

Young adults' experiences of their relationships with family-related older people

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my Grandmother, Connie Pietersen, who loved me unconditionally.

“Your legacy should be that you made it better than it was when you got it.” — *Lee Iacocca*

SUMMARY

Intergenerational relationships can be defined as interactions between members of different generations. There are two different groups of intergenerational relationships, historical and familial. The familial relationship consists of members who are familiarly related, while historical generations can be viewed as a cohort, or a group of people who have experienced similar historical events, because they are the same age or have lived through the same historical period. Most research in South Africa has focused on intergenerational relationships among African families. Research into these families highlights the role of grandparents as people with wisdom, life experience and the educative relationship they have with their grandchildren. Grandchildren, on the other hand, have to take care of their grandparents and respect them as older people. Members of the different generations provide social support, despite the fact that they are not familiarly-related. The norms that guided the interactions between these two generations provide individuals with a sense of continuity and stability.

Social theories regarding intergenerational relationships are: the solidarity model, the solidarity and conflict model, and ambivalence. Current theories from the psychological perspective are: intergenerational intelligence and self-interactional group theory (SIGT). Little research has been conducted into intergenerational relationships among white familial generations in South Africa even though the phenomenon has been widely researched internationally. In order to establish the nature of the intergenerational relationship, young adults' lived experiences of their relationships with older people was the focus of this research. This focus has been motivated by the fact that young adults and older people can benefit from effective intergenerational relationships; young adults provide a source of physical and emotional care for older people, where the older person in turn provide a source of affirmation and shared experience for young adults. This research is further motivated by

the fact that it cannot be assumed that white generations in South Africa are necessarily following international trends.

The study was conducted at the North-West University, at Potchefstroom in South Africa. Psychology Honours students were purposively selected to participate because of their age group as young adults, and their knowledge of human behaviour. It was thought that their description of their relational experiences would be of particular interest. Nineteen young adults (eighteen women and one man) aged 21 to 30 formed part of the study. Ethical approval for the research was obtained from North-West University. The participants gave informed consent that their participation was voluntary, and that they had been made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time for whatever reason without any negative consequences. They were provided with the materials of the Mmogo-method®, which consist of clay, straws and colourful beads, and were invited to make a visual representation of their relationship with a person older than 60 years. When all the participants had completed their visual presentations, the researcher asked what each had made and why they had made it. An informal group discussion was conducted after each participant had told the others what they had made. During the discussion participants shared their subjective view of their experiences of their relationship with older people. The researcher employed visual data analysis and discourse analysis to analyse the data. Different guidelines were applied to ensure the trustworthiness of the research process and the findings.

The results revealed that young adults experienced four types of relationships, which are presented as typologies. The two axes which describe the four types of relationships are: intimacy (physical and emotional) or distance and empathy or judgemental. The four types of intergenerational relationships that emerged from the combination of the different axes were: effective, normative-guided, ineffective, and double-bind. These findings can be used to develop programmes and interventions to promote intergenerational relationships. They

also provide an opportunity for cross-cultural and international data to be compared with the four different relationship types.

Key words: elderly, familial, intergenerational relationships, lived experiences, psychology,
young adults

OPSOMMING

Intergenerasionele verhoudings word gedefinieer as interaksies tussen lede van verskillende generasies. Daar is twee verskillende groepe intergenerasionele verhoudings naamlik histories en familieel. 'n Historiese generasie is 'n kohort of groep wat eenderse historiese gebeure ervaar het omdat hulle dieselfde ouderdom is óf omdat hulle in dieselfde historiese tydperk geleef het. Familiële intergenerasionele verhoudings bestaan uit lede wat biologies verwant is. Die meerderheid navorsing in Suid-Afrika fokus op die intergenerasionele verhoudings in Afrika-families. Navorsing in hierdie families lê klem op die rol van die grootouers as persone met wysheid, lewenservaring en die rol van opvoeding van hul kleinkinders. Kleinkinders versorg op hul beurt weer hul grootouers en het respek vir hulle as ouer persone. Lede van die verskillende generasies voorsien sosiale ondersteuning, ten spyte van die feit dat hulle nie biologies verwant is nie. Die norme wat die verhouding lei – in die navorsing na verwys as die interaksie tussen die twee generasies – voorsien individue met 'n sin van kontinuïteit en stabiliteit.

Sosiale teorieë van intergenerasionele verhoudings sluit in die solidariteitmodel, die solidariteit-en-konflikmodel en ambivalensie. Huidige teorieë vanuit 'n psigologiese perspektief is intergenerasionele intelligensie en die selfinteraksie-groep teorie (SIGT). Weinige navorsing is gedoen oor die intergenerasionele verhoudings van wit familiële generasies. Om die aard van die intergenerasionele verhouding te bepaal is jong volwassenes se geleefde ervaringe die fokus van hierdie navorsing. Die motivering vir die navorsing is dat beide jong volwassenes en ouer persone die voordeel van effektiewe intergenerasionele verhoudings kan ervaar. Intergenerasionele verhoudings is belangrik om die fisieke en emosionele versorging van ouer persone te verseker en daar kan nie aangeneem word dat wit generasies in Suid-Afrika noodwendig internasionale tendense volg nie.

Die navorsing is onderneem by die Noordwes-Universiteit, te Potchefstroom in Suid-Afrika. Deelnemers is doelgerig geselekteer as sielkundehonneursstudente op grond van hul ouderdomsgroep as jong volwassenes en hul bestaande kennis van menslike gedrag. Dit was interessant om die wyse waarop die groep hul verhoudingservarings beskryf te ondersoek. Negentien jong volwassenes, tussen die ouderdomme 21-30, het deelgeneem aan die studie (agtien vrouens en een man). Etiese goedkeuring vir die navorsing is vanaf die Noordwes-Universiteit ontvang. Deelnemers het ingeligte toestemming gegee, het vrywilliglik deelgeneem en hulle is bewus gemaak daarvan dat hulle op enige tydstip van die studie kan onttrek – ongeag die rede en sonder negatiewe gevolge. Hulle is daarna voorsien van die Mmogo-metode®-materiaal, wat bestaan uit klei, stokkies en kleurvolle krale. Die jong volwassenes is gevra om 'n visuele voorstelling te maak van hul verhouding met 'n persoon ouer as 60 jaar. Nadat al die deelnemers hul voorstelling voltooi het, het die navorser elke deelnemer uitgevra oor dit wat hulle gemaak het en hoe dit gemaak is. 'n Informele groepsbespreking het gevolg nadat elke deelnemer hul visuele voorstelling gedeel het. Tydens die groepsbespreking het deelnemers 'n gemeenskaplike uitkyk gedeel oor wat hul subjektiewe ervarings van hul verhouding met ouer persone. Die navorser het visuele data-analise en diskoersanalise gebruik om die data te ontleed. Verskillende riglyne is gevolg om die vertrouenswaardigheid van die navorsingsproses en -bevindinge te verseker.

Die bevindinge van die navorsing het getoon dat jong volwassenes vier verskillende tipes verhoudings ervaar, voorgestel as tipologieë. Die twee asse wat die vier tipologieë beskryf is intimiteit (fisiek en emosioneel) of afstand en empatie of veroordeel. Die vier tipes verhoudings wat na vore gekom het deur die kombinasie van die verskillende asse is die effektiewe intergenerasionele verhouding, die normatief-geleide intergenerasionele verhouding, die oneffektiewe intergenerasionele verhouding en die dubbel verbintenis intergenerasionele verhouding. Hierdie bevindinge kan gebruik word om programme en

intervensies te ontwikkel wat intergenerasionele verhoudings kan bevorder. Dit skep ook die geleentheid vir vergelykings van kruiskulturele en internasionale data in terme van die vier verskillende verhoudingstipes.

Sleutelwoorde: familieel, geleefde ervarings, intergenerasionele verhoudings, jong volwassenes, ouer persone, psigologie

PERMISSION TO SUBMIT

The candidate opted to write an article, with the support of her supervisor. I hereby grant permission that she may submit this article for examination purposes in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Artium in Clinical Psychology.

Prof. Vera Roos

DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER

I hereby declare that this research, **Young adults' experiences of their relationships with familially-related older people**, is entirely my own work and that all sources have been fully referenced and acknowledged.

.....

Ursula Nagel

DECLARATION BY THE LANGUAGE EDITOR

I hereby declare that I have language edited and proofread the thesis **Young adults' experiences of their relationships with familially-related older people** by Ursula Nagel for the degree of MA in Clinical Psychology.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Statistics South Africa (2011) 3,891,258 South-Africans fall into the 60 years and older age group (G1) and 14,673,997 South-Africans are classified as (G3) young adult grandchildren (aged 19-30). These statistics indicate that 36.59% of South-Africa's population is made up of these two age groups, with 7.6% being (G1) grandparents and 28.99% (G3) grandchildren. There are three different generational classifications. The first generation is grandparents (G1), the second, adult children (G2) and the third generation is grandchildren (G3). The statistics above refer to two of these: generation 1 (G1), the grandparents, and generation 3 (G3), the grandchildren. Although generations are historically related, the most widespread representation of intergenerational relationship in a society is found in families and other kinship associations (Lüscher, 2000).

Intergenerational relationships always exist within broader social, political and economic environments. For example, pandemics such as HIV/AIDS force older people to take care of grandchildren orphaned by disease (Keating, 2011). There is also growing concern about families' failing ability generally to support their older members due to economic and social constraints (Keating, 2011). This would indicate an increasing need to understand the relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren because older people are contributors to the well-being of future generations as well as recipients of the economic and social resources grandchildren provide (Keating, 2011). Traditionally grandparents have been viewed as people who have wisdom, experience of life and who show affection to their grandchildren, while members of the younger generations have the obligation to care for the needs of their grandparents (Costanzo & Hoy, 2007). Studies on intergenerational relationships have focused on the differences in needs and resources of the two generations with the intention of informing our understanding of the variability in the ties between the younger and older generation (Roberto & Stroes, 1992). The normative

expectation that younger generations are obligated to care for older generations of ageing kin (Costanzo & Hoy, 2007), require that young adults must form part of research regarding intergenerational relationships.

Developmental Psychology

Intergenerational relational research adopts a life course-perspective proposed by Erikson (1980). The psychosocial theory of development consists of different life phases. Each of these is characterised by a specific and unique developmental task. According to Erikson (1980), human development takes place through the interaction of external social demands. The intergenerational relationship forms part of the external social demands. The eight phases are: trust versus mistrust (Birth to 18 months); autonomy versus shame (18 months to 3 years); initiative versus guilt (3 years to 6 years); industry versus inferiority (6 years to 12 years); identity versus role confusion (12 years to 25 years); intimacy versus isolation (18 years to 35 years); generativity versus stagnation (35 years to 55/65 years); integrity versus despair (55/65 years until death) (Corey, 2009). These tasks build on each other, so that one task must be completed before the individual can begin the next phase. For this research the focus will be only on the phases that are applicable to these generations grandparents (G1) and young adult grandchildren (G3).

Young adults, according to Erikson (1980), are between two life stages. The preceding life stage is adolescence and the psychosocial developmental task which adolescents have to deal with is identity versus role confusion (ages 12-25). This implies that young adults are at a stage where they are in search of identity, life goals and life meaning (Erikson, 1980). Successfully completing this task could lead to the ability to stay true to oneself, while failure to complete it could lead to role confusion and a weak sense of self. As a young adult, he or she has to deal with intimacy versus isolation; and learn how to form

intimate relationships (Corey, 2012). Successfully completing this task could lead to strong relationships, while failure to do so could result in loneliness and isolation.

Older people, on the other hand, are in the phases of, first, generativity versus stagnation (35 years to 55/65 years) and, second, integrity versus despair (55/65 years until death). The aim of the first phase is to create or nurture, often by having children or by creating a positive change that will benefit themselves and others. The successful completion of the task could lead to feelings of worth and achievement, while failure could result in marginal connectivity to the world. In the second phase, older people, who are considered diverse as a group, look back and reflect on their lives, evaluate and take into account factors such as age, socio-economic status, cultural background, attitudes and health. By completing the task successfully this stage could lead to feelings of wisdom and achievement, while failure to complete could result in regret, resentment, and hopelessness (Erikson, 1980). Both generations can contribute to the social and emotional care of the other.

Intergenerational Theories

The following sociological theories explain intergenerational relationships: the theory of intergenerational solidarity, the solidarity (and conflict) model (Bengtson, Giarrusso, Mabry, & Silverstein, 2002) and ambivalence.

Intergenerational solidarity can be described as intergenerational interactions that represent sentiments, attitudes and behaviours that unite family members across generations (Monserud, 2008). This conceptual framework represents an approach which aims to obtain family cohesion. Intergenerational solidarity is conceptualised as a multidimensional construct that includes affectual, associational, consensual, functional, normative and structural solidarity (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). Each of the multiple dimensions of solidarity is distinct and each represents a positive and a negative aspect: intimacy and distance (affectual solidarity), conformity and opposition (consensual solidarity), dependence

and autonomy (functional solidarity), integration and isolation (associational solidarity), opportunities and barriers (structural solidarity), familism and individualism (normative solidarity) (Bengston et al., 2002; Bengston & Roberts, 1991; Silverstein & Bengston, 1997). Research into intergenerational solidarity was explored in Korean immigrant families, and findings were applied to the solidarity model (Jongserl & Joohee, 2006). The primary goal of the exploration of intergenerational relationships and affectual solidarity between grandparents and young adults was to investigate whether both parents' ties with their adult offspring, their own parents, and parents-in-law are associated with young adults' feelings of closeness to their grandparents (Monserud, 2008). Ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity contributed to the understanding of how cultural and structural factors are associated with ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity (Schans & Komter, 2010).

Several studies have also found negative effects of intergenerational solidarity. This led to conflict being proposed as a study of an element intergenerational family relationships and hence the solidarity (and conflict) model. The solidarity and conflict model provides a basis for understanding the potential causes and consequences of intergenerational relations (Antonucci, Jackson, & Biggs, 2007). Conflict can range from differences of opinion about less important issues, to more or less heated arguments about principal issues, and all the way to physical attacks. That means that, according to the nature of conflict and the way in which the argument is conducted, there are risks and opportunities in conflict (Szydlik, 2008). Conflict is an inevitable attribute of interpersonal relationships, including intergenerational relationships (Bengston et al., 2002).

Despite the perception of solidarity as harmony and unity, the solidarity-conflict model view of families is positive only when the dimensions of family relationships are positively evaluated (Bengston et al., 2002). Conversely, when family relations are not positive, the solidarity and conflict model reveals them as negative on specific dimensions.

The words positive and negative refer to the arrangement of these relationships along a continuum, and not to conclusions or predictions related to outcomes (Bengston et al., 2002). Family relationships can thus be portrayed in a variety of constellations, some reflecting them as positive and others as negative, indicating some levels of ambivalence.

Intergenerational ambivalence has been proposed as an intergenerational relational theory (Pillemer & Lüscher, 1998). Ambivalence occurs when an individual experiences difficult and oppositional feelings, thoughts and actions in relation to the same generation. This experience of ambivalence also includes contradictions in social relationships and social structures, both of which are relevant for personal and social development (Lüscher, 2000). Further elaboration would indicate that ambivalence is experienced when polarised simultaneous emotions, thoughts, social relations and structures are present. These polarised experiences are interpreted as temporarily or even permanently irreconcilable. But still these experiences are necessary for the development of individual or collective identities (Lüscher, 2002).

Ambivalence should be understood as a consequence of contending perspectives preoccupied with one and the same person, whereas it can also be the experience of ambivalence towards the self and more abstractly ascribed to relationships (Lüscher, 2002). There are four reasons that aim to provide an explanation for the experience of ambivalence: (a) The person experiences entirely opposed frameworks and forces in the dynamic domains of individual actions and interpersonal relationships; (b) These opposed experiences are significant for the identity of the individual. In other words, the experience of ambivalence and the ability to cope with it can be understood as an aspect of human agency; (c) The assumption is that the experienced ambivalence will be interpreted as incompatible as long as the individual stays in a certain situation; (d) The assumptions that the experience of ambivalences and the ways of dealing with them can be systematically connected with the

aspects of psychological functioning. Psychological functioning includes social relations and social structures as well as the regulation of social control and power (Lüscher, 2005).

Ambivalence can be viewed both as opportunities and burdens (Lüscher, 2002). The concept of ambivalence enables us to study intergenerational relationships with greater openness to gain a better understanding of the problem of generations in our present times (Lüscher, 2000).

Research into intergenerational relationships regarding ambivalence focused on the perceptions parents have regarding ambivalence in their relationship with their children. Research by Peters, Hooker and Zvonkovic (2006) found that parents experience ambivalent perceptions regarding the children's pace of life and boundaries around areas of communication (Peters et al., 2006). Pillemer and Jill (2002) identified and explained the ambivalence mothers experienced towards their adult children. The explanation focused primarily on the child's achieved adult status and the change in the relationship it initiates (Pillemer & Jill, 2002). Further research on ambivalence in the relationship of adult children to ageing parents and in-laws has identified the sources of ambivalence in family relations (Willson, Shuey, & Elder, 2003). The study of sociological ambivalence and family ties concluded that ambivalences in socially structured contradictions manifest through social interaction (Connidis & McMullin, 2002).

Research into intergenerational relational typologies that explains different intergenerational styles has been undertaken by Silverstein and Bengston (1997) between (G1) grandparents and (G2) parents. They identified five kinds of intergenerational relationships. The first is *Tight-Knit*, characterised by high emotional closeness, living in proximity, frequent interaction, and reciprocal help and support. The opposite relational type is *Detached*, with low levels of connection. Between *Tight-Knit* and *Detached* relational types there are three more, diverse types (Silverstein & Bengston, 1997) The *Sociable* and

Intimate-but-Distant types are characterised by low or absent functional exchange, but with affinity that implies future support and exchange. The *Obligatory* type is characterised by structural connectedness (proximity and interaction) but with little emotional attachment (Silverstein & Bengston, 1997).

The above theories explain intergenerational relationships from a sociological perspective.

Psychological Theories

By contrast, there are not many psychology theories that explain intergenerational relations. Currently, these include: intergenerational intelligence and the self-interactional group theory (SIGT). The intergenerational intelligence theory emphasises the subjective experiences and the processes underpinning intergenerational relations (Biggs, Haapala, & Lowenstein, 2011). This theory acknowledges that different generational groups have different goals and different contributions to offer (Biggs & Lowenstein, 2011). The original description of intergenerational intelligence was an individual's ability to understand their own and others' life-courses and to be able to reflect and act appropriately, according to the family and social history (Biggs, 2008). The process of intergenerational intelligence recognises the multiple and contradictory aspects of generational awareness. It includes one generation's ability to create objective distance from the influential factors arising from family and cohort history and a willingness to self-consciously return to them in order to act with understanding (Biggs & Lowenstein, 2011). Finally, generational intelligence refers to the degree of an individual's awareness of being part of a specific generation, with the relative ability to place oneself in the position of the other generation by acting with awareness of one's own generation's circumstances (Biggs, 2008). It is thus of critical importance to form empathic intelligence between generations (Biggs et al., 2011).

The self-interactional group theory (SIGT) attempts to clarify the relational/interactional nature of intergenerational relationships (Roos, 2013). It provides a framework that explains the intergenerational relationship, with the aim of providing tools for effective interventions to promote social cohesion. SIGT uses three levels of analysis, namely: the intra-individual, the inter-individual and the group level. The intra-individual level focuses on feelings, perceptions and experiences. The inter-individual level is analysed in terms of: 1) the definition the generations have regarding the relationship; 2) the qualities of the relationship; 3) the needs and goals that motivate the interaction; and 4) the interactional processes during the interaction (Roos, 2013). The group level consists of the inevitable process of categorisation. Inter-group behaviour is determined by different social groups, behaviour during intergroup situations and by beliefs regarding a person's own group and different groups relevant to him (Tajfel, 2010).

Intergenerational Programming

Various intergenerational programmes exist to promote effective relationships between older people and young adults. One of the most prominent, SKIP (Seniors and Kids Intergenerational Programs), in Brantford, Canada, aims to reconcile generations. The programme follows a multifaceted approach consisting of three initiatives. School Visitation brings together Junior Elementary school students and nursing home seniors; Mentoring Hearts brings Senior Elementary students together with retired seniors to talk about career paths; and Music Enrichment brings seniors and young people together for the pure enjoyment and love of music (Skip, 2012). In Carthage, Missouri a programme called Building Bridges was developed to provide opportunities for children to interact and learn from seniors as well as for seniors to enjoy meaningful experiences and relationships with children. Education, friendships and caring were main components. The programme began in September 1995, and involved 23 agencies, schools and nursing homes, 10 volunteers, 900

children, and 520 frail and home-bound seniors (Chen, 1997). It was found that an intergenerational programme not only bridges a generational gap with meaningful interactions, but also introduces children to some positive aspects of being old (Chen, 1997).

Problem Statement

The above studies dealt mainly with familial relations in intergenerational relations in the international context. In South Africa, the available research has been undertaken chiefly into African communities (Hoffman, 2003). From these studies it is not clear how young white adults experience their relationships with significant older people who are familially related to them. In order to fill some of the gaps in the literature on intergenerational relationships in South-Africa, the following research question guided this research: what are the lived experiences of young white adults regarding the older people to whom they are familially related?

The very nature of lived experiences has an underlying structure, this underlying structure which all participants experience are known as a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The description will cover what the participants experienced and how they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology is not just a description of lived experiences, but is also intended to interpret the meanings of these experiences (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology can yield a deep understanding of a particular phenomenon as experienced by several different individuals (Creswell, 2007).

Therefore, the study will explore the experiences of young adults in their relationships with older people who are familially related. Effective intergenerational relationships are distinguished by sustained reciprocal cooperation and coordination that benefit the members of both of these generations (Bengston & Roberts, 1991). These effective relationships build connectivity and understanding between generations. They are also central to the processes of socialisation and human sociability (Lüscher, 2005). The findings can also be used to make

the young adults aware of their experiences and the impact on the intergenerational relationship. The intergenerational relationship is of utmost importance and it is necessary to understand and identify the relational qualities and interactions of the two generations.

Through exploring the lived experiences the dynamic nature of the intergenerational relationship will be critically examined to attempt a possible psychological theory regarding intergenerational relationships. This theory could serve as a basis for the development of psychological and community interventions.

Article Proceedings

The research will be represented in an article format. In this article the literature background will create the research context. The aim of the study is to explore young adults' experiences regarding their relationship with familiarly-related older people. The results will be discussed in the form of a typology. Finally, a critical reflection will describe what this research contributed to intergenerational research by referring to other literature.

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MANUSCRIPT FOR EXAMINATION

Young adults' experiences of their relationships with familially-related older people

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ABSTRACT

Various researchers have focused attention on the intergenerational relationship and explained it from a sociological perspective. Most of the research in South-Africa has been undertaken on African cultures. This study aims to cast light on intergenerational relationships between white Afrikaans-speaking young adults and familiarly-related older people. The research was conducted at the North-West University, in Potchefstroom, South Africa. Psychology honours students were specifically selected as participants because of their age group as young adults and their knowledge of human behaviour. Nineteen young adults (eighteen women and one man) aged 21-30 were included in the study. Findings revealed that young adults experienced four types of relationships, which are presented as typologies. The two axes which describe the four types of relationships are: intimacy (physical and emotional) or distance, and empathy or judgemental. The four types of intergenerational relationship that emerged from the combination of the different axes were: effective, normative-guided, ineffective and double-bind intergenerational relationships. These findings may be used to develop programmes and interventions to promote intergenerational relationships.

Keywords: elderly, familial, intergenerational relationships, lived experiences, psychology, young adults

Young adults' experiences of their relationships with familially-related older people

There is an increasing interest in understanding the relationship between older people (60 years and older) and young adults, who are familially-related because there is a persistent emphasis on families to provide for the needs of older people (Wisensale, 2003).

Traditionally grandparents are viewed as people who have wisdom, life experience and who show affection to their grandchildren, while members of the younger generations have the obligation to care for the needs of their grandparents (Costanzo & Hoy, 2007; Keating, 2011). Studies on intergenerational relationships have focused on the differences in needs and resources of the two generations, grandparents and grandchildren, because it is important to understand the variability in the ties between the familially-related generations (Roberto & Stroes, 1992).

Intergenerational relations may be defined as familial lineage, which is a specific type of family relationship of parentage and kinship, or viewed as a cohort or a group of people who have experienced similar historical events, because they are the same age or having lived through the same historical period (Scabini & Marta, 2006). Although generations are historically related, the most widespread representation of intergenerational relationship in a society is found in families and other kinship associations (Lüscher, 2000). The aim of the study is to explore the lived experiences of young adults' and their relationship with older people to whom they are familially-related.

Existing social theories that explain intergenerational relationships are the theory of intergenerational solidarity, the solidarity (and conflict) model, and ambivalence (Bengston, Giarrusso, Mabry, & Silverstein, 2002; Bengston & Roberts, 1991; Lüscher, 2000).

Intergenerational solidarity is observed when intergenerational interactions that are based on sentiments, attitudes and behaviours, unite family members across generations (Monserud, 2008). Intergenerational solidarity is conceptualised as a multidimensional construct,

including affectual, associational, consensual, functional, normative and structural solidarity (Bengston & Roberts, 1991). Each of the multiple dimensions of solidarity is distinct and each represents a positive and negative aspect: intimacy and distance (affectual solidarity), conformity and opposition (consensual solidarity), dependence and autonomy (functional solidarity), integration and isolation (associational solidarity), opportunities and barriers (structural solidarity), familism and individualism (normative solidarity) (Bengston et al., 2002; Bengston & Roberts, 1991; Silverstein & Bengston, 1997).

Several studies have also found negative effects of intergenerational solidarity. Consequently, conflict has been proposed as part of intergenerational family relationships, hence the solidarity (and conflict) model (Antonucci, Jackson, & Biggs, 2007; Bengston et al., 2002; Szydlik, 2008). Intergenerational ambivalence has been proposed as an intergenerational relational theory (Pillemer & Lüscher, 1998). Ambivalence is experienced when members of different generations experience difficult and oppositional feelings, thoughts and actions in relation to the same person from the other generation. This experience of ambivalence also refers to contradictions in social relationships and social structures (Lüscher, 2000).

Most of the research about experiences of members of different generations has been conducted internationally or focused on the experiences of older people in relation to younger generations. Jongserl and Joohee (2006) explored Korean immigrant families and applied their findings to the solidarity model. They identified themes that support intergenerational solidarity between Korean immigrant grandparents and grandchildren and relationships based on affection, consensus, mutual exchange of resources, familial norms, and structural factors such as cohabitation or religion. Monserud (2008) explored affectual solidarity between grandparents and young adults, with the aim to determine young adults' experiences of feeling close to their grandparents. The findings indicated that each parent's intergenerational

relationships are related to the grandparent-grandchild bond. Specifically, within lineage lines, evidence was found for the argument that the parent-child relationship influences the grandparent-grandchild relational closeness. Research findings on ambivalence identified that parents' experience ambivalence in their relationships with their children. Older parents have ambivalent perceptions regarding two aspects: the children's pace of life and second the boundaries their children place on areas about which they are willing to communicate (by Peters, Hooker, & Zvonkovic, 2006).

The above research and theories take a sociological perspective. Psychology's best-known theory regarding relationships centres on empathy. Empathy in intergenerational relationships is one generation's ability to have the insight into the other generation's position (Biggs, Haapala, & Lowenstein, 2011). It implies the ability to assume a meta-reflective position and to put yourself in the position of another, in that person's world, in such a way that you actually feel and experience what the other person does. It is the ability to be in tune with the other person in such a way that you are able to become the other person and see the world through his or her perceptions and interpretations. This enables you to understand and grasp the other person's perception with insight (Hill, Watson, Rivers, & Joyce, 2007). For the research to be able to clarify the intergenerational interaction, self-interactional group theory (SIGT) was kept in mind. SIGT attempts to explain the relational/interactional nature of intergenerational relationships (Roos, in press). It is a framework that explains the intergenerational relationship in order to explain effective or ineffective relational qualities in interpersonal relationships which could be used to plan interventions to promote social cohesion. SIGT uses three levels of analysis, namely: the intra-individual, the inter-individual and the group level.

Rogers (1986) emphasised the importance of empathy in relationships. His core assumption was that every person has the potential to be productive and self-actualising. But

for each person's potential to be developed, it had to be nurtured by a relationship with essential attributes. The three core attributes for creating the optimum climate for relational growth are: congruence, unconditional positive regard and accurate empathy. Rogers saw an empathetic environment within relationships as vital for growth (Corey, 2009). Thus empathy is essential for the growth of any healthy relationship and specifically intergenerational relationships (Decety & Ickes, 2009).

Intergenerational relational research adopts a life-course perspective proposed by Erikson (1980). Young adults are, according to Erikson's psychosocial developmental stages, currently between two stages. The first stage is identity versus role confusion (ages 18-25) and the second is intimacy versus isolation (ages 18-35). This implies, first, that young adults are at a stage where they are in a search of identity, life goals and life meaning (Erikson, 1980). Second, they are at a stage where they learn how to form intimate relationships (Corey, 2009). Young adults are in a phase of life marked by a great deal of confusion and uncertainty. This makes it important to explore the experiences of young adults because they are in a phase of change where they acquire different adult roles and become more autonomous (Monserud, 2008). The intergenerational relationship plays a core role in the young adult's phase of change and the achievement of their optimal psychosocial development.

Most of the research in South-Africa is focused on African cultures, seen from a sociological perspective (Hoffman, 2003). Very little research has been conducted from a psychological perspective. The question that guided this research was: what are the lived experiences of white young adults in their relationship with older people to whom they are familiarly-related? The aim was to gain in-depth knowledge about the nature of the intergenerational relationship specifically from the white young Afrikaans speaking adult generation's perspective in South Africa. These findings may be used to develop programmes and interventions that can be applied in the psychological context, to promote

intergenerational relationships.

Research Methodology and Design

A qualitative research approach was used to explore the experiences of young adults' relationships with older people who are familially-related to them. According to Neuman (2000), qualitative data are rich in detail, sensitive to context, and can be a reflection of complex processes or sequences of social life. Qualitative research is a term that describes approaches to explore human experiences, perceptions, motivations and behaviour (Clissett, 2008). This method provides an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences of the relationships in the context in which it takes place (Creswell, 2007).

A phenomenological research design was used to explore the lived experiences of young adults in their relationships with older people. A phenomenological study aims to describe the meaning of several individuals' experiences of a phenomenon. Here the focus was on what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon. Phenomenology is not just a description of lived experiences, but it also serves to interpret the meaning of these experiences (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology can yield a deep understanding of a particular phenomenon as experienced by several different individuals (Creswell, 2007). The research will collect data from people who have experienced the phenomenon, and will attempt to develop a composite description of the very nature of the experience for all these individuals. This means that the very nature of the experience has an underlying structure that all participants experience in this phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The description will consist of what the participants experienced and how they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994).

Research Context and Participants

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants which will be able to answer the research question. The research was conducted in a tertiary education context among young adults who are registered as postgraduate students in Psychology. It was expected that this groups would be able to provide eloquent and in-depth descriptions of their lived experiences. Nineteen white young adults formed part of the study: eighteen women and one man. The participants were all Afrikaans-speaking and ranged between the ages of 21-30. They were specifically selected on the basis of their knowledge of psychology and their understanding of empathy and the role it plays in relationships.

Procedure and Data Gathering

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus Ethics Committee, NWU-005-10-51. The researcher invited the post-graduate students to participate in the study regarding young adults' experiences of their relationship with familially-related older people. The participants were divided into two groups, to attend the data gathering sessions separately. This ensured that the groups were manageable and that data gathering was done more in-depth. The Mmogo-method® as data gathering instrument was explained by the researcher. The researcher ensured that their participation was voluntary by stating that each participant could choose whether to participate in the research. Participants were able to retract participation at any time. They were informed that the data would be treated with confidentiality by keeping it anonymous. To ensure that the participants were willing to take part in the research, and that they understood all the ethical aspects, they were required to give their written informed consent. The researcher posed the research question and facilitated the discussion to obtain the relevant information that forms part of the study. Data gathering consisted of a visual

research method, the Mmogo-method® (Roos, 2008) and group discussions.

Mmogo-method®. This method requires participants to create a visual presentation of their experiences (Roos, 2008). The method is projective in nature and allows meanings to emerge from the participants' reflections on social structures and meaningful actions through visual representations (Roos, 2012). This method provided an in-depth reflection and projection of the participant's experiences of their relationship with older familiarly-related people. Clay, straws of different lengths, cloths and colourful beads in different sizes were used to build the visual presentation (Roos, 2008). The young adults were seated in a half circle; each received cloth, clay, straws and beads.

The following instructions were given:

Make a visual presentation of your relationship with a familial significant person older than 60 years.

The completed visual representations were photographed and served as visual data. Participants were asked to discuss and explain their presentations individually. The discussion of each presentation was in-depth. The rest of the group was asked to comment on the visual presentations, thus serving as verification and further complementing and enriching the individual participants' responses. The discussions were digitally voice-recorded, and video-recorded and transcribed verbatim for content analysis.

Data Analysis

The visual representations the participants made were analysed by using the suggested steps by Roos (2008; 2012). Each participant was asked to explain what they had made, to understand the literal meanings of their visual representation. The relationship between the different objects in the visual representation was determined. Next, the visual representation was applied to the specific research question, to obtain in-depth insight into the phenomenon under investigation. The cultural meanings that manifested in the symbolic use of the objects

were explored. Finally, the rest of the participants were asked if their lived experience correlated with or differed from the specific participant's lived experiences. The contribution of the other participants added to the trustworthiness of the findings (Roos, Maine, & Khumalo, 2008).

The transcribed data from the group discussions were analysed by means of discourse analysis. Gee (2005) recommends asking seven different questions to analyse each participant's data: 1) In what way is language used to make a certain thing significant or not? 2) What activity is the language portraying? 3) What identity is this language representing? 4) What sort of relationship is the language seeking to represent with others? 5) What perspective is this language communicating? 6) How is language connecting or disconnecting things? 7) How does the language favour specific systems? By using the above mentioned recommendations, the textual data, which represent the participant's language, were analysed to understand the participant's experience of the intergenerational relationship. The meaning of each word in relation to the context was analysed in order to obtain a meta-perspective of the participants' lived experiences. The textual data were then compared with the visual representations. During this comparison the researcher focused on similarities and differences between the textual and visual data. This enabled the researcher to achieve an even better understanding of the participants' lived experience. After each participant's response was analysed, an in-case analysis was done. The focus was to link the data with an explanation, in an attempt to understand how the participants in each case experience and explain their specific intergenerational relationship (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Following each in-case analysis certain themes and patterns emerged. Each in-case analysis was compared across with the other participants' cases. The cross-case analysis described the themes which emerged and enabled the researcher to form more general categories of how these themes were related (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The cases with common themes were grouped

together. After the cross-case analysis common denominators emerged, which enabled the researcher to add constructs to represent these common denominators. The constructs identified were used to represent the cases that were grouped together. The grouped cases shared common qualities, interactions, emotions, appraisals and experiences. Four types of groups were represented by the constructs which in the end are represented by a typology.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research quality is represented by eight different criteria (Tracy, 2010). This approach aims to ensure rich and trustworthy research. Quality qualitative research will be marked by the following: (a) A worthy topic. The researcher ensured that the topic was relevant, significant and timely by doing an in-depth literature review. (b) Rich rigor. Sufficient and appropriate theoretical constructs were used and described in detail. (c) Sincerity. The researcher was transparent about the methods she used and challenges she experienced. (d) Credibility. To ensure credibility the researcher triangulated the data and crystallisation was applied until well-articulated findings emerged, substantiated by the data. (e) Resonance. The researcher aimed to generate transferable findings so that international data could be compared with the findings. (f) Significant contribution. The research will contribute to the in-depth understanding of intergenerational relationships in a tertiary context. (g) Ethics, procedural and relational. Ethics was of utmost importance during data gathering as well as during analysis. (h) Meaningful coherence. The researcher used discourse analysis, and a projective technique, Mmogo-method®, to ensure the aim of the study was met (Tracy, 2010).

Rossmann and Rallis (2010) define trustworthiness as being composed of both competent practice and ethical considerations. It is key to regard the relationship between the researcher and participants as important. The researcher ensured this by being sensitive towards the participants and inviting them for debriefing if they felt it necessary (Shweder,

2006). An immersion process was followed where the researcher immersed herself in the data she collected by reading and examining a portion of the data in detail. Crystallisation followed by temporarily suspending the examining process in order to reflect on the analysis experience in an attempt to identify and articulate patterns and themes noticed during the immersion process. This dual process continued until all the data had been examined, and meaningful and well-articulated claims that could be substantiated had emerged from the data (Brokan, 1999).

To ensure the trustworthiness of the quotes used, the researcher translated them from Afrikaans into English. These were translated back into Afrikaans independently by someone not acquainted with the research.

The two versions of quotes in Afrikaans were compared to ensure that the meaning had remained the same and had been translated accurately.

Results

The themes that emerged from the analysis were grouped in four quadrants on two axes. The constructs that were used on the different axes were physical and emotional intimacy and distance on the one axis and empathy and judgemental on the second axis. Each construct will be defined before the typologies will be discussed.

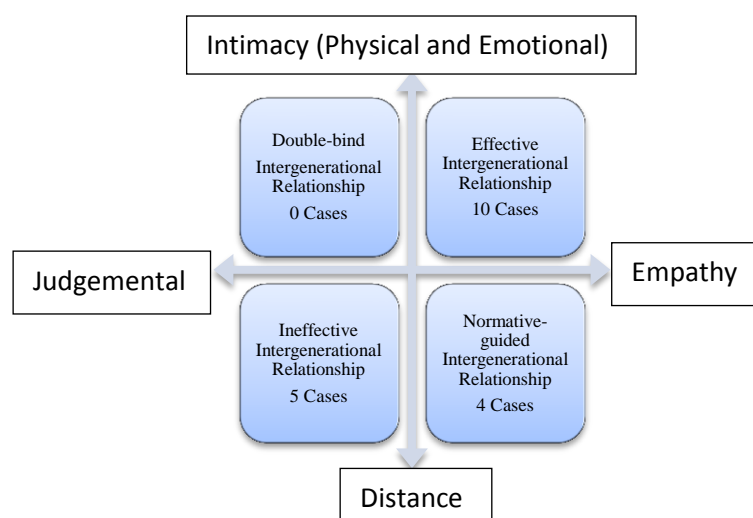


Figure 1. Relationship Typology

Y Axis: Intimacy (Physical and Emotional) and Distance

Intimacy (Physical and Emotional). Physical intimacy conveys a vitality and immediacy more powerful than language (Jones & Yarbrough, 1985). Physical intimacy refers to touch, hugs and kisses. It facilitates the sharing of feelings and enhances the intensity of the communication of messages (Gallace & Spence, 2010). Erikson (1950) defined emotional intimacy as the union of two people who care deeply about each other. Intimate relationships consist of love, exchanging of information, commitment, warmth, communication and the need for closeness (Hatfield, Traupmann, Sprecher, Utne, & Hay, 1985; McAdams, 1982). The degree of intimacy will be influenced by the history and the type of relationship that the grandparent and grandchild share.

Distance. The solidarity theory refers to affectual solidarity, with intimacy at one end of the continuum, and distance at the other (Bengston et al., 2002). Distance is defined, in this research context, as personal, and especially emotional, separation between the two generations. This distance can be caused by two instances: first, geographical distance, and second, the loss of a grandparent. The result of the distance between the two generations is associated with a lack of lived experiences of what an intergenerational relationship really should be, as well as an emotional feeling of loss.

X-Axis: Empathy and Judgemental

Empathy. Empathy in intergenerational relationships is one generation's ability to have the insight into the other generation's position (Biggs et al., 2011). It implies that you have the ability to assume a meta-reflective position and to put yourself in the position of that, grandparent's and/or grandchild's, world, in such a way that you actually feel and experience what the other person feels and experiences. It is the ability to be in tune with the other person in such a way that you are able to become the other person and see the world

through his or her perceptions and interpretations. This enables you to understand and grasp the other person's perception with insight (Hill, Watson, Rivers, & Joyce, 2007).

Judgemental. For the purpose of this study judgemental will be defined as forming opinion without carefully considering subjective experiences, by arriving at a conclusion without empathetic insight (Vorster, Roos, & Beukes, 2013). This results in the development of a negative opinion regarding the other generation. Judgemental in this research is associated with rigidity, stubbornness and preconceived perceptions.

Typologies

By placing each case of the participants in the four quadrants, the following types of relationships emerged.

Effective Intergenerational Relationship. Effective relationships refer to participants who described their relationships with older people in terms of physical and emotional intimacy on the one hand and empathy on the other. Ten of the 19 cases described effective intergenerational relationships according to the two dimensions: physical and emotional intimacy, and empathy (cases 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19).

Emotional intimacy was expressed as a need for closeness and the specific young participant made an effort to establish contact with the older people in her life. In case study 4, the following visual representation illustrated how technology (a telephone) was used to establish contact.

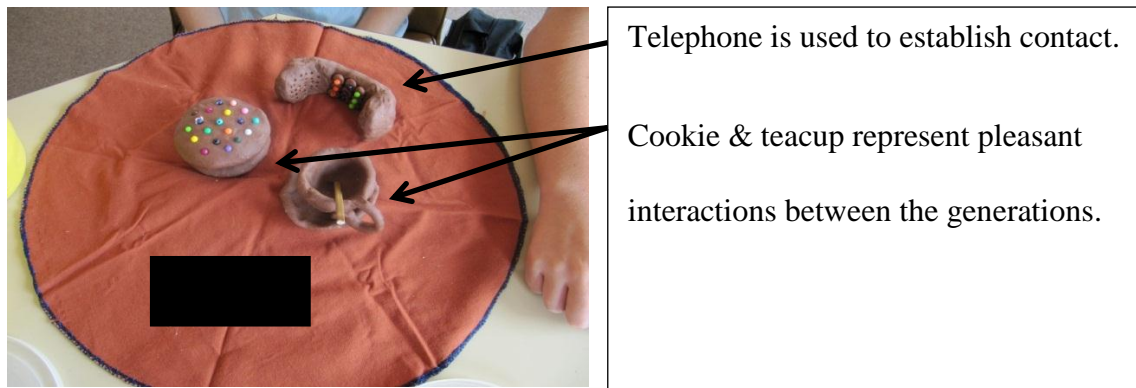


Figure 2. Visual illustration of emotional intimacy

Case 4 “The telephone symbolises when I can’t be with her, I really miss her a lot, and this is the only way I can communicate with her. And the telephone is the only way which you can use to communicate, but it is...it is not really enough, but you don’t have another choice”

This need for contact with her grandmother motivates the young adult to take autonomous action, with the aim of finding a way to ensure contact and communication with her grandmother. According to this behaviour it is reasonable to deduce that the interpersonal action by the young adult will elicit positive responses from the older person. This positive response could serve as positive reinforcement in the relationship. Emotional intimacy can thus be enhanced by using technology as a medium for contact and communication between the two generations for example, Facebook, Skype, instant messaging and so forth.

A demonstration of physical intimacy was seen in case study 3. The participant’s visual representation is made up of three figures, with her placed in between the two significant older people in her life. The physical closeness is also associated with emotional safety, holding and support.

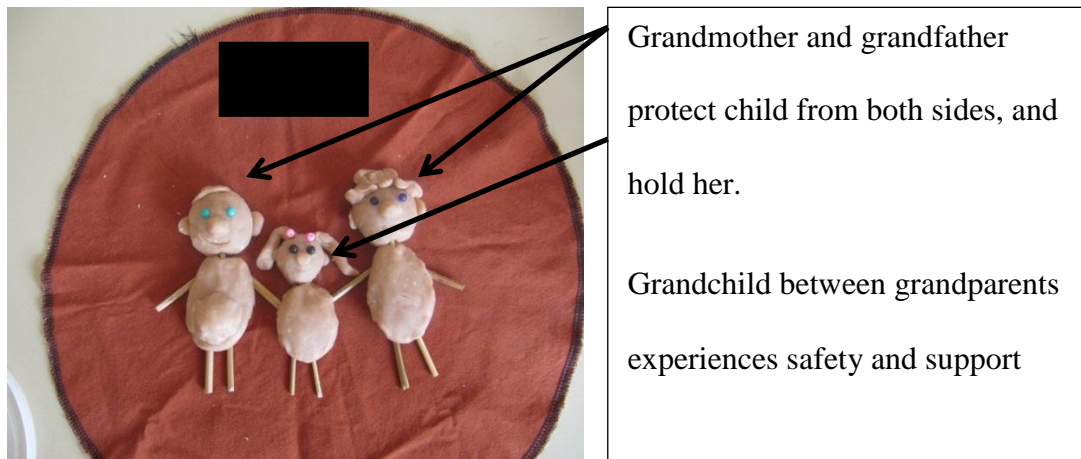


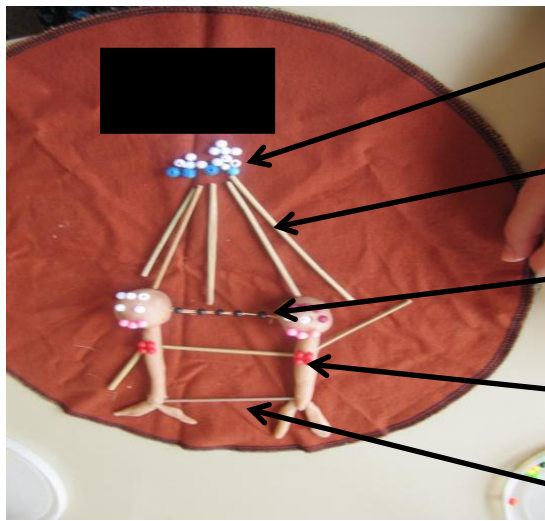
Figure 3. Visual illustration of physical intimacy

Case 3 “The reason why I am between them, they always give me the feeling that even if I am not safe anywhere else, with all my problems I can go to them, and they will hold me and support me, and like she also said, they will give me wisdom where they can. When I sat on my grandfather’s tummy, it is a place where I always felt safe when I was little. When somebody scared me or something, I sat on my grandfather’s lap and he made everything right.”

Before physical intimacy can be effectively demonstrated in any relationship, both partners have to feel emotionally safe. This is facilitated by acceptance and positive regard. The fact that physical intimacy is present in the experience of the participant is indicative of a relationship characterised by physical affection and the acceptance of one another’s differences.

A demonstration of empathy was seen in case study 5, in which the young adult has insight into her grandmother’s struggles and life problems. She demonstrates the ability to place herself in a meta-reflective position regarding her grandmother’s functioning, in such a way that she can almost feel what her grandmother is experiencing. The participant

illustrated empathy in the visual presentation through the symbolic representation of the beads.



Beads represent her grandmother's dreams and struggles.

Sticks symbolise that she understands her grandmother's struggles.

Black beads symbolise that they sometimes have different opinions.

Stick between hearts symbolise their love for each other.

Stick between two bodies symbolise that they have different physical abilities due to age.

Figure 4. Visual illustration of empathy

Case 5 "And here I have symbolised the blue and the white, it is dreams and peace...And then here it also symbolises that I hope she gets to a place of peace and tranquillity before her time is over and I hope to walk that road with her the last few years. It is very important to me...I think that she still has a lot of stuff in her life that she hasn't made peace with. Choicest she made, and I experience it in the way she guides me regarding certain things"

"Um ... and it is through that reason that I feel that I really want her to see a place of peace and beauty, regardless of wrong choices and so on. So no, I don't think I know what peace is, but I know where her struggles are. A lot of them."

The combination of physical and emotional intimacy and empathy is regarded as relational qualities contributing to an effective intergenerational relationship. This is supported by participants' expressions of emotions of happiness, contempt, hope, pleasure and tenderness. When the relationship is not available because of geographical distance or the

loss of the grandparent the young adults experience sorrow, grief and sadness. In case 2 the participant expressed emotions of pleasure and contentment. A tree transforming through different seasons represents social interactions that accompany the emotions, while the tree itself represents older people's human frailty and their inevitable death.

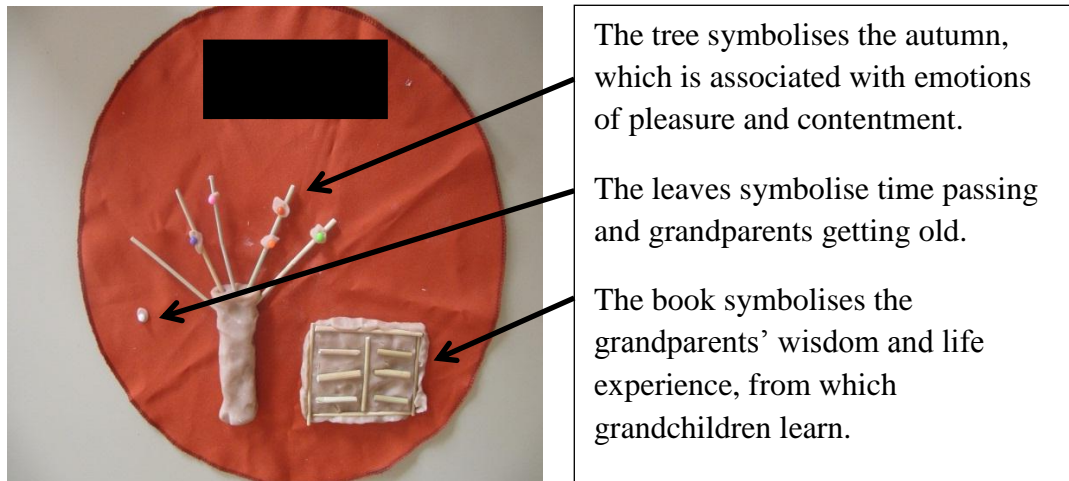


Figure 5. Visual illustration of emotions

Case 2 “And autumn always makes me think of a glass of wine, a fireplace, and a little red wine. Understand, it is nice social and cuddly. And ... when I think of my relationship with mostly my grandmother and grandfather I always get this feeling of protection and it is homey.”

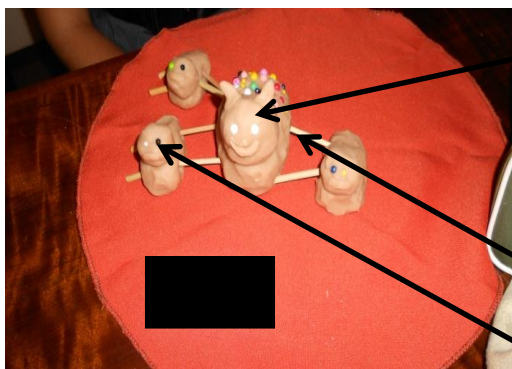
Normative-guided intergenerational relationships. This type of relationship includes two constructs, namely empathy and distance. Four cases (6, 10, 11 and 16) represented the normative-guided intergenerational relationship. Distance refers to participants who described distant relationships as a result of the absence of an intergenerational relationship. Cases 11 and 16 are examples of the absence of such a relationship:

Case 11 “When ... yes, when you said we must illustrate it I found it a bit difficult, because my grandmother and grandfather both died at an early age. So I don’t know how it is to have a grandmother or grandfather.”

Case 16 “I didn’t always have someone, a grandparent, that always shared this wisdom with me.”

Despite the distance, young adults show respect and a high regard for older people and have the ability to put themselves in the position of the older person. Empathy and sensitivity towards older people are described in terms of an obligation to care for grandparents on a physical and emotional level.

Participant 11 illustrated that she received support from her relationship with her grandparents. She expressed empathy for her grandmother’s sudden dependency by being very patient with her, understood her frustration and treated her with respect and understanding. But she described it incongruously by giving an almost factual account of how her grandmother had changed from an autonomous functioning older person to being dependent on others. During the interaction, however, she describes the caregiving factually, as an obligation. It is almost as if she does not feel enjoyment of the relationship but, does her duty because it is the right thing to do; it is the expected norm. The visual representation shows how she is a support to them by using the sticks as struts between them and her.



Grandchild in the middle and grandparents on either side.

Sticks represent the support the granddaughter provides to her grandparents.

Beads in different colours represent eyes and symbolise grandparents’ physical and/or emotional dependency on their grandchild.

Figure 6. Visual illustration of distance and empathy

Case 11 *“Yes, my grandmother, she used to be very independent, but when she had a stroke she suddenly became completely dependent on others. I have a lot of patience and I learned patience by interacting with her, because she couldn’t do anything.”*

“This is the reason why I made my legs into their legs [in the representation], or made a strut. That was the relationship I had with them: it was a strut or a supportive type. We had to do a lot for them.”

“When we came to visit her, and I had to give her fruit or something. She couldn’t eat it herself. I had to feed her. She was very perfectionistic and if it messed on her, even though it wasn’t really there, she felt that it was there, she became very impatient, but it taught me patience, because I want to care for her.”

The implication of absent intergenerational relationships is that grandchildren lacked the experience to develop a frame of reference from which they could approach older people. The young adults associated with this type of intergenerational relationship will be able to learn that an intergenerational relationship is not an obligation but it could be to their own benefit.

Ineffective Intergenerational Relationship. The ineffective intergenerational relationship includes two constructs, namely distance on the one hand and being judgemental on the other. Five out of 19 cases formed part of the ineffective intergenerational relationship (cases 1, 7, 8, 12 and 18)

In case 1 the participant illustrated judgement between the two generations by comparing them with two different objects. The first was a telescope/instrument which represented the young adults, while the object that represented older people was a toy. Her experience was that young adults are focused, inquisitive and future-orientated in contrast to

older people, who are rigid, engaged in repetitive monologues regarding their lives and past-orientated. Judgement is characterised by polarisation –them and us –and irreconcilable differences.

Distance is illustrated by the physical difference in height between the telescope and the toy. Although all the objects are placed very close together, they do not represent a close intergenerational relationship. Rather, they present a suffocating space which the young adult experienced as frustrating and limiting. She experiences the interaction between the two generations as frustrating and irritating, causing resentment. She experiences the conversations as incompatible. The subjective experiences of this interaction are disrespect.

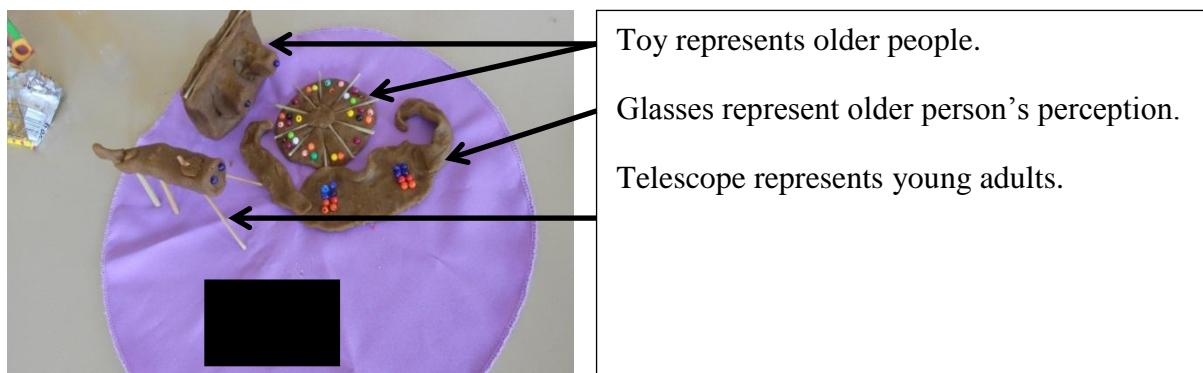


Figure 7. Visual illustration of distance and judgement

Case 1 Judgement *“A telescope. And this is ... I don't know what you call this little machine, but I made it a small handle. The little old red machine is a toy, into which you insert a disc... This is the disc you put in and then you click-click it, you see all the basic pictures, [you] see the same pictures”*

“The old people see the same things in them. The same pictures represent their past and it is always the same stories that they tell.”

“Well, the older person, the way that they think about things, there is not always space for something else”

Case 1 Distance *“When we talk about something I will always enquire; the conversation will always be future-orientated, something new. Whereas the older person will talk about something in the past.”*

Double-bind Intergenerational Relationship. None of the cases studied involved a double-bind intergenerational relationship. This relationship is associated with intimacy (physical and/or emotional) and judgement.

Discussion of Findings

Young adults’ experience of their relationships with significant older people is diverse and also depends, as with any other relationship, on the history and the context in which the interactions between young adults and their grandparents take place (Hargie, 2011).

In the first typology which is regarded as an effective intergenerational relationship, characterised by physical and emotional intimacy and empathy, has the potential to fulfil the needs of both generations (Lüscher, 2005). In this type of relationship, young adults are able to recognise the wisdom and experience of older people and use them as intermediaries to link the past, present and future (Keating, 2011). The implication of this type of relationship is that it creates a safe environment which meets Rogers’s (1986) criteria for an optimal environment for self-actualisation. A relationship is optimal when unconditional positive regard, acceptance and accurate empathy are present (Corey, 2009). According to SIGT (Roos, 2013), each action will have a reaction. Young adults who initiate positive actions towards an older person will most likely elicit the same response from older people. This reciprocal positive interpersonal interaction will inform both generations’ perception of each other’s generation. This effective interpersonal interaction will allow both generations to express their needs in an effective way, because they know from experience that their needs can be negotiated in relation to the other. The intergenerational relationship can therefore

contribute to relational well-being that could benefit both generations' achievement of their psychosocial developmental tasks.

The implications of the normative-guided intergenerational relationship are that young adults may feel obligated to care for the needs of their grandparents (Costanzo & Hoy, 2007). It is interesting that even though these young adults display cognitive insight into the other generation's position, very little emotional insight or empathy is prominent (Biggs et al., 2011). The implication of this type of relationship is that although young adults never developed an extended behavioural repertoire in relation to older people, they still feel an obligation to take care of them. The members of the normative-guided intergenerational relationship lack experience of intimate intergenerational interpersonal interaction. This can affect these young adults' socialisation with older people, because they will have a limited frame of reference to guide them during interaction.

The ineffective intergenerational relationship is explained by the solidarity (and conflict) model. Conflict is an inevitable attribute of interpersonal relationships, including intergenerational relationships (Bengtson et al., 2002). In these kinds of relationships, young adults reported that they experienced interactions with older people as unpleasant and frustrating. They described the elderly as rigid and condescending (Giles & Williams 1994). The frustration young adults experience is the subjective impact of the interactional style of older people, who tend to view the relationships linearly, and from their own perspective, with little regard for the position of the young adult – thus sustaining ineffective interactional patterns (Giles, Ballard, & McCann, 2003). These patterns inform the perceptions of young adults regarding the older generation as a group, labelling them, as 'the other' (Roos, 2013). Possible implications of this kind of relationship are that the young adults and the older people will eventually avoid interacting with one another. This can eventually lead to the complete disintegration of the intergenerational relationship, with both members missing out

on opportunities to engage. Young adults may lose relationships on which they can draw for support and older people may become isolated and lonely with their physical and emotional needs unmet.

In this research there were no young adults who experience their relationship with older people as intimate and judgemental. This could possibly be contributed to sociological, cultural or environmental factors. The group participants in this study are more individualistic and do not dependent on older persons. In the case of an older person with whom they experience intimacy and judgement, they can prevent this type of relationship by withdrawing from the situation or avoid the interaction causing judgement.

Limitations and Recommendations

Limitations of this study include that only 19 young adults were involved in the research. There was only one male representative in the study which limits the gender representation of the study. Other data gathering methods, such as quantitative techniques, can enlarge the sample size, ensuring generalisation of the findings. Additional groups of young adults in this and other communities could provide a more in-depth exploration of intergenerational relationships. Young adults from other cultural groups could also have provided a cross-cultural perspective on young adults' subjective experience of older people who are familially-related. This, in turn, could provide an in-depth understanding of the double-bind intergenerational relationship. A further recommendation is to include older people in the research so that their experiences regarding their relationship with young adults could be explored. This will provide critical information to expand the current typology of the intergenerational relationship.

It is recommended that intergenerational interventions be developed to address the ineffective and double-bind intergenerational relationships. Family-focused interactional

activities are needed that centre on teaching both generations skills such as communication, empathy and unconditional acceptance. Interactional activities can help the two generations to move closer to each other so that a safe platform is created where each generation has the opportunity to be respected and acknowledged. Such exercises will also create an opportunity for the two generations to address issues in the community and work on solutions jointly as a partnership. Through this programme, knowledge, values and skills can be exchanged between the two generations. This would create an opportunity for intergenerational programming to apply young adults, with the need for interaction, but that don't always have the opportunity to interact, in community programs and interventions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, intergenerational relationships are omnipresent. They form an integral part of being human, whether a grandparent or grandchild. The intergenerational relationship can be either positively built by gestures such as intimacy and empathy or broken down by characteristics such as judgement and distance. The interpersonal interaction of any intergenerational relationship will have a reciprocal influence. Intrapersonal attributes will influence the interpersonal interaction. Finally, it can be concluded that effective intergenerational relationships can be beneficial to both generations, and that the aim of intergenerational programming should be to enhance both generations' ability to place them in a meta-reflective position so that empathy and intimacy may be enhanced.

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CRITICAL REFLECTION

There exists, nationally and internationally, a growing interest in understanding intergenerational relationships because of an increased expectation that families will provide in the needs of older people (Wisensale, 2003). Most of the research done in South Africa focused on intergenerational relations among African families (Hoffman, 2003), and it was important therefore to conduct research in another context. Even though intergenerational relationships also occur in historical context, it was considered particularly appropriate to conduct the research in a familial context, because the most widespread representation of intergenerational relationships is to be found in families and other kinship associations (Lüscher, 2000). Most of the research into experiences of different generations has been conducted internationally or focused on the experiences of older people in relation to the younger generation (Peters et al., 2006). The focus of this study was on young white adults' lived experiences of their relationship with familiarly-related older persons. Intergenerational research and findings are drawn mostly from a sociological perspective; hence the solidarity model, the solidarity and conflict model, and the ambivalence model (Bengston et al., 2002). The existing theories in psychology about intergenerational relationships are the intergenerational intelligence theory (Biggs & Lowenstein, 2011) and the self-interactive group theory (SIGT) (Roos, 2013). Erikson's psychosocial developmental phases also informed the research regarding the background of the phase young adults are currently traversing (Erikson, 1950). Rogers's description of an optimal relationship plays an important role for the research from a psychological perspective. It is expected that if the intergenerational relationship were to be characterised by Rogers's core conditions it will be beneficial for both generations (Rogers, 1986).

When comparing the intergenerational family relation types described by Silverstein and Bengston (1997), remarkable similarities were discovered. The *Tight-Knit* type shares

similarities with the effective intergenerational relationship, and the *detached* type displays similar characteristics to the ineffective intergenerational relationship. The *Obligatory* type shows similarities to the normative intergenerational relationship but there is no comparative data for the double-bind intergenerational relationship. These research findings thus contribute a new typology for intergenerational relationships between (G1) grandparents and (G3) grandchildren. When comparing the *Tight-Knit* type with the effective intergenerational relationship similarities exist between emotional and physical intimacy and affectual solidarity (intimacy). What this research contributes is relational characteristics of empathy and emotional and physical intimacy, as well as the relational interaction, the appraisal of the older person and feelings regarding the relationship. The *Tight Knit* type requires only that adult children engage with their parents on the six indicators of solidarity, with no characteristics of this interaction. When comparing the *detached* type with the ineffective intergenerational relationship, similarity is found to exist between distance and affectual solidarity. This thesis is able to identify the relational interaction, the emotional experience, appraisal of older people as well as the cause of the distant relationship. Intergenerational relationships were previously explained only in terms of the six indicators of solidarity.

Finally, the four different relationships were described by the four different constructs identified. The constructs describing the relationships are: physical and emotional intimacy, empathy, distance and judgement. The constructs were particularly effective in describing and categorising the different identified relationships. The description was rich in relational interaction, appraisal of the older generation, emotions experienced, perceptions and normative values. This study went beyond identifying intergenerational relationships; indeed, it generated relational patterns between the generations, which may be useful in developing tools for intervention. It is clear from the relational type which aspects of the relationship need to be addressed or which part of the relationship could serve as a strength.

The findings also compliment the generational intelligence theory and can contribute to its further expansion (Biggs, 2008). The relationships between the two generations studied could benefit from psychological and community interventions and programmes. Even though ineffective relationships exist, these are valuable because they explain what is going wrong between the two generations. The ineffective intergenerational relationship characteristics will enable researchers to develop psychological techniques and interventions to improve the intergenerational relationship with the ultimate goal of ensuring that it is effective (Costanzo & Hoy, 2007). As a consequence of this study it is recommended that interventions be developed that address ineffective and double-bind intergenerational relationships by developing family-focused activities to teach both generations skills such as communication, empathy and unconditional acceptance.

The Value of the Mmogo-method®.

Visual projective data enable the researcher to obtain insight into the subjective lived experiences which inform the interaction between people (Roos, 2012). Personal unconscious processes significantly influence conscious processes as well as everyday life (Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody, 2001). In psychology, projection is a commonly used technique (Jung, 1966). It is generally used to explore personality, individual functioning, and unconscious conflicts. It empowers a therapist to enable a patient in therapy to bring unconscious thoughts and feelings to the surface, with the aim of promoting the patients' understanding and insight (Oaklander, 1988). Projection refers to unconscious feelings, thoughts and experiences that are projected onto something or someone other than the self (Corey, 2012). The Mmogo-method®, which uses experiences, was considered an appropriate data gathering instrument. The Mmogo-method® uses visual projections to access participant's personal and collective experiences. Participants' social and cultural contexts are obtained through this visual projective technique, leading to a deeper understanding of the relation dimensions

(Walkerdine et al., 2001). The basic theory behind the Mmogo-method® is that people are relational in nature and that their visual presentations will be a projection of themselves and the social context in which they live (Roos, 2008).

Conclusion

This research has addressed a gap in the literature. It was conducted with a research methodology that made it possible to access subjective lived experiences. These lived experiences enabled the researcher to obtain rich information regarding the nature of the intergenerational relationship. Four different intergenerational relationships between grandparents and grandchildren emerged from the data, thus contributing new knowledge and understanding to intergenerational literature. Not only the different relationships, but also the relational interaction, appraisal of the older person, emotions experienced and normative values were identified for each relationship. This research contributes to intergenerational literature by presenting intergenerational relationships from a new perspective. This will assist in the development of communal and psychological interventions and programmes based on existing ineffective patterns and building on available strengths.

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