



Variations in Grandfathering: Characteristics of Involved, Passive, and Disengaged Grandfathers

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Introduction

- To better understand a grandfather and his roles and relationships in the extended family system, it is important to consider his:
 - demographic and personal characteristics of him and his family.
 - the behavioral and social-cognitive aspects of grandfathering.
 - the results of his actions or inactions on himself, others and family relationships.



Grandfather Literature

- Process Model of Determinants of Grandparenting (Bates & Taylor, 2013a).
- Grandfather Involvement Conceptual Framework (Bates & Taylor, 2013b).
- Grandparenting Styles (Neugarten & Weinstein, 1964; Robertson, 1977; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985, 1986; Mueller, Wilhelm, & Elder, 2002; Bates & Taylor, 2012)



Methods

- Grandfather Involvement and Health Survey
- $N = 351$ grandfathers
 - Central New York and locations throughout the US.
- Completed either a written version of the questionnaire on their own or over the telephone with contact persons.
- Asked to select one grandchild and answer questions in the survey about their relationship with that particular grandchild.
- Hierarchical Agglomerative Cluster Analysis
 - Three clusters of grandfathers based on:
 - Contact frequency
 - Generative activities
 - Intergenerational commitment
 - Three clusters were:
 - Disengaged ($n = 57$; 16%)
 - Passive ($n = 181$; 52%)
 - Involved ($n = 113$; 32%)
- Multinomial Logistic Regression
 - Reference group: Disengaged.

Multinomial Logistic Models Examined

- Model 1
 - Grandfather mental and physical health
- Model 2
 - Grandfather personality
- Model 3
 - Grandfather family support
- Model 4
 - Grandfather-grandchild relationship
- Model 5
 - All variables



Grandfather Demographics

Table 1. Background and demographic characteristics of grandfathers.

Variables	<i>n</i>	%
Marital status		
Married	284	80.9
Widowed	31	8.8
Divorced	21	6.0
Not married but living with a partner	8	2.3
Single, not living with a partner	7	2.0
Residential living arrangement^a		
In own home	319	91.1
In a retirement home/community	17	4.9
With a family member in their home	11	3.1
At a grandchild's home	3	0.9
Highest level of education completed^b		
8th grade or less than 8th grade	24	7.0
High school diploma	114	33.0
Associate's degree	19	5.5
Trade school/apprenticeship certification	31	9.0
Bachelor's degree	91	26.3
Graduate degree (MS or PhD)	67	19.4
Employment status^c		
Currently retired and not working	176	51.2
Currently unemployed but looking for work	3	0.9
Employed part-time	55	16.0
Employed full-time	108	31.4
Currently retired but working either full-time or part-time	2	0.6
Annual household income^d		
\$0–10,000	10	3.0
\$10,001–30,000	57	17.3
\$31,000–75,000	122	37.1
\$76,000–125,000	86	26.1
\$126,000–above	54	16.4
Grandfather ethnicity^e		
African American or Black	56	16.1
White	243	69.6
American Indian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	0.6
Asian	9	2.6
Hispanic or Latino	30	8.6
Other	9	2.6

^aMissing = 1.

^bMissing = 5.

^cMissing = 7.

^dMissing = 22.

^eMissing = 2.

Demographic and Background Results

Table 2. Odds ratios from multinomial logistic regression of grandfathering styles on selected independent variables (reference group is disengaged).

	Involved	Passive
Demographic and background variables		
Household income > \$30,000 annually	0.19**	0.42*
Grandfather age (in years)	1.01	1.01
Grandfather community involvement	2.98***	2.09**
Distance to GC > 30 minutes	4.52***	1.33
Granddaughter	1.18	1.42
Grandchild age (in years)	1.04	1.04
Maternal	0.40***	0.50 [†]
Cox and Snell pseudo- R^2		0.17
-2 log likelihood		542.84
χ^2		57.59***

Note: GC: Grandchild.

[†] $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Multinomial Logistic Regression Results

Table 3. Odds ratios from multinomial logistic regression of grandfathering styles on selected variables (reference group is disengaged).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	Involved	Passive	Involved	Passive	Involved	Passive	Involved	Passive	Involved	Passive
GF physical and mental health										
Physical health	1.16*	1.09							1.15	1.11
Depressive symptoms	0.93	0.98							1.01	1.04
Positive affect	1.05	1.08							0.78	0.87
GF personality										
Extraversion			1.41 [†]	1.13					1.00	0.80
Agreeableness			1.48*	1.36 [†]					1.96*	1.57
Conscientiousness			1.40 [†]	1.43*					1.51	1.81*
Emotional stability			1.35	1.53*					1.57	1.86*
Openness to experience			0.97	0.84					0.88	0.92
GF family support										
GF spouse					1.31	1.52			0.38	0.50
GC mother					3.05*	1.12			1.32	0.56
GC father					2.11*	2.16**			0.50	0.81
GF-GC relationship										
Relationship satisfaction							39.41***	8.16**	51.79***	10.55**
Relationship quality							7.35 [†]	3.11	14.14*	6.96*
Role satisfaction							48.48***	6.66**	66.59***	7.61*
Demographic variables										
Household income >\$30,000	0.25**	0.49 [†]	0.20**	0.44 [†]	0.23**	0.51	0.25 [†]	0.61	0.24 [†]	0.52
Grandfather age (in years)	1.01	1.01	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.95
GF community involvement	2.53**	1.84*	2.54**	1.94**	2.71***	1.91**	1.39	1.64	1.47	1.53
Distance to GC >30 minutes	4.98***	1.48	6.36***	1.75	4.45**	1.25	3.85*	1.12	4.70*	1.25
Granddaughter	1.12	1.36	1.04	1.22	1.22	1.50	1.10	1.68	1.11	1.55
Grandchild age (in years)	1.06	1.05	1.05	1.04	1.05	1.05	1.12 [†]	1.10	1.16*	1.13 [†]
Maternal	0.40*	0.50 [†]	0.37*	0.45*	0.36*	0.40*	0.47	0.50	0.65	0.60
Cox and Snell pseudo-R ²	0.20		0.25		0.24		0.56		0.60	
-2 log likelihood	532.60		512.66		516.58		348.15		318.49	
χ ²	67.82***		87.76***		83.84***		252.27***		281.93***	

Note: GF: Grandfather; GC: Grandchild.

[†]*p* < .10.

**p* < .05.

***p* < .01.

****p* < .001.

Limitations

- The large and possibly inflated odds ratios for relationship satisfaction, relationship quality, and role satisfaction in the final models may indicate endogeneity.
- A more ethnically/racially diverse sample of grandfathers would allow for comparisons across racial and ethnic groups.
- Unknown the extent to which grandfather-grandchild relationship and involvement may have changed over time.
 - The snapshot of time reported on does not necessarily signify past or future involvement.

Future Directions

- Grandfather involvement over time and/or at different time points of a grandchild's life.
- Potential differences in types grandfather-grandchild engagement activities.
- Mediating effect of grandfather's adult child/son-in-law/daughter-in-law on grandfather-grandchildren relationship quality.

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