; $SD = 10.7$). At the descriptive level, the tendency was for grandsons to have higher average scores on authoritarian style ($M = 24.7$; $SD = 6.6$ compared to $M = 23$; $SD = 5.3$). No between-groups differences were found in socialization style between the favorite grandparent groups. On the whole, favorite grandparents use both authoritative and democratic socialization techniques, but more frequently use democratic tactics ($M = 52.6$; $SD = 10$) than authoritarian ones ($M = 23.9$; $SD = 6.1$). Table 3 summarizes these results.

Since there were no differences in socialization style between the favorite grandparent categories, descriptive analyses were performed to go further into depth on the favorite grandparent’s role in socialization. Regarding the frequency of use of the three dimensions of democratic socialization style, unconditional affection had the highest percentage (always or often) of use (82.9%), followed by reflection (53.4%), and democratic principles (51.4%). Of the dimensions of authoritarian style, the least frequently used were authoritarian principles (never or very little) (96.9%), followed by use of power (99.1%), and manipulation of affection (99.7%).

Finally, we analyzed the frequency of each educational technique within the dimensions of authoritarian and democratic styles. The results demonstrate that among democratic principles, the technique most often used is flexibility in punishment (50.7%), followed by decision

through consensus (29.4%). Within reflection, explanation (46.9%) is the most common technique, followed by expressing one’s personal values (37.3%). Within the unconditional affection dimension, the technique most often used is demonstrating unconditional care in the face of transgression (74.3%), followed by demonstrating affection (70.5%). As for the dimensions of authoritarian socialization style, we found that within authoritarian principles, the most frequent technique is establishing hierarchical rules (7.8%), followed by valuing submission (7.6%). Also, use of power is mainly applied through scolding (12.3%) and imposing order (7.5%). Manipulation of affection is infrequent (17.4%) and it is basically employed by creating blame (3.9%) and gestures or words of rejection (3.7%).

4. Relationship between activities done with grandchildren and socialization styles.

Correlational analyses were performed to analyze the relationship between the variables activities done with grandchildren and socialization styles. The authoritarian style was not found to be significantly correlated with help and care activities ($r = -.03$; $p > .05$), nor with recreational-cultural activities ($r = -.09$; $p > .05$). However, the democratic socialization style was positively and significantly correlated with help and care activities ($r = .540$; $p < .01$) as well as recreational-cultural ones ($r = .622$, $p < .01$).

Discussion

When it comes to the favorite grandparent figure’s profile, the results of the present study indicate that grandsons and granddaughters alike prefer their grandmothers, especially the ones on their mother’s side. In addition, they prefer grandparents that maintain geographical proximity to them and those who have daily contact with them. They also prefer grandparents between 60 and 70 years old. These results concur with the findings of various other studies, both at the

national and international level (Kennedy, 1992b; Roberto & Stroes, 1992; Triadó et al., 2000). Specifically, the Rico et al. (2001) study found that in a sample of children between three and six years old, the profile of the favorite grandparent is mainly the maternal grandmother, either retired or a housewife, 60-70 years of age, and lives in the same city as her grandchildren with whom she has frequent contact, seeing them several times a week.

Along those lines, note that in spite of social and family changes, in the majority of families, women continue to bear the role of paying attention to and caring for children more than men on a daily basis, which implies a greater relationship between children and their mothers and grandmothers. Grandmothers continue to be given greater importance in their grandchildren's care than grandfathers, and thus children more closely relate to them from birth. Among the possible explanatory arguments to justify the fact that grandchildren tend to feel closer to their maternal grandmothers lays the possible relationship between this choice and the grandparent's age, since it is more likely that the maternal grandparents be younger than the paternal grandparents. Another explanation has to do with Spanish culture's matriarchal tendencies. Families tend to be closer to their maternal side than their paternal side, so maternal grandparents have the advantage of spending more time with their grandchildren. Paternal grandparents, in addition to getting along well with their son, should develop more substantial ties with his family so that the relationship with paternal grandparents may become similar to that of the maternal ones. The existing tendency may very well alienate paternal grandparents in cases where parents separate or divorce, seeing as how it continues to be the mother who usually gets custody of the children. Obviously, after a separation or divorce, changes occur in the relationships among family members, and intergenerational ties have to be renegotiated.

The grandparents selected as favorite by their grandchildren usually live in the same town or city as them and are considered more influential in their lives than those who live far away. Children who see their grandparents more often feel closer to them, have a more direct relationship with them, have a greater sense of understanding of them, and are more influenced by them (Kennedy, 1992b). When frequency of contact is greater, it produces an increase in intimacy, affection, care, admiration, satisfaction and alliance (Creasey & Kaliher, 1994). Greater frequency of contact occurs when the following characteristics apply: young grandchild, female grandchild, close relationship, maternal lineage, frequent contact with parents, and geographical proximity (Rico et al., 2001).

As for the findings about the relationship between the favorite grandparent and the kinds of activities they do with their grandchildren, it has been observed that granddaughters participate more in both sets of activities. This is particularly true of help and care activities, when the

grandparent is from the maternal line, and above all, when the grandmother participates. On a similar note, prior studies have shown that grandmothers score higher on measures of participation (Roberto & Stroes, 1992). Some studies posit that grandmothers participate in more activities with their grandchildren related to care and the role of housewife, and they score higher on the dimensions of intimacy, affection, admiration and alliance. Grandfathers, on the other hand, are associated more with sports, abilities, outdoor activities, and provide more concrete help with particular skills (Creasey & Koblewski, 1991). Hagestad (1985) found that grandfathers try to influence their grandchildren only in concrete matters, while grandmothers also try to influence them interpersonally. Traditionally, grandmothers have been described as "ministers of the interior," specializing in emotional-expressive roles, while grandfathers have been called "ministers of the exterior," specializing in more instrumental roles (Van Ranst et al., 1995). This study observed more severe gender differences than more recent research has, which seems to indicate that the meaning of being a grandparent has evolved to be more similar between men and women, or toward greater homogeneity in the roles of grandfather and grandmother. Regarding the findings about increased use of the democratic style with granddaughters, note that according to a study by Castañeda et al. (2004), there seems to be a pattern of differentiated interaction related to gender roles. The question remains of whether these patterns of family care, stereotyped according to gender, are of a more biogenetic nature (sociobiological theories), or of a more cultural nature, as in the product of particular learning processes (Gilligan, 1982; Radl, 2001). What does seem clear is that the socialization of male children is directed toward reducing their expression of affection and increasing their aggression, autonomy and independence, while dependence, emotional expressiveness, and social attachment are emphasized when girls are socialized (Lytton & Romney, 1991).

On a related note, a study by Radl (2003) tried to determine whether grandfathers and grandmothers play out their gender roles traditionally, or if they incorporate new elements of gender into their contact with their grandsons and daughters, and into their family lives. It was concluded that, though there is a tendency to incorporate some new elements, there still exists a clearly traditional differentiation of gender roles in that grandmothers still take on the affectionate role of caregiver and grandfathers still play a more instructional role.

On the other hand, according to children's perspectives on their favorite grandparents, our results do not show differences in socialization style as a function of the grandparent's gender, or his or her family line. Similarly, the majority of grandparents predominantly use a democratic style by showing their unconditional affection, reflecting with their grandchildren, and using democratic principles, while they very rarely employ manipulation of affection, use of power or authoritarian principles.

Finally, we found that applying a democratic style implies greater participation in both types of activities, or vice-versa. This supports the findings of Osuna's (2006) study that indicated that frequency of contact with the grandchild is an important factor because it is directly involved in yielding greater satisfaction with, and positive effects of the relationship. When there is more contact, the number of activities they do together also tends to increase and it is easier to establish a close, direct relationship between the two, as well as a greater feeling of understanding, which is directly related to a democratic socialization style.

To conclude, we would like to highlight some of the limitations of this study that should be taken into account in future research. One is related to the use of a single source of information, in this case, the grandchildren's perspective. For this reason, information was lacking that could have provided the grandparents' perspective about the types of activities they do with their grandchildren and the socialization style they employ. Furthermore, our study differs from others in that our results refer only to the use of the two most important dimensions of socialization style. Other studies have included a larger number of dimensions. It would also be interesting to gather data that would allow for a comparison of parental educational styles and grandparents' educational styles; this would certainly enrich the data and could help to better explain the results obtained. Last, we worked with participants from a limited age range, which did not provide a perspective on the relationship at hand beyond puberty, which would be a possible line of longitudinal research in the future.

References

- Adams, G. R., & Jones, R. M. (1983). Female adolescents' identity development: Age comparisons and perceives child-rearing experience. *Developmental Psychology, 19*, 249-256.
- Aiken, L. R. (1998). *Human development in adulthood*. New York: Plenum Press
- Baumrind, D. (1967). Child cares practices anteceding three patterns of preschool behavior. *Genetic Psychology Monographs, 75*, 43-88.
- Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology Monographs, 4*, 1-103.
- Bernedo, I. M., Fuentes, M. J., & Fernández, M. (2008). Behavioral problems in adolescents raised by their grandparents. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology, 11*, 453-463.
- Castañeda, P. J., Sánchez, D., Sánchez, A., & Blanc, S. (2004). Cómo perciben los nietos adultos las relaciones con sus abuelos. *Anuario de Psicología, 35*, 107-123.
- Celdrán, M., Triadó, C., & Villar, F. (2009). Nietos adolescentes con abuelos con demencia: ¿la enfermedad cambia la naturaleza de la relación? *Anales de Psicología, 25*, 172-179.
- Cherlin, A., & Furstenberg, F. (1985). Styles and strategies of grandparenting. In V. L. Bengtson, & J. F. Robertson (Eds.), *Grandparenthood* (pp. 97-116). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Clarke-Stewart, K. A. (1978). And daddy makes three: The father's impact on mother and young child. *Child Development, 49*, 466-478.
- Cohler, B. J., & Grunebaum, H. U. (1981). *Mothers, grandmothers, and daughters*. New York: Wiley.
- Creasey, G. L., & Kaliher, G. (1994). Ages differences in grandchildren perceptions of relations with grandparents. *Journal of Adolescence, 17*, 411-426.
- Creasey, G. L., & Koblewski, P. J. (1991). Adolescent grandchildren's relationship with maternal and paternal grandmothers and grandfathers. *Journal of Adolescence, 14*, 373-387.
- Flaquer, L. (1998). *El destino de la familia*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Fuentes, M. J., & Bernedo, I. M. (2009). Adaptación y relaciones familiares según los adolescentes acogidos por sus abuelos. *Revista de Psicología Social, 24*, 53-64.
- Fuentes, M. J., Bernedo, I. M., & Fernández, M. (2007). Adolescents in foster care with their grandparents: Parenting styles and family relationships. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships, 5*, 41-58.
- García, D., Ramírez, G., & Lima, A. (1998). La construcción de valores en familia. In M. J. Rodrigo, & J. Palacios (Eds.), *Familia y desarrollo humano* (pp. 201-220). Madrid: Alianza.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grotevant, H. (1983). The contribution of the family to the facilitation of identity formation during early adolescence. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 3*, 225-237.
- Hagestad, G. O. (1982). Parent and child: Generations in the family. In T. M. Field, A. Huston, H. C. Quay, L. Troll, & G. E. Finley (Eds.), *Review of human development* (pp. 485-499). New York: Wiley.
- Hagestad, G. O. (1985). Continuity and connectedness. In V. L. Bengtson, & J. F. Robertson (Eds.), *Grandparenthood* (pp. 31-48). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Jiménez, J. M., & Muñoz, A. (2005). Socialización familiar y estilos educativos a comienzos del siglo XXI. *Estudios de Psicología, 26*, 315-327.
- Kahana, B., & Kahana, E. (1970). Grandparenthood from the perspective of the developing grandchild. *Developmental Psychology, 3*, 98-105.
- Kennedy, G. (1992a). Shared activities of grandparents and grandchildren. *Psychological Reports, 70*, 211-227.
- Kennedy, G. (1992b). Quality in grandparent/grandchildren relationship. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 35*, 83-98.
- Kohlberg, L. (1992). *Psicología del desarrollo moral*. Barcelona: Descleé de Brouwer.
- López, F., & Cantero, M. J. (1999). La intervención en la familia. In F. López, I. Etxebarria, M. J. Fuentes, & M. J. Ortiz (Eds.), *Desarrollo afectivo y social* (pp. 341-355). Madrid: Pirámide.
- Lytton, H., & Romney, D. M. (1991). Parent differential socialization of boys and girls: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 109*, 267-296.

- Maccoby, E. E., & Martín, J. A. (1983). Socialization in the context of the family: parent-child interaction. In J. S. Hetherington (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 4. Socialization, personality, and social development* (pp. 1-101). New York: Wiley.
- Matthews, S. H., & Sprey, J. (1985). Adolescents' relationships with grandparents: An empirical contribution to conceptual clarification. *Journal of Gerontology, 40*, 621-626.
- Ochaita, E., & Espinosa, M. A. (1995). Nuevas relaciones en el seno de las familias de finales del siglo XX: Las relaciones entre miembros de familias alternas. *Infancia y Sociedad, 29*, 27-46.
- Osuna, M. J. (2006). Relaciones familiares en la vejez: Vínculos de los abuelos y de las abuelas con sus nietos y nietas en la infancia. *Revista Multidisciplinar de Gerontología, 16*, 16-25.
- Parke, R. D., & Buriel, R. (1998). Socialization in the family: Ethnic and ecological perspectives. In N. Eisenberg (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 3. Social, emotional and personality development* (pp. 463-552). New York: Wiley.
- Parke, R. D., & Tinsley, B. J. (1981). The father's role in infancy: Determinants of involvement in caregiving and play. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (pp. 429-457). New York: Wiley.
- Pinazo, S. (1999a). Significado social del rol de abuelo. *Revista Multidisciplinar de Gerontología, 9*, 169-176.
- Pinazo, S. (1999b). Influencia de los abuelos en la socialización familiar de los nietos. Revisión de la literatura científica. *Revista Española de Geriatria y Gerontología, 34*, 231-236.
- Pineda, O. M., & Ruiz, M. C. (1996). *Estilos de socialización de los abuelos*. Armenia: Asculquin.
- Power, T. G., & Parke, R. D. (1982). Play as a context for early learning: Lab and home analyses. In I. E. Siegel, & L. M. Laosa (Eds.), *Families as learning environments for children* (pp. 147-178). New York: Plenum.
- Radl, R. (2003). Transformaciones en el comportamiento en función del género en la vejez: El caso de las relaciones familiares actuales entre abuelas, abuelos y nietos y nietas. *Papers, 70*, 117-134.
- Radl, R. (2001). La socialización en función del género. *Revista Multidisciplinar de Gerontología, 11*, 189-196.
- Rey, G., & Ruiz, M. C. (1990). *Estilos de socialización y desarrollo moral en cinco centros juveniles*. Santa Fé de Bogotá: CINDE.
- Rico, C., Serra, E., & Viguer, P. (2001). *Abuelos y nietos. Abuelo favorito-abuelo útil*. Madrid: Pirámide.
- Rico, C., Serra, E., Viguer, P., & Meléndez, J. C. (2000). Relaciones abuelos nietos al final del milenio: la visión de los niños. *Geriatrics, 16*(9), 33-40.
- Roberto, K., & Stroes, J. (1992). Grandchildren and grandparents: Roles, influences, and relationships. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 34*, 227-239.
- Robertson, J. F. (1977). Grandmotherhood: a study of role conceptions. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 39*, 165-174.
- Ruoppila, I. (1991). The significance of grandparents for the formation of family relation. In P. K. Smith (Ed.), *The psychology of grandparenthood. An international perspective* (pp. 120-138). London: Routledge.
- Steinberg, L., & Silk, J. S. (2002). Parenting adolescents. In M. H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting. Vol 1. Children and parenting* (pp. 103-134). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Triadó, C., Martínez, G., & Villar, F. (2000). El rol y la importancia de los abuelos para sus nietos adolescentes. *Anuario de Psicología, 31*, 107-118.
- Triadó, C., Villar, F., Pinazo, S., Solé, C., Montoro, J., & Celdrán, M. (2008). La relación entre abuelos/as y sus nietos/as adolescentes: Una perspectiva diádica. *Infancia y Aprendizaje, 31*, 385-398.
- Triadó, C., Villar, F., Solé, C., Osuna, M. J., & Celdrán, M. (2006). Percepciones cruzadas entre abuelos y nietos en una muestra de diádas: una aproximación cualitativa. *Revista Española de Geriatria y Gerontología, 41*, 100-110.
- Troll, L. E. (1983). Grandparents: The family watchdogs. In T. Brubaker (Ed.), *Family relationships in later life* (pp. 63-74). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Tyszkowa, M. (1991). Grandparents and grandchildren: An often neglected relationship between significant others. *Journal of Counselling and Development, 65*, 289-290.
- Valero, A. (1997). Evolución del sistema familiar español 1970-1991. In R. Rowland & I. Moll Blanes (Eds.), *La demografía y la historia de la familia* (pp. 293-303). Murcia: Universidad de Murcia.
- Van Ranst, N., Verschueren, K., & Marcoen, A. (1995). The meaning of grandparents as view by adolescent grandchildren: An empirical study in Belgium. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 41*(4), 311-324.

Received May 26, 2009

Revision received November 17, 2009

Accepted November 27, 2009