

STAYING CONNECTED: TECHNOLOGY USE IN
GRANDPARENT-GRANDCHILD
RELATIONSHIPS

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Despite the distance that often separates grandparents from their young adult grandchildren, the abundance of new technologies provides numerous means of connection for the grandparent-grandchild (GP-GC) dyad. The purpose of this study was to understand how grandparents use technology, namely text messaging and Facebook, in relationships with their young adult grandchildren. Specifically, the aim was to understand grandparents' purposes for using these technologies with their grandchildren, their motivations for using these technologies, and their perceptions of these technologies. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 23 grandparent participants and analyzed according to the procedures delineated in grounded theory analysis. Both text messaging and Facebook emerged as important tools for connection, as text messaging encourages more frequent communication and Facebook helps grandparents "fill in the gaps" about their grandchildren's lives. Furthermore, results indicated that grandparents' uses of text messaging, and to a lesser extent Facebook, are acts of accommodation to their grandchildren.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My 9-year-old in our Philadelphia home was playing an online Scrabble game with his grandmother on her iPad two time zones away in Denver. My 11-year-old was video-chatting with his grandfather in Florida on Skype, a program I didn't even know we had...Certainly, it's nothing new that kids are plugging in and staying connected. But what is new is that it may be a grandparent on the other end of that virtual tin can—and that technology is bridging the vast age and distance gap that has long divided the generations.

- *Molly Baker, reporter for the Wall Street Journal*

The grandparent-grandchild (GP-GC) relationship serves an important role in the lives of both older adult grandparents and young adult/adolescent grandchildren (Hartshorne & Manaster, 1982; Kennedy, 1990; Kivnick, 1988; Silverstein & Marengo, 2001; Thomas, 1990). While this relationship constitutes the most common intergenerational relationship between older adults and young adults/adolescents (Ng, Liu, Weatherall, & Loong, 1997; Williams & Giles, 1996), few researchers have investigated the communication dynamics present in this dyad (Harwood, 2000a; Holladay & Seipke, 2007; Soliz, Lin, Anderson, & Harwood, 2006). Aging and family communication scholars who have focused on this relationship have highlighted the effects of communication accommodation in the relationship (Harwood, 2000b; Lin & Harwood, 2003), the topics of conversation in the relationship (Lin, Harwood, & Bonnesen, 2002; Webb 1985), and the importance of relational maintenance communication (Folwell & Grant, 2006; Mansson, Myers, & Turner, 2010). Furthermore, identifying the importance of technology in relational maintenance, Harwood (2000a), Holladay and Seipke (2007), and Hurme, Westerback, and Quadrello (2010) have provided a starting point for exploring communication technology use in the GP-GC dyad. The purpose of this study is to expand on the work of Harwood (2000a), Holladay and Seipke (2007), and Hurme et al. (2010) by providing a more thorough understanding, through qualitative analysis, of grandparents' uses of communication technology

with their grandchildren. Before discussing the importance of examining technology usage in the GP-GC relationship, I first highlight the social importance of the GP-GC relationship to provide a rationale for focusing on the GP-GC dyad.

The Social Importance of the GP-GC Relationship

As mentioned before, the GP-GC relationship is the most common intergenerational relationship for older and young adults and adolescents (Ng et al., 1997; Williams & Giles, 1996). Furthermore, the GP-GC relationship is lasting longer as older adults are living longer due to an increase in life expectancy (Soliz & Harwood, 2006; Uhlenberg & Kirby, 1998). Therefore, while the GP-GC relationship offers a location for the most frequent intergenerational interaction, the relationship also offers a location for long-term intergenerational relationships. This creates important implications for the GP-GC relationship, as well as for young adults' perceptions of older adults and the aging process.

One area where the GP-GC relationship can influence young adults' non-familial intergenerational relationships concerns intergroup relations and stereotypes. Social identity theory (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1986) posits that individuals categorize themselves according to groups (e.g., women, African American, teenagers, etc.), creating social ingroups and outgroups. These intergroup relations become salient in human interaction as people adjust their communication and behavior according to perceived intergroup boundaries (see communication accommodation theory [CAT]; Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991). Due to the position of the GP-GC relationship within the family, the GP-GC relationship functions on both ingroup and outgroup levels (Soliz & Harwood, 2006). The GP-GC relationship is considered an ingroup relationship as grandparents and grandchildren have a shared family identity (Soliz & Harwood, 2006), but the relationship is also an outgroup relationship as age is a salient factor that separates

young grandchildren from their older grandparents (Soliz & Harwood, 2006). Based on intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954), Soliz and Harwood (2006) posited, "family interactions may influence how we communicate with and perceive members of groups outside of the family" (p. 89), as families provide an opportunity to interact with outgroup members based on age.

Intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954) asserts that interaction with outgroup members may influence perceptions of the overall outgroup. According to Pettigrew (1998) and Wright, Aron, and Tropp (2002), this influence on the social outgroup is often more powerful when contact with the outgroup member exists across a close, intimate, long term relationship, a characteristic of many GP-GC relationships. Furthermore, Harwood, Hewstone, Paolini, and Voci (2007) and Soliz and Harwood (2006) have noted that age must be a salient factor in the relationship in order for young adults to make the connection from the older outgroup member to the outgroup as a whole. Thus, in an intergenerational interaction with high intergroup salience, such as a difference in age, the younger person in the interaction can make generalizations about the older adult social group based on that interaction (Williams & Harwood, 2004). Because GP-GC communication is a prime area of intergenerational contact (Harwood, 2000a; Williams & Giles, 1996), it allows for the possibility that young adults' and adolescents' views of their grandparents can be passed on to the older adult population, potentially preventing negative stereotypes of older adults (Soliz & Harwood, 2006) and alleviating ageist attitudes (Harwood et al., 2007). For example, Harwood et al. (2007) found that young adults' attitudes toward older adults were significantly influenced by contact with their older adult grandparent when their relationship exhibited high contact quality and when group salience in the relationship (i.e., a noticeable age difference) was high. Thus, the authors determined that positive GP-GC

relationships characterized by high quality and high age saliency can lead to the attribution of positive stereotypes towards other older adults.

Communication Technology in the GP-GC Relationship

The only way for such results to transfer from the grandparent to the older adult outgroup is for contact to occur between grandparents and their young adult/adolescent grandchildren through GP-GC interaction. However, geographic separation, a characteristic of the GP-GC dyad (Harwood & Lin, 2000), greatly influences the amount of face-to-face contact between grandparents and grandchildren. While an increase in geographic distance may have drastically limited the amount and variety of interaction between grandparents and their grandchildren before, now geographic distance becomes seemingly insignificant as the vast amount of technology available increases the communication options for GP-GC communication. Distant GP-GC relationships are no longer restricted to the telephone; instead, grandparents can choose between an amassment of media when selecting the most appropriate way to communicate with their grandchildren. Therefore, understanding communication technology use in the GP-GC relationship provides insight into how grandparents and grandchildren use technology as a means to overcome geographic barriers to contact (Harwood, 2000a; Holladay & Seipke, 2007).

Despite the potential use of various technologies in the GP-GC dyad, few scholars (Harwood, 2000a; Holladay & Seipke, 2007; Hurme et al., 2010) have examined technology use in the GP-GC relationship. Those who have, have maintained a narrow focus on three constructs: frequency of technology use, satisfaction with technology use, and the correlation between established relational quality and frequency of technology use. These studies have provided a descriptive understanding of the frequency of select media usages (i.e., mainly telephone and email usage) in the GP-GC relationship and the relevant factors that predict higher or lower uses

of certain technological mediums, but they have failed to illuminate the depth of the influence of technology in maintaining the GP-GC relationship. Furthermore, scholars have failed to explore whether grandparents perceive communication technologies as viable tools for quality connections with grandchildren. Thus, I explore how grandparents use new technologies to connect with their grandchildren to understand how communication mediums aid in relational maintenance of the GP-GC dyad. Specifically, I focus on grandparents' uses of two new technologies: text messaging and Facebook.

In the following chapter, I examine literature that establishes the importance of the GP-GC relationship to both actors in this relational dyad and identify the factors that influence their perceptions of relational closeness. I also review the importance of communication in the GP-GC dyad, specifically relationship maintenance, and identify how technology aids in connecting grandparents to their grandchildren. I then review literature focusing on text messaging and Facebook in family relations. Finally, I identify the gaps in the current research and propose my specific research questions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The life transitions of grandchildren from children to adolescents to adults create unique implications for communication within grandparent-grandchild (GP-GC) relationships. Such transitions are usually associated with an increase in geographical distance that separates the GP-GC dyad, when children leave their nuclear homes (Geurts, Poortman, van Tilburg, & Dykstra, 2009). Thus, mediated communication may become a prime means for relationship maintenance for grandparents with young adult grandchildren. In this literature review, I first examine research on the nature of the GP-GC relationship, with a specific focus on the importance of this relationship to both grandparents and grandchildren and the factors that influence relational solidarity. Next I discuss communication within the GP-GC relationship, highlighting the importance of communication in maintaining the GP-GC relationship across the lifespan and across geographical distance. I also examine research on technology use as a means for grandparents and grandchildren to stay connected and highlight the growing significance of Facebook and text messaging in family communication. Finally, I introduce the research questions guiding this study.

The GP-GC Relationship

Regardless of grandparent or grandchild age, numerous researchers (Hartshorne & Manaster, 1982; Kennedy, 1990; Kivnick, 1988; Silverstein & Marengo, 2001; Thomas, 1990) have highlighted the importance of the GP-GC relationship in the lives of both relational partners. Kemp (2005) stated both grandparents and grandchildren designate the GP-GC relationship as personally meaningful and noted that GP-GC relationships have the ability to become even more significant as the relationships progress across the life course. One aspect that

contributes to the importance of this relationship stems from the roles each member of this dyad engages in when interacting with the other.

Within the GP-GC relationship, grandparents often serve as teachers or nurturers through the roles they enact. According to Kornhaber and Woodward (1981), grandparents act as historians, mentors, and role models. These three roles position the grandparent as teacher or educator and the grandchild as student or learner. In the historian role, grandparents preserve the history of their families by orally transmitting family stories to their grandchildren and to other family members (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). Thus, grandchildren learn from grandparents about their family histories and their family practices that have endured across time. Furthermore, this historian role enables the grandparent to transmit a family identity and culture to their grandchildren (Langellier, 2002). As mentors, grandparents transmit their wisdom through interaction with their grandchildren, guiding their grandchildren to enact good behavior within and throughout their lives (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). As role models, grandparents serve as sites for learning the aging process and grandparenting duties and behaviors (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). Several researchers have suggested the location of grandparent as role model not only influences how grandchildren perceive the role of grandparenthood and their own aging, but also how they perceive other older adults and the aging process, suggesting important implication for grandchildren's perceptions of older adult and aging stereotypes (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981, Williams & Nussbaum, 2001). Thus, based on these roles, grandparents inhabit a position that enables them to educate their grandchildren on familial traditions, life values, and the normative aging process.

In addition to teacher roles, grandparents also engage in behaviors that position them as nurturers to their grandchildren (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). According to Kornhaber and

Woodward (1981), the role as nurturer is perhaps the most fundamental role of grandparenting; grandparents often exhibit this role through caregiving. Furthermore, as grandchildren age, grandparent as nurturer encompasses aspects of emotional and social support (Block, 2002; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986). According to Block (2002), "grandmothers provide emotional support by showing concern for their grandchildren's well-being, by letting them know they will always be there to support them, by telling them they are 'OK' just the way they are and by letting them know that they feel close to them" (para. 18).

While grandparents are in a unique position to serve their grandchildren as educators and nurturers through the roles they maintain within the GP-GC relationship, the roles of grandchildren in the relationship have not received much academic attention. However, Harwood and Lin (2000) determined that grandchildren serve important social purposes for their grandparents, acting as sources of affection, pride, and positive identity for their grandparents. Additionally, grandparents often report that interacting with their grandchildren instills within them a feeling of youthfulness (Harwood, McKee, & Lin, 2000). Thus, grandchildren perform a role in relationships with their grandparents by connecting their grandparents to youth culture.

In addition to noting the importance of this relationship, researchers have determined that the quality of the GP-GC relationship exists on a continuum from close to distant. Hence, not all grandparents and grandchildren will deem their GP-GC relationship as a significant influence in their lives. One factor influencing the solidarity within the GP-GC relationship is the sex of the grandparent. Researchers (Hartshorne & Manaster, 1982; Hodgson, 1992; Taylor, Robila, & Lee, 2005; Williams & Nussbaum, 2001) have consistently noted that grandchildren feel closer to their grandmothers, specifically their maternal grandmothers (Creasey & Koblewski, 1991; Hartshorne & Manaster, 1982; Kennedy, 1992; Williams & Nussbaum, 2001). Providing an

explanation for this phenomenon, Soliz, Lin, Anderson, and Harwood (2006) stated grandchildren's stronger solidarity with grandmothers could result from the tendency for grandmothers to provide more emotional support than grandfathers. Grandfathers, on the other hand, tend to provide more instrumental support. In addition to types of support, Holladay, Lackovich, and Lee (1998), determined that relational closeness was a result of grandparent's active involvement in their grandchildren's lives.

One aspect tightly intertwined with relationship involvement is frequency of contact, as active involvement equates to higher levels of contact between grandparents and grandchildren. Researchers (Folwell & Grant, 2006; Holladay et al., 1998; Kennedy, 1992) have persistently documented a strong connection between grandparent and grandchild frequency of contact with the quality of the GP-GC relationship; higher levels of contact relate to higher levels of relational solidarity within the GP-GC relationship (Folwell & Grant, 2006; Holladay et al., 1998; Kennedy, 1992). However, several factors act as barriers or challenges to maintaining an adequate amount of contact within the GP-GC dyad, including relationship dissolution of the grandchild's parents (Drew & Smith, 1999), marital status of the grandchild's grandparents (King, 2003), age of the grandchild (Folwell & Grant, 2006; Kemp, 2005; Silverstein & Marengo, 2001), and geographic distance between the grandchild and grandparent (Falk & Falk, 2002; Folwell & Grant, 2006; Harwood & Lin, 2000; Hodgson, 1992; Holladay et al., 1998; McKay & Caverly, 2004).

According to Soliz et al. (2006), grandparents tend to maintain higher frequencies of contact with younger grandchildren as opposed to older grandchildren. Silverstein and Marengo (2001) supported this claim, stating that frequency of contact declines as grandchildren age into young adulthood. This decrease in contact is often a result of normative life changes

grandchildren experience that move them away from their nuclear homes. For example, Geurts et al. (2009) identified normative life changes a grandchild experiences, such as going to college, moves him or her away from his or her nuclear family. This not only has the potential to increase geographic distance between grandparents and grandchildren, but also diminishes the effect of the middle generation parents in maintaining their children's relationships with grandparents (Geurts et al., 2009). Hence, through the normative aging processes grandchildren experience, parents are removed as the bridge connecting grandchildren to their grandparents, placing prime responsibility for maintaining contact with one's grandparent on the grandchild.

The amount of interaction between grandchildren and their grandparents, however, is often a result of geographic distance (King & Elder, 1997), a "fundamental tension that characterizes the GP-GC relationship" (Harwood & Lin, 2000, p. 43). Many scholars (Falk & Falk, 2002; Folwell & Grant, 2006; Harwood & Lin, 2000; Hodgson, 1992; Holladay et al., 1998; McKay & Caverly, 2004) have claimed an increase in geographic proximity between grandparents and grandchildren negatively influences contact within the GP-GC relationship, and consequently, negatively influences quality. Harwood and Lin (2000) noted that grandparents and grandchildren who live within closer geographic distance report a higher level of relational solidarity than those grandparents and grandchildren who do not. Holladay et al. (1998) reported a similar conclusion, stating that increases in the distance that separate grandparents and grandchildren negatively influence GP-GC relational quality, whereas a decrease in geographical proximity leads to higher levels of relational quality. Furthermore, Falk and Falk (2002) discovered that grandparents have a stronger liking for their relationships with grandchildren who live within closer geographical distance.

However, while many scholars have noted the detrimental effects of geographical distance on frequency of contact within the GP-GC relationship and consequently quality (Folwell & Grant, 2006; Harwood & Lin, 2000; Hodgson, 1992; Holladay et al., 1998; McKay & Caverly, 2004), Harwood (2000a) disagreed, stating that geographical distance has no bearing on the quality of the GP-GC relationship. Further, Taylor et al. (2005) disputed the connection between frequency of contact and relational quality, asserting that frequency of contact does not influence relational quality. Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) supported this notion, stating the true impact of frequency of contact on the closeness of the GP-GC relationship is unknown as older grandchildren who infrequently contact their grandparents may engage in higher quality of intimate and personal communication, thus impacting the overall closeness of the relationship (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). These areas of dispute point to another factor that works in tandem with frequency of contact and distance in influencing the GP-GC relationship: communication.

Communication in GP-GC Relationships

Researchers have noted the importance of the GP-GC relationship in the lives of both grandparents and grandchildren (Hartshorne & Manaster, 1982; Kennedy, 1990; Kivnick, 1988; Silverstein & Marengo, 2001; Thomas, 1990) and the importance of frequency of contact within the relationship (Folwell & Grant, 2006; Holladay et al., 1998; Kemp, 2005); however, family communication scholars have devoted little attention to studying the communication aspects of this relationship (Harwood, 2000a; Holladay & Seipke, 2007; Soliz et al., 2006). Harwood (2000a) noted, "investigation into communication within the GP-GC relationship has been rare" (p. 58). Scholars who have focused on communication within the GP-GC relationship have highlighted the effects of communication accommodation within the relationship (Harwood,

2000b; Lin & Harwood, 2003), conversational topics in the relationship (Lin et al., 2002; Webb, 1985), the importance of relational maintenance communication in the relationship (Folwell & Grant, 2006; Mansson, Myers, & Turner, 2010), and technology use in the relationship (Harwood, 2000a; Holladay & Seipke, 2007; Hurme, Westerback, & Quadrello 2010). Of importance here are the latter two; I discuss these in further detail below.

Folwell and Grant (2006) argued "both close and distant GP-GC relationships require attention and relational maintenance if they are to become closer over time; otherwise, the relationships may deteriorate as the years go by" (p. 16). This is especially poignant because as grandchildren mature through life from children to young adults, parental influence on GP-GC contact progressively declines across these stages (Geurts et al., 2009); thus, grandchildren gain more responsibility for maintaining relationships with their grandparents. Further, once adolescents mature into young adults, they often move from their nuclear home to establish more independent lives (Hodgson, 1992). These transitions often increase the geographic distance that separates them from their grandparents, reducing opportunities for frequent face-to-face contact. Thus, as grandchildren age, relational maintenance becomes an important factor in sustaining geographically separated GP-GC relationships.

Despite the need for relational maintenance, Silverstein and Marengo (2001) noted that the frequency of interaction between grandparents and their grandchildren might decline as grandchildren age. In opposition to these claims, however, Hodgson (1992) determined that many young adult grandchildren remain in close contact with their grandparents, despite typical constraints of going to school, having a job, and starting a family. Furthermore, Hodgson (1992) argued that the strength that characterized the relationship while grandchildren were young continues well on into grandchildren's adult lives. Additionally, Mansson et al. (2010)

determined that young adult grandchildren engage in relational maintenance behaviors (e.g., positivity, conflict management, and task maintenance) to help sustain their relationships with their grandparents.

The conclusions of Hodgson (1992) and Mansson et al. (2010) indicate that young adults engage in close contact with their grandparents and enact relational maintenance behaviors as they transition to adults. Although scholars (Folwell & Grant, 2006; Mansson et al. 2010) have noted the importance of relationship maintenance in sustaining GP-GC relationships, few researchers have examined how relational maintenance communication occurs in the GP-GC dyad. Among those who have, they have noted the importance of technology use in maintaining GP-GC relationships (Holladay & Seipke, 2007).

Technology use in GP-GC Relationships

Holladay and Seipke (2007) stressed the importance of technological mediums in grandparent relationships with young adult grandchildren, as many GP-GC relationships are characterized by geographic separation; therefore, technology becomes the most appropriate way to engage in communication. Thus, Holladay and Seipke (2007) argued that technological mediums of communication (e.g., telephone or email) supplement face-to-face communication and serve as a means to maintain the GP-GC relationship. Harwood and Lin (2000) noted the importance of technology in relationship maintenance, citing the telephone as a key channel for maintenance in the GP-GC relationship.

Despite the noted importance of communication technology in maintaining the GP-GC relationship, Harwood (2000a) stated, "studies of communication media use in personal relationships are rare" (p. 59). This is especially true for research that examines the use of multiple media in interpersonal relationships (Harwood, 2000a). The limited research available

investigating mediated communication use in the GP-GC relationship has maintained three areas of focus: assessing frequency of technology use, assessing satisfaction with technology use, and assessing the correlation between relational quality and frequency of technology use.

Concerning frequency of technology use in GP-GC relationships, Harwood (2000a) and Holladay and Seipke (2007) have noted grandparents' communication with their young adult grandchildren is occurring more frequently through telephone and email communication as opposed to face-to-face contact. Furthermore, Holladay and Seipke (2007) discovered grandparents view email as a useful communication option and engage in email communication more often than face-to-face communication; nevertheless, telephone communication still surpasses both email and face-to-face communication. Despite these variations in use, grandparent satisfaction with communication does not change according to communication channel (i.e., telephone, face to face, email).

While several researchers have posited that an increase in distance between grandparents and their grandchildren will subsequently lead to an increase in telephone and email communication, research has failed to support this hypothesis. For example, Holladay and Seipke (2007) determined that geographical distance did not influence the frequency of telephone or email communications. Harwood (2000a), on the other hand, discovered an inverse relationship between geographic distance and telephone usage; as distance increased between grandparents and their grandchildren, contact by telephone decreased, supporting assertions by others that geographic distance decreases contact in the GP-GC relationship (Folwell & Grant, 2006; Harwood & Lin, 2000; Hodgson, 1992; Holladay et al., 1998; McKay & Caverly, 2004).

Hurme et al. (2010) uncovered similar findings to Harwood (2000a), determining that an increase in distance correlates to fewer landline and mobile phone communications as well as

fewer instances of text-messaging. Alternatively, an increase in distance relates to an increase in written communication, such as letters and cards (Hurme et al., 2010). Hurme et al. (2010) posited that the decrease in telephone communication may be financially motivated; however, the decrease in text messaging, as the price is not influenced by distance, may be related to the nature of text messaging as a practical means of communication.

Despite the findings of an inverse relationship between telephone communication and distance, both Harwood (2000a) and Hurme et al. (2010) have maintained the position that mediated communication has the potential to overcome geographic distance that separates many GP-GC dyads, especially as grandparents use these mediums more frequently to communicate with their young adult grandchildren than face-to-face communication (Harwood, 2000a). Therefore, as Holladay and Seipke (2007) noted, leaner media (i.e., media channels that are limited in the amount of cues they can send), such as telephone and email communication, may play a larger role in maintaining geographically separated GP-GC relationships. This becomes more apparent as grandparents and young adult grandchildren who have a high level of relational closeness also have a higher frequency of media use across various technological mediums, including telephone, email, and written communication (Harwood, 2000a; Holladay & Seipke, 2007).

While relational closeness can influence the frequency of communication technology usage within the GP-GC relationship, communication technology can also contribute to the satisfaction of the GP-GC relationship, as such technologies compensate for a lack of face-to-face communication (Holladay & Seipke, 2007). Therefore, these mediums may be used as tools to develop a shared relational understanding in a relationship characterized by infrequent face-to-face contact (Harwood, 2000a), contributing to their ability to enhance the quality of the

relationship even though such communication technologies are seen as “lean” mediums (Harwood, 2000a; Holladay & Seipke, 2007). This reinforces Holladay and Seipke's (2007) statement: “grandparents can experience a high level of relational quality without extensive face-to-face interaction, the richest media” (p. 292). Therefore, in the context of the GP-GC dyad, traditionally lean mediums may not be as deficient as put forth by the assumptions in media richness theory (Harwood, 2000a; Holladay & Seipke, 2007).

Despite scholars’ efforts to examine technology usage in the GP-GC dyad, the research has focused on few communication channels. As discussed above, the primary investigative focus of technologically mediated communication in the GP-GC relationship has included the examination of telephone and email communication (Harwood, 2000a; Holladay & Seipke, 2007; Hurme et al., 2010), and other forms of written communication such as cards and letters (Harwood, 2000a; Hurme et al., 2010). Only one study has added to this area of examination by including text messaging (Hurme et al., 2010); thus, numerous other new technologies have been excluded from examination, including the widely popular social networking site, Facebook. In this study, I expand the technological area of examination in GP-GC relationships to include a more thorough examination into grandparents' uses of text messaging and Facebook as a means to communicate with their young adult grandchildren. While Facebook and text messaging have been vastly understudied in the GP-GC relationship and the older adult population in general, literature available on young adult uses of these mediums and on their influence in the nuclear family provide some insight into the potential importance of these technologies within the GP-GC dyad.

Facebook: Young Adult Usage, Popularity, and the Older Adult Population

Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>) is an online social networking site that was launched in 2004 for college students (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011). Access to the site was initially restricted to Harvard students (i.e., the location where Facebook was created) and then expanded to include members of other universities (boyd & Ellison, 2007). Following its release to the general public in 2005 (boyd & Ellison, 2007), Facebook quickly became one of the most popular online social networking sites (Cheung et al., 2011), boasting 901 million active monthly users at the end of March 2012 (Facebook, 2012). The company explains that people use Facebook "to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them" (Facebook, 2012, para. 1). Facebook offers several functional services that enhance its attraction to users: email messaging, networking, photo and video sharing, and other functions such as gaming. In addition to these features, each user's profile has a "wall" through which their Facebook "friends" (i.e., people who the Facebook user is connected to) can leave messages. Furthermore, each profile on the site is equipped with a "News Feed," which provides updates of the Facebook activity of a user's networked friends (Cheung et al., 2011).

Due to the popularity of Facebook among social network users, particularly with young adults and adolescents, researchers have taken an interest in understanding communicative and relational aspects involved in Facebook. Urista, Dong, and Day (2008) explored young adults' reasons for using social networking sites, specifically Myspace and Facebook. Using focus groups with undergraduate students, these researchers discovered that these two social networking sites offer students a convenient means for maintaining relationships with geographically distant family and friends at a communicative rate desirable to the individual (i.e.,

the ability to respond when convenient). This is reflective of the findings of Reich, Subrahmanyam, and Espinoza (2012) as well, who found that young adults and adolescents with social networking profiles are motivated to use them to stay in touch with friends and relatives.

In addition to young adults and adolescents' use of social networking sites, in particular Facebook, to communicate with friends and relatives, Waters and Ackerman (2011) determined that young adults perceived Facebook offered a means of communication that actually improved their relationships with friends and family members. As Waters and Ackerman (2011) stated, "individuals using Facebook to disclose felt this helped them better manage relationships and improve their own psychological well-being" (p. 111). Hence, connecting with others is not the only benefit Facebook offers to its users, but it also offers a means to improve those relationships through self-disclosure.

Through the literature on Facebook usage with young adults and adolescents, it is clear that Facebook offers a valuable means of communication with others that results in positive relational outcomes. Nonetheless, while Facebook has typically been studied with the young adult and adolescent populations (Brandtzaeg, Luders, & Skjetne, 2010), it is important to note that demographic user statistics of social networking sites indicate that older adult usage is on the rise (Madden, 2010). According to Madden (2010), "social networking use among Internet users ages 50 and older nearly doubled—from 22% in April 2009 to 42% in May 2010" (para. 1). Specifically, users between the ages of 50-64 increased by 88%, from 25% in 2009 to 47% in 2010. Those individuals aged over 65 increased over 100% in usership, from 13% in 2009 to 26% in 2010. Madden (2010) noted that the increase in older adult usage of social networking during this period outpaced the growth of young adult users.

Madden (2010) posited that the increase in older adult usage on social networking sites could be a result of their desire to reconnect with others from the past, to seek social support from others, and to bridge a generational gap. As Madden (2010) suggested,

There are few other spaces—online or offline—where tweens, teens, sandwich generation members, grandparents, friends and neighbors regularly intersect and communicate across the same network. Photos, videos and updates shared on a daily basis can provide a valuable connection to faraway family and friends who are tied together in a variety of ways. The children and grandchildren of older adults are documenting many aspects of their lives through social media, and these are also becoming popular spaces for professional networking, continuing education, and political participation. (para. 24)

Thus, as older adults begin to use Facebook and other social networking sites, researchers should strive to understand how their usage behavior compares to those of the younger cohorts. One group of researchers from Norway has started this endeavor, documenting several differences between younger and older users' usage behaviors (Brandtzaeg et al., 2010).

Brandtzaeg et al. (2010) sought to uncover the differences between younger and older people (ages 16-33 and 40-64, respectively) in terms of sociability, content sharing, and privacy concerns in regards to people's use of Facebook. Of particular concern here are their findings on comparisons of the age groups' sociability uses, which indicated that both younger and older users use Facebook to keep in contact with extended family. However, of noted differences between the generations is that for younger adults, use of Facebook seems to first be a means of communicating with friends, while for older adults, Facebook is often initiated as a means to contact and keep in touch with family. Importantly, older adults' uses of Facebook often extended to connect with old and current friends after prolonged use of the social networking site.

Thus, as research has indicated, it is apparent that older adults are increasingly using social networking sites to maintain contacts with family and friends. Despite this knowledge, few

researchers have focused their attention on this growing population of Facebook users. Instead, most research predominately focuses on the younger adult and adolescent population, highlighting the importance of Facebook in maintaining and supporting younger individuals' relationships. Due to the importance of Facebook with younger adults and adolescents, and the growing population of older adult users, Facebook may become an important means in maintaining the grandparent-grandchild relationship. In addition to the use of Facebook in maintaining the GP-GC relationship, text messaging may also serve as a convenient means to keep the younger and older generations connected due to the high accessibility and popularity of this technological medium among the youth and young adult populations and its growing presence in family communication.

Text Messaging: Young Adult Usage, Popularity, and Family Communication

Longmate and Baber (2002, as cited in Harley, Winn, Pemberton, & Wilcox, 2007) noted that cell phone usage, particularly text messaging, has become the prime communication medium among undergraduate students. Harley et al. (2007) further reiterated this assertion in their study, discovering that undergraduate students preferred text messaging to voice calling, often because of the asynchronous characteristics text messaging affords. These undergraduate students used text messaging as a means to stay connected to friends and family, as well as to receive and maintain social and emotional support networks. The popularity of text messaging among the youth and young adults creates important implications for family communication, as parents and other older family members can use this medium to communicate with their children and younger relatives.

Few researchers have examined the use of the cell phone in family connections. Christensen (2009) and Stern and Messer (2009) argued that the cell phone is an important

communication tool in the management and maintenance of family relations, especially in distant family relations. Furthermore, Wei and Lo (2006) asserted that cell phone usage can strengthen bonds between family members, as it can supplement the role the telephone plays in the relationship maintenance of family members and social contacts.

One important aspect of the cellular phone in maintaining and strengthening familial relationships is its ability to foster closeness and a sense of presence among the communicators. According to Christensen (2009), who examined both cell phone voice calling and text messaging in the nuclear family, intra-familial communication via these mediums "contributes to the creation of a general sense of closeness between family members while they are physically separated" (p. 437). The families in Christensen's study used the cell phone for both instrumental and expressive uses (e.g., micro-coordination and sharing experiences, respectively); both type of uses created a sense of "presence" that countered the physical separation between the members within the family.

While little research exists on the use of cell phone technology, especially text messaging, in family communication, the literature available indicates that cell phones can be an important medium to keep families connected. This is even more pertinent for families that are separated, such as grandparents who are geographically separated from their grandchildren. The cell phone (through voice calls and text messaging) can enable family members to feel a "connected presence" to their loved ones (Christensen, 2009).

Research Questions

Due to the potential importance of Facebook and text messaging in maintaining GP-GC communication, further attention should focus on how grandparents use these technologies with their grandchildren. While Harwood (2000a) and Hurme et al. (2010) briefly examined text

messaging in the GP-GC relationship, no scholars have examined Facebook in this relationship. Furthermore, most studies examining the use of technology in the GP-GC dyad have been approached from a quantitative perspective. These studies have provided an important descriptive understanding of the frequency of select media usages in the GP-GC relationship and the relevant factors that predict higher or lower uses of certain mediums, but have failed to illuminate the depth of the influence of technology on GP-GC relationships. Therefore, I expand the current research concerning GP-GC technology usage by conducting a qualitative exploratory study of grandparents' uses of Facebook and text messaging in their relationships with their young adult grandchildren.

The first area in need of attention concerns how grandparents use text messaging and Facebook to communicate with their grandchildren. Harwood (2000a) noted that one area that has lacked examination in GP-GC technology use is an understanding of the content communicated via various mediated channels. As Harwood (2000a) put forth, it is necessary to "examine the 'what' of communication in tandem with the 'how'" (p. 71); in other words, it is necessary to examine the content of communication in connection with the medium used to communicate. Harwood and Lin (2000) highlighted the importance of examining both "what" and "how," as they noted the telephone, while a significant communication medium used to maintain contact in the GP-GC relationship, engendered frustration with some grandparents as the topics discussed with their grandchildren via telephone lacked intimacy, equating to mostly small talk. Therefore, understanding the content communicated across Facebook and text messaging in the GP-GC relationship will lead to a better understanding of the nature and function of media within the GP-GC dyad (Holladay & Seipke, 2007). Further, such an understanding will illuminate the degree of content intimacy exchanged across these two

mediums (Harwood, 2000a) and underscore the role of these mediums in maintaining quality interaction. Therefore, based on the research voids noted thus far, I ask:

RQ1a: For what purposes do older adult grandparents use text messaging to communicate with their young adult grandchildren?

RQ1b: For what purposes do older adult grandparents use Facebook to communicate with their young adult grandchildren?

In addition to assessing the “what” and “how” of Facebook and text messaging as a means to provide a more holistic description of mediated communication in maintaining the GP-GC relationship, current research would also benefit from understanding grandparents' motivations for choosing these mediums to communicate with their young adult grandchildren. This coincides with Harwood's (2000a) suggestion that “the choice to use one media over the other may be impacted by, or may itself influence, the nature of the relationship” (p. 71). Thus, I ask:

RQ2a: What are grandparents' motivations for using text messaging to communicate with young adult grandchildren?

RQ2b: What are grandparents' motivations for using Facebook to communicate with young adult grandchildren?

Finally, it is important to understand grandparent' perceptions of Facebook and text messaging as a means to communicate with their grandchildren. According to media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Walther, 1992), the use of lean mediums to communicate decreases the quality of communication within relationships. However, while people often assume that face-to-face communication will receive higher satisfaction ratings than technologically mediated communication, the results of Holladay and Seipke's (2007) study

indicated no satisfaction differences among communication channels (i.e., face-to-face, email, and telephone). To explain this finding, Holladay and Seipke (2007) posited that grandparents have adapted to their communication situation, and thus adjusted their expectations accordingly. A qualitative analysis exploring grandparent's perceptions of the various mediated communication employed in their relationships with their grandchildren will provide a more definitive answer to solve this confounding relationship. Therefore, I ask:

RQ3a: What are grandparents' perceptions of text messaging as a means to communicate with their young adult grandchildren?

RQ3b: What are grandparents' perceptions of Facebook as a means to communicate with their young adult grandchildren?

These three questions have been formulated based on a relevant review of the literature and provide the foundation for this study. In this chapter, I have described the nature of the GP-GC relationship, described the importance of communication in maintaining the GP-GC relationship, and specified how grandparents and grandchildren use technology as a means to stay in contact with one another. In the following chapter, I delineate the methodology used to explore these research questions.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

To better understand how grandparents use text messaging and Facebook in relationships with their young adult grandchildren, I conducted a qualitative exploratory study of grandparents' technology uses in the grandparent-grandchild (GP-GC) relationship. Through interviews with grandparents of young adult grandchildren, I gained insight into grandparents' purposes for using text messaging and Facebook to communicate with their young adult grandchildren, their motivations for using these technologies, and their perceptions of using these mediums. In this chapter, I outline the methodological approach to this study, including a detailed description of participants, recruitment and data collection procedures, and data analysis methods.

Participants

Grandparent Demographics

Twenty-three participants were recruited for this study; 12 participants were interviewed for using text messaging with their young adult grandchildren and 11 participants were interviewed for using Facebook. Nineteen participants in this study were female and four participants were male; participants' ages ranged from 58 to 82, with an average age of 68. Sixteen participants identified as Caucasian (69.57%), four identified as African American (17.39%), two identified as Hispanic (8.70%), and one identified as mixed ethnicity (4.35%). Nine participants identified their highest education level as completing some college, six participants completed high school, three participants completed less than high school, two participants had bachelor's degrees, two participants had graduate degrees, and one participant completed the GED. For a breakdown of grandparent demographic information, please see Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Text Messaging Participant Demographics

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Education Level</i>
002	75	Male	Hispanic	Some College
005	82	Female	Caucasian	Some College
006	67	Female	Caucasian	Graduate Degree
014	68	Female	African American	Some College
015	72	Female	African American	GED
016	59	Female	African American	High School
017	76	Male	Caucasian	High School
018	82	Male	Caucasian	High School
019	67	Female	Caucasian	Some College
020	68	Female	Caucasian	bachelor's Degree
022	62	Female	Caucasian	Some College
023	66	Female	African American	Some College

Table 2

Facebook Participant Demographics

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Education Level</i>
001	58	Female	Caucasian	High School
003	73	Female	Hispanic	High School
004	67	Female	Caucasian	High School
007	73	Male	Caucasian	Some College
008	70	Female	Caucasian	Less than H. S.
009	64	Female	Caucasian	Some college
010	62	Female	Other	Graduate Degree
011	58	Female	Caucasian	Less than H.S.
012	65	Female	Caucasian	Less than H.S.
013	66	Female	Caucasian	Some College
021	70	Female	Caucasian	bachelor's Degree

Grandchildren Demographics

Following identification of personal demographic information, participants were asked to identify the number of grandchildren they had between the ages of 16 and 25. Responses ranged from one to 10, with an average response of five grandchildren within this age range. The grandparent participants in this study were asked to focus the interview on the young adult

grandchild they used text messaging or Facebook with the most. Of the young adult grandchildren grandparents focused on, 15 of the grandchildren were female and 8 were male. The grandchildren ages ranged from 16 to 25, with an average age of 21.

Relational Information

Of the grandchildren chosen, 15 grandparents identified their relationship to their grandchild as maternal (13 maternal grandmothers and 2 maternal grandfathers), while 7 grandparents identified a paternal grandparent relationship (4 paternal grandmothers, 1 paternal grandfather, 2 paternal step grandmothers, and 1 paternal step grandfather). Even though several of the grandparents in this study identified themselves as a step grandparent, they all described close relations to their grandchild and many indicated that they were the only grandmother or grandfather their grandchildren knew from the maternal or paternal side of the family. Hence, while these grandparents may not be related to their grandchildren genetically, they fulfilled the grandparent role throughout most of the life of the specified grandchild.

Grandparents were also asked to identify the distance separating them from their chosen grandchild. Ten grandparents identified a distance of less than 50 miles, five grandparents identified a distance ranging between 100 and 200 miles, one grandparent specified a distance between 200 and 300 miles, two grandparents specified a distance between 800 and 900 miles, and five grandparents indicated more than 1000 miles of separation. Of the 12 grandparents who used text messaging to communicate with their grandchildren, three specified they used text messaging every other day, four indicated they use it at least twice a week, two specified once a week, one specified every other week, and two specified at least once a month. For those who used Facebook ($n = 11$), five specified that they used the technology daily, four indicated every

other day, one indicated once a week, and one indicated twice a week. For a breakdown of grandparent and grandchild relational information, please see Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3

Text Messaging Grandchildren Demographics and Relational Information

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Distance (miles)</i>	<i>TM Comm. Frequency</i>
002	21	Female	Paternal GF	0 - 50	Twice a Week
005	24	Female	Maternal GM	1000 +	Once a Month
006	25	Male	Step Paternal GM	800 - 900	Once a Month
014	22	Female	Paternal GM	0 - 50	Every Other Day
015	20	Female	Maternal GM	0 - 50	Twice a Week
016	21	Male	Maternal GM	0 - 50	Twice a Week
017	19	Male	Step Paternal GF	100 - 200	Every Other Day
018	21	Male	Maternal GF	100 - 200	Once a Week
019	24	Female	Maternal GM	1000 +	Once a Week
020	19	Female	Maternal GM	0 - 50	Twice a Month
022	23	Female	Maternal GM	0 - 50	Every Other Day
023	21	Male	Maternal GM	1000 +	Twice a Week

Table 4

Facebook Grandchildren Demographics and Relational Information

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Distance (miles)</i>	<i>FB Comm. Frequency</i>
001	17	Male	Step Paternal GM	100 - 200	Every Other Day
003	21	Female	Paternal GM	0 - 50	Once A Week
004	22	Female	Maternal GM	1000 +	Daily
007	22	Female	Maternal GF	0 - 50	Every Other Day
008	20	Female	Paternal GM	100 - 200	Every Other Day
009	21	Female	Maternal GM	100 - 200	Every Other Day
010	17	Female	Maternal GM	1000 +	Daily
011	16	Male	Maternal GM	0 - 50	Daily
012	20	Male	Maternal GM	200 - 300	Daily
013	17	Female	Paternal GM	0 - 50	Twice A Week
021	24	Female	Maternal GM	800 - 900	Daily

Recruitment

Participants in this study were recruited based on a purposeful sampling method using the

following established criteria: grandparents must use either Facebook or text messaging to communicate with their young adult grandchildren (ages 16 to 25) at least once a month. To recruit grandparents for this study, I followed several methods. First, I publicized my topic of research to acquaintances to gain referrals for participants who fit the criteria for this study. If my acquaintances knew a person who fit the study criteria, they asked the person if he or she would be willing to participate in the study and then forwarded me contact information to set up an interview date and time if the person agreed to be interviewed. Through this convenience sampling method, I acquired six participants.

In addition to publicizing my research to acquaintances, two communication studies courses offered extra credit to students who recruited participants for this study. Students were informed of the study criteria and upon successful recruitment of a study participant, received extra credit in the designated course. In order to receive extra credit, students had to contact a grandparent who fit the study requirements and ask them if they would be willing to participate in a study exploring how they use Facebook or text messaging to communicate with their young adult grandchildren. If grandparents agreed, then students forwarded me the contact information for the grandparent so I could set up an interview date and time. Because not all students may have known someone who fit the study criteria, several other extra credit opportunities were offered in each course that students received extra credit. This method of recruitment resulted in 17 participants, for a total of 23 participants.

Data Collection Procedures

To address my research questions, I conducted one-on-one interviews with grandparents of young adult grandchildren. All interviews were conducted via the telephone.

The interviews consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions with noted follow-up questions as necessary to obtain information about grandparents' uses of text messaging or Facebook to communicate with their grandchildren, their motives for using those technologies, and their perceptions of these mediums in the relationship. Lindlof (1995) identified that qualitative interviews are appropriate to gauge a person's perspectives and experiences and that they allow the researcher to access the "subjective realities" of participants (p. 163), thus making the qualitative interview a prime choice of method for this study.

Prior to conducting the interview, I reviewed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) consent document with each participant and informed participants about the purpose of the study, the risks associated with the project, their rights as participants in this study, and the confidentiality measures taken for this study. Following review of the IRB consent form and study details, I gained verbal consent from each participant to go forward with the interview. All participants agreed to be interviewed and to the terms of the IRB consent form. After gaining participants' agreements to continue with the interviews, I asked each participant if I could audio-record the interview. All but one participant agreed to have the interview audio-recorded; the one participant who declined indicated she had several privacy concerns about a permanent recording.

The interviews began with an inquiry into basic demographic information of each participant, including age, gender, race, and level of education. Following assessment of this information, participants were asked to identify the number of grandchildren they had between the ages of 16 and 25. To help streamline the interview, grandparents were told to focus their attention during the interview on the grandchild they use the specified technology (i.e., Facebook or text messaging) with the most. Once grandparents chose a grandchild to focus on during the

interview, I asked each grandparent the age and gender of the chosen grandchild and whether the relationship to that grandchild was maternal or paternal.

Following obtainment of demographic information, I followed a semi-structured, open-ended interview protocol (see Appendices A and B) to obtain information about grandparents' purposes for using text messaging or Facebook in their relationships with their young adult grandchildren, their motivations for using this technology to communicate with their grandchildren, and their perceptions of using this technology within the GP-GC relationship. Each interview protocol (one for text messaging and one for Facebook) consisted of eleven open-ended questions to address these concerns. Relevant follow-up questions and probing questions were used when appropriate throughout the interviews and to clarify understanding. The duration of interviews ranged from 12 minutes to 56 minutes, with an average of 21 minutes.

Data Analysis

Following the interview process, I transcribed the 22 audio-recorded interviews and compiled them into two documents, each document based on whether grandparents used text messaging or Facebook to communicate with their young adult grandchildren. The resulting data yielded 64 pages of single-spaced transcription for grandparents who use Facebook and 85 pages of single-spaced transcription for grandparents who use text messaging (a total of 149 pages of single-spaced transcription). For one of the recorded interviews, the audio-recording equipment malfunctioned and failed to record the first 10 minutes of the interview. Fortunately during this interview, I was taking hand written notes and therefore did not lose the main ideas of the participant's response to the interview questions. For the one participant who requested not to be audio-recorded, I electronically took notes throughout the interview, resulting in two pages of single-spaced notes.

Following transcription and prior to analysis, I read through each transcript to gain a better understanding of the data. During the initial read through, I documented theoretical notes and potential code categories. Once I gained a more thorough understanding of the data, I engaged in Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded theory method of analysis. This method of analysis is an inductive method that highlights categories that emerge from the data. According to Crooks (2001), grounded theory is ideal for areas of social interaction that have received little examination, making this analytic approach appropriate for exploring grandparents' uses of Facebook and text messaging. Grounded theory involves several coding processes, including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

During the open coding process, each interview transcript is coded line-by-line to identify "simple, concrete, and topical categories" among the data (Lindlof, 1995, p. 220). Adhering to the open coding process outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990), I created initial topical categories by breaking down, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing the data from each interview. During this process, categories can emerge through In-vivo coding as well, which occurs when the language participants use become the coded concepts. While identifying and labeling these initial categories, I simultaneously engaged in a comparative process of the data with other emerging concepts to ensure proper categorical fit. During open coding, one of the primary goals is to create as many categories as possible. The open coding process yielded 38 open coded categories for the research questions addressing grandparents' uses of Facebook and 42 open coded categories for the research questions addressing grandparents' uses of text messaging. Following the open coding process, I engaged in axial coding to connect and integrate the initial categories.

Through axial coding, categories transform from "mere collections of coded incidents into constructs" (Lindlof, 1995, p. 224), resulting in categories that encompass the connections between the initial topical categories established in the open-coding process. I used the three research questions for grandparents' uses of Facebook and text messaging to guide the axial coding process and to ensure that emergent categories were within scope of the project. To begin the axial coding process, I analyzed the 38 open codes for Facebook and 42 open codes for text messaging separately to determine the categories in which these codes could collapse. Open codes that did not relate to the research questions were eliminated from analysis.

During axial coding, the open codes for Facebook were collapsed into seven categories and the open codes for text messaging were collapsed into six categories. For grandparents' uses of text messaging, the following categories emerged as relevant to the research questions and to the development of a theory: relational communication, task communication, text messaging is not-for, grandchild as motivator, bittersweet acceptance, and bridging the distance. For grandparents' uses of Facebook, the following seven categories emerged and were relevant to the formation of an explanative theory: lurking, active Facebook engagement, "guarded" communication, grandchild as motivator, convenience, limits "Cookie Jar Grandma," and satisfied nonetheless. These categories are further discussed in the results sections for grandparents' uses of text messaging and Facebook, chapters four and five respectively.

Following axial coding is the process of selective coding. Selective coding establishes a core theme through which all categories relate (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). When engaging in selective coding, one integrates the categories that were established during the axial coding process to create a theoretical framework. The core category established through the selective coding process represents the central idea of the data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) identify the

importance of establishing a core category, explaining that the core category has "analytic power" derived from "its ability to pull the other categories together to form an explanatory whole" (p. 104). Therefore, through identifying the core category, selective coding illustrates the interrelation of the categories established through axial coding.

For each set of data (i.e., grandparents uses of text messaging and Facebook), the central theme that emerged based on the categories for each research question concerned grandparents' accommodation to their young adult grandchildren's preferred communication style via the discussed technological medium (i.e., text messaging or Facebook). While this similar theme emerged across both sets of data, it manifested slightly differently amongst the two medium choices and to a lesser extent for grandparents' uses of Facebook than for their uses of text messaging. An expanded explanation of the central theme for each data set follows the description of the prominent categories for grandparents' uses of text messaging and their uses of Facebook in the results sections (Chapters 4 and 5).

Validation

While the nature of qualitative research lends itself to multiple interpretations, it is important to present those that are most plausible (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). The purpose of validating research is to verify a right interpretation. To ensure an accurate representation of participant experiences, I used the member validation method to confirm the results generated from data analysis. According to Lindlof and Taylor, member validation "means taking findings back to the field and determining whether the participants recognize them as true or accurate" (p. 279).

Following analysis of data, I contacted two research participants who willingly agreed during their interviews to review the findings of the study and ensure an accurate representation.

I provided each participant with the results section for the medium of contact in which they interviewed (i.e., text messaging or Facebook) via an attached document in an email. The results sections underscored the main categories generated from analysis, a description of each category, and relevant examples for each category. Due to an extraneous situation, one participant was unable to fully review the results section concerning grandparents' uses of text messaging and asked if I could send her an abridged version. I complied and sent her a shortened version of the corresponding categories and themes for each research question with a brief explanation, in addition to the explanation of the theoretical framework that emerged through the selective coding process.

Each participant was instructed to assess the interpretation for an accurate portrayal and to provide feedback concerning his or her assessment (both confirming and disconfirming feedback). To aid in their assessment of the results section and of my interpretation of participant responses, I highlighted the excerpts from each of the reviewers' interviews that were used in the results section. This enabled participant reviewers to check my interpretation of their own responses in addition to assessing the results of this study for an accurate portrayal of the grandparent experience using text messaging or Facebook to communicate with young adult grandchildren. Both participant reviewers indicated the description of results provided an accurate depiction of their experiences. Other additional feedback provided by the reviewers was discussed and has been incorporated into the study results section.

CHAPTER 4

THE GP-GC RELATIONSHIP AND TEXT MESSAGING

In this chapter, I delineate the results that emerged in relation to the research questions concerning grandparents' uses of text messaging with their young adult grandchildren and the emergent theoretical framework based on the prominent categories. A brief discussion specific to grandparents' uses of text messaging with their young adult grandchildren follows the results explained in this chapter.

The grounded theory analysis of grandparents' uses of text messaging with their young adult grandchildren resulted in 42 open coded categories. Through the axial coding process, these codes were condensed into six categories that addressed the three research questions concerning grandparents and text messaging. For Research Question 1a, three categories emerged: relational communication, task communication, and text messaging is not-for. For Research Question 2a, one category emerged: grandchild as motivator. For Research Question 3a, two categories emerged: bittersweet acceptance and bridging the distance. The following sections explain each of the six categories in relation to the research questions while highlighting relevant examples from participant responses. All names have been changed to maintain participant confidentiality. Following the explanation of each category, I describe the underlying central storyline that connects these categories and that forms the theoretical framework emergent from this data.

Research Question 1a

Research Question 1a asked, "For what purposes do older adult grandparents use text messaging to communicate with their young adult grandchildren?" Many grandparents identified that text messaging was more of a supplementary mode of communication with their

grandchildren; however, few did note how text messaging was increasingly becoming the primary mode of communication. Regardless of supplementary or main form of communication mode, grandparents identified similar notions about how they used text messaging with their grandchildren. Three categories concerning this research question were revealed through the grounded theory analysis: relational communication, task communication, and text messaging is not-for. Relational communication underscores what grandparents and grandchildren typically talk about through text messaging and how grandparents in this study used text messaging to perform relational maintenance with their grandchildren. Task communication demonstrates how grandparents in this study used text messaging to accomplish task-related endeavors. Finally, text messaging is not-for reveals how grandparents in this study do not use text messaging, underscoring the extent of their desired use. I discuss these three categories in further detail below.

Relational Updates

Based on the interviews, grandparents in this study used text messaging to perform relational maintenance with their young adult grandchildren often through checking on their grandchildren's wellbeing, letting their grandchildren know they are thinking of them, and staying updated on their grandchildren's lives. All of these themes helped grandparents stay updated on the lives of their grandchildren and offered grandparents an avenue to provide social support when needed; this allowed grandparents to maintain a sense of connection with their grandchildren and served as an important tool for relational maintenance in these grandparent-grandchild (GP-GC) relationships.

Checking wellbeing. A prominent theme connected to relational updates was grandparents' use of text messaging to check on their grandchild's wellbeing. Grandparents often

identified that they used text messaging to check on their grandchildren to see how they were doing. For example, when one participant was asked to talk about the things she and her grandchild talk about through text messaging, she responded:

I just say, "Hello Janet, I'm blessed today, how are you? Just checking on you. Bye!" That's what I usually say. She texts me back: "Oh I'm okay beautiful." She calls me beautiful. So that's just about what I text about, and if she's feeling you know yellow and stuff like that I'll text her more. See how she's doing. (Participant 015)

As this example demonstrates, through checking in on their grandchildren via text messaging, grandparents are able to offer important social support to their grandchildren if needed. Thus, through text messaging, grandparents can maintain what Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) identified as a fundamental grandparenting role: the nurturer. Block (2002) explained that emotional and social support becomes fundamental to the nurturing grandparent role when grandchildren reach adolescent and young adult life stages. Thus, text messaging is an avenue that allows grandparents to continue to perform this role as nurturer when they are separated from their grandchildren.

Based on the responses of grandparents in this study, checks on their grandchildren's wellbeing was not limited to emotion or health, but also included inquiries about the grandchild's grades in school and their spiritual well-being. For example, one grandmother explained: "I asked how his grades and how are things going with him – is he eating right you know, is he sleeping good, stuff like that" (Participant 023). Another grandmother stated, "and I have always - of course as a grandparent, checking on their church attendance" (Participant 019). By inquiring about school and church in particular and checking on their grandchildren's wellbeing in these areas, these grandparents are creating the opportunity to serve another grandparent role: the role-model (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). This opportunity allows grandparents to

encourage their grandchildren to enact good behavior and make good choices concerning school and church.

Interestingly, while most grandparents identified that they often ask how their grandchildren are doing, one grandfather approached the topic from the opposite direction and claimed that he and his grandson often talk about his own wellbeing. The following excerpt from our conversation demonstrated this subtle difference:

P: He just checks in with me really, I guess, just to let me know how he is and to see how I am I suppose because he knows me and momma uh have some health issues here and there...

I: Uh hmm...

P: ...but he just checks in with us to see how we're doing. (Participant 018)

On the contrary to other participants, this grandfather rarely initiated conversation with his grandson via text messaging; this underscores the slight difference in conversation focus. In this particular situation, this participant's grandson would always text him around the same time on Wednesday evening of every week. Despite the minor difference in conversation focus, the notion of wellbeing is still an essential component to their conversation. In this particular instance, the grandchild may become a prime means for social support to his grandfather.

Overall, it is through these checks on wellbeing that grandparents can fulfill their nurturing roles and offer emotional and social support to their grandchildren when needed. Grandparents also emphasized their intimate connection to their grandchildren when they sent them messages that conveyed they were thinking of their grandchildren.

Thinking of you. In many instances, grandparents noted the importance of letting their grandchildren know they were on their mind. One grandmother stated, "I always just like to know and let them know that we love them and are thinking about them always" (Participant

019). Furthermore, one participant indicated, "It's just, that I, like I said before...I can let her know with without her expecting, not having to talk a whole lot to me that I'm thinking about her..." (Participant 022). Rettie (2006) argued small messages that indicate the sender, in this case a grandparent, is thinking of the recipient, his or her grandchild, foster a sense of connectedness among the dyad. Furthermore, Rettie noted that, "text messages are near-synchronous; this means that the recipient knows the other party is thinking of them at *that* particular time, creating a feeling of a shared present" (p. 4). Thus, text messaging has the ability to foster feelings of connectedness, despite the distance that may separate grandparent and grandchild, through these small thoughtful messages.

Several other grandparents noted the importance of sending these messages, as one grandmother stated, "Well it's just one way. It's not as personal, as like talking on the phone. But it's still a way to keep in touch in a very quick way. And know that we're thinking of each other, which is so important" (Participant 005). As this grandmother noted, it is a quick way to let her granddaughter know she is thinking about her. This notion of text messaging allowing for a quick way to maintain relational contact with these grandparents' loved ones was often noted by other grandparents and reflects Rettie's (2006) explanation of the low inconvenience text messaging causes in the lives of those sending the message and in the lives of those receiving the message. As one participant noted, "It's just a contact of hey, I'm thinking about you, you know, what's going on, that type of thing, rather than just making a big, uh...you know, a big phone call" (Participant 022). A phone call would commit these interactants into a longer conversation, and is thus more demanding of time and attention; however, it is not necessary to just let person know they are on someone's mind. Thus, grandparents often used text messaging to convey small tokens of affection, such as letting their grandchildren know they were on their mind.

Life updates. In addition to using text messaging as a means to check on wellbeing and to let their grandchildren know they were on their minds, grandparents in this study also used the medium to learn about their grandchildren's daily life activities. The topics of conversation under this theme of "life updates" reflect many of the conversation topics Lin, Harwood, and Bonnesen (2002) documented in their study on GP-GC communication. According to Lin et al. (2002), grandparents and grandchildren often focus conversations on social activity talk, work and school, impersonal events, and family relationships, and these patterns of communication serve to sustain the GP-GC relationship. Many grandparents in this study, when questioned about what they typically discuss through text messaging, noted they often talk about the events or activities their grandchildren participate in from the day to day. For example, one grandmother highlighted the following when asked about the things she and her grandson discuss through text messaging: "Oh...work. He has recently moved, so the logistics of finding a new place to live has been paramount lately. School...umm...you know, education. What he's doing...mainly just lifestyle things" (Participant 006). Thus, catching up on the life events of their grandchildren seems to be of prime importance in these texting conversations.

In many instances, as one grandfather noted, the conversation amounts to a type of "small talk" that serves to keep the grandparents engaged in their grandchildren's lives as grandchildren and grandparents "catch up" with each other. Participant 017 noted this type of "small talk" when discussing the things he and his grandson discuss: "Well sometimes he might just be telling me things that he's been doing or somewhere he's fixing to go to a band concert of something of that nature. It generally deals with business but sometimes it's just small talk." In this case, the "small talk" described serves an important function to maintain the grandparents' connections to their grandchildren. While some may see "small talk" as non-important in terms of relationships,

Licoppe and Smoreda (2005) noted that this type of communication actually serves a strong purpose by keeping people in touch, despite the limited content that is communicated. This reflects what Drew and Chilton (2000, as cited in Coupland, 2003) noted in their assessment of small talk: small talk can create a "copresence" for individuals across distance.

In addition to creating a sense of "copresence," small talk functions to validate existing relationships (Knutson & Ayers, 1986). Small talk can be a means to confirm relationships as members in the interaction express interest in each other's activities. Knutson and Ayers (1986) documented that small talk also validates relationships through support or encouragement, which several grandparents conveyed during the interviews. One grandmother provided a prime example of this type of supporting small talk when discussing what she and her granddaughter converse about: "And she'll text me about her running. And I text her back when she's you know, won a ribbon and say 'way to go' and 'congratulations' and...whenever she texts me something special's happen" (Participant 005). Thus, not only is the this type of small talk important for keeping grandparents connected to their grandchildren and staying involved in their lives, but it also serves as an avenue for grandparents to encourage and support their grandchildren's activities, allowing them to once again engage in the nurturing grandparent role (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981).

On several occasions, grandparents noted that the small talk about life updates did not solely relate to their grandchildren's life, but also extended to other family members. As one grandmother noted, she and her granddaughter used text messaging to discuss relationships "with other family members" (Participant 022). In many of these instances, the grandchildren or grandparent served as gatekeepers for information about other family members. For example, one grandfather depicted his granddaughter in the role of gatekeeper when he stated:

Sometimes I'll say "hey have you heard from your dad?" and she'll say yes and you know sometimes my – I don't uhh I don't hear from my son and we – we're pretty close knit, you know, we – I keep in touch with all my kids. Uh at the very minimum you know I speak to each one of them on the phone you know every week. So if I don't hear from one of them you know I kinda – I might ask her have you spoken to your dad – is your dad doing ok? (Participant 002)

Another participant demonstrated himself as gatekeeper when he emphasized he tells his grandson about the wellbeing of his wife, his grandson's grandmother: "And I just update him on momma, his grandmother, um, you know, and how's she's doing" (Participant 018). Thus, the relational talk extends to other family relationships, placing the grandchild, or at times, the grandparent, in a position to reveal the knowledge they know about other family members.

Overall, relational updates emerged from checks on wellbeing, from messages that conveyed to the grandchildren they were in their grandparents' thoughts, and from life updates, often in the form of "small talk." In these instances, grandparents are given the opportunity to enact the grandparent role of nurturer, as they are able to provide support and encouragement for their grandchildren. Furthermore, text messaging helps grandparents stay connected to their grandchildren, and can potentially create a feeling of "copresence" (Drew & Chilton, 2000, as cited in Coupland, 2003) among them when they discuss their daily events and activities.

Task Communication

In addition to using text messaging for relational means, grandparents also used text messaging with their grandchildren to accomplish tasks. Task communication, for purposes here, is defined as communication used to accomplish an overt goal desired by one or both interactants in the conversation. This theme emerged through two primary ways: scheduling and discussing "business."

Scheduling. Grandparents in this study often used text messaging with their grandchildren for scheduling purposes, primarily to schedule phone calls and visits. For grandparents who lived

within reasonable driving distance from their grandchildren, they used text messaging as a means to inquire about when their grandchildren would visit them next, as one grandfather explained:

But a lot of times you know, it's just a matter of – uh – "are you gonna be coming this weekend?" She comes over pretty much every week. She comes over and does her washing and gets a couple of good meals. (Participant 002)

Several other grandparents noted a similar purpose, stating they often used text messaging to schedule dinners or other various outings with their grandchildren. This is reflected in one grandmother's explanation when she stated, "So we're often texting her to see if she wants to have dinner or do something with us" (Participant 020). Thus text messaging offered a means for goal-oriented conversation, either for scheduling home visits, dinners, or outings.

In addition to scheduling visits, grandparents also used text messaging to schedule phone calls with their grandchildren. For example, one grandmother explained the importance of text messaging for scheduling phone calls with her granddaughter: "She'll say call me at so and so time and I'll know when I can reach her. Or, she'll get my text and she knows my schedule, you know I'm on day, and she'll call me when she's up" (Participant 019). In this particular situation, the grandmother and granddaughter maintained different schedules across time zones; thus, the asynchronous nature of text messaging enabled the two individuals to coordinate their schedules and identify a desirable time for a phone conversation. Several other grandparents noted the importance of scheduling phone calls through text messaging due to the uncertainty of their grandchild's availability. One grandfather stated,

Rather than, rather than call her I don't know if she's working or not so I'll just text her, you know, and I'll say – if you – if you're not working or if you're not in class, you know, give me a call when you can (Participant 002)

Thus, as this grandfather explained, the uncertainty of his granddaughter's work and school schedule led him to use text messaging as a means to let her know to call him when she was

available. As grandparents indicated, their grandchildren would also use text messaging to see if they were available for a phone call, for example, one grandmother dictated: "But he would text me and say 'grandma what's up' and I'd text him back and say 'not much.' And then he'll call me" (Participant 023). Thus text messaging is an important tool for grandparents in this study to use for scheduling phone calls and visits with their grandchildren.

"Business." The name for this theme is an In-vivo code that emerged through a participant's identification of communication with his grandson through text as "business" oriented. "Business" communication is a task oriented communication because central to the communication is the objective to achieve a goal. While this theme did not dominate across all interviews, and is minor compared to the use of text messaging for scheduling purposes, it does provide alternative insight into how grandparents use text messaging with their grandchildren. A prime example of this theme occurred when one grandfather identified how he and his grandson typically use text messaging:

Well, generally when we text message, it's generally business. Like "I need money. (Laughs) or I need my car fixed." Once in a while they'll text me just to tell me they love me, but uh, it's generally some type of business, that they actually need help of some kind. (Participant 017)

As this grandfather indicated, his grandson will text him for "business" purposes, to achieve some type of tangible or financial help. While few grandparents spoke of this idea of tangible support through financial assistance inquiries from their grandchildren, several grandparents spoke of a different notion of "business" in asking for assistance from their grandchildren.

"Business" from this perspective often involved the grandparent asking the grandchild for some type of help or favor. For example, one grandmother noted she kindly asks her granddaughter to "pick up something from the store" if her granddaughter is coming to visit (Participant 014).

Overall, the category of task communication was composed of two themes: scheduling and "business." In many instances, grandparents used text messaging to schedule phone calls and future visits from their grandchildren, as text messaging allowed the grandparents to accommodate their uncertainty of their grandchildren's schedule. To a lesser extent, grandparents also used text messaging for "business" purposes, whether responding to a request for tangible support from their grandchildren or asking their grandchildren for assistance.

Texting is Not-For

While grandparents in this study provided insight on how they used text messaging to communicate with their grandchildren, how they spoke of not using text messaging is also revealing to the extent that they choose to use this medium as a means of communication with their grandchildren. As previously mentioned, most grandparents in this study seemed to indicate that text messaging was a supplementary medium of communication, although few identified that it was quickly becoming the primary means. Regardless of whether grandparents saw text messaging as a primary or supplementary medium to communicate with their grandchildren, most spoke similarly about what they chose to not text their grandchildren and the limiting nature of text messaging in terms of conveying emotion. Thus, text messaging is not-for is an amalgam of several prominent topics that emerged through the interviews, including texting is not for long messages; texting is for facts, not emotions; and texting is not for the revelation of bad news.

Texting is not for long messages. Several grandparents expressed the sentiments that they do not use text messaging to send long messages. One grandfather indicated that if he needs to send something longer, he often chooses to use an email and then will notify his granddaughter to check her email via text messaging. He stated, "I find it a little bit easier to you know if I send

a long message I might just send them an email" (Participant 002). He followed this up noting that, "I'll email them and then what I'll do is I'll text them 'Check your email.' This way they'll know that there's something there that I want to get across to them."

In many cases, grandparents did not like sending long messages because of the time it took to type the message. This was most often a result of the small buttons on cell phones and grandparents' etiquette preferences (e.g., accurate punctuation or spelling out words). Several grandparents noted that they were not as agile typing a message as their younger counterparts in the conversation. As the previous grandfather noted,

I prefer to spell it all out you know so it takes me a long time to say something that I want to say because I'm trying to perfect punctuation wise and everything. So you can see that you know that my old thumbs (laughing) just don't work as fast as they should I guess.
(Participant 002)

Thus, this grandfather indicated he takes longer because he wants to spell the words completely, rather than use the shorthand language for text messaging. One grandmother expressed similar sentiments in spelling out words fully, claiming that such may also lend itself to identification of an age difference. This grandmother stated, "Um...our age difference shows. Difference shows because, um...I'm used to, you know, I want to text full words or it doesn't look like its correct to me." (Participant 022). Furthermore, in addition to desiring to spell out the words in a text message, some grandparents just noted that they were slower at texting than the younger generation. One grandmother explicitly stated that she was not able to text message "as rapidly as with two thumbs like [she] see[s] all the young people doing."

Thus, in several instances, the grandparents indicated they preferred not to write long messages using text messaging, as their desire to type out full words and the combination of small buttons with their "less agile" fingers in typing made texting more difficult. Grandparents

noted that these were minor problems that did not prevent them from using text messaging as a means of communicating with their grandchildren.

Texting is for facts, not emotions. In addition to grandparents avoiding text messaging for long messages, grandparents also avoided text messaging for emotionally laden conversations. This theme, texting is for facts, not emotions, emerged throughout grandparent interviews and has strong connections to how grandparents approached text messaging in general. Grandparents recognized the limited ability text messaging had in conveying emotions, thus restricting their ability to engage in full communication with their grandchildren through text messaging. The limitations grandparents discussed in terms of the inability for text messages to convey emotions reflect the prominent computer mediated communication theory, media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986). Media richness theory posits that different mediums of communication vary in their ability to convey multiple cues (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Walther, 1992). The more cues a medium can convey, the richer the medium. This theory suggests that richer mediums are more appropriate for conveying ambiguous, emphatic, or emotional information. Leaner mediums, on the other hand, are more appropriate for simple and unequivocal messages. Grandparents reflected the basic tenet of this theory when they maintained that text messaging lacked the ability to convey emotional information and, thus, they avoided relaying emotionally laden information via text messaging.

One grandmother highlighted the inability for text messaging to convey emotions when she compared text messaging to a face-to-face conversation: "Because of the interaction between two people, umm, tells you a lot...the non-verbal communication. And you don't get that when you're texting, so to me texting is basically facts" (Participant 006). As this grandmother demonstrated, texting eliminates nonverbal communication, which can serve as indicators for

different emotional states. Thus to her, communication via text messaging is restricted to factual information only. Factual information is less ambiguous, and thus seen as more appropriate for this medium. This grandmother's perspective was reemphasized through another participant, who stated,

You really can't tell over a phone like, you know, even when you're talking over the phone you really can't tell their emotion. You can tell their pitch and tone, I suppose, of their voice, but it's really hard to tell how he's feeling, and usually, you know, I'd assume that he is alright...he just...it's just text message and words...you really can't get any emotion out of a word... (Participant 018).

Once again, this grandmother notes the more factual nature of text messaging and the inability for words to convey emotions. Grandparents' recognition of the inability of text messaging to convey emotions prevented these grandparents from engaging in deep conversations with their grandchildren via text messaging. Therefore, as aforementioned, grandparents often instead used text messaging to check on their grandchild's wellbeing, engage in small talk with their grandchild about life events, and focus on task-related communication. Furthermore, the restricting ability of text messaging to convey emotions led grandparents to avoid personal discussions, often concerning bad news, with their grandchildren via text messaging, as bad news has an inherent emotional connotation. This is discussed in the following section.

Not for revelations of bad news. A previously mentioned, the limited ability of text messaging to convey emotions was often the reason for grandparents' refusals to reveal bad information to grandchildren via text messaging. In these discussions, the bad news discussed usually concerned health issues, accidents, family emergencies, and death. In many instances, grandparents felt like text messaging was not an appropriate medium for the revelation of such personal information to a beloved relative or to people in general. One grandmother expressed this sentiment in the following example when discussing the things she would not want to reveal

through text messaging to her granddaughter: "Well...you know if something - if something happened to someone in our family, you know, things like that. Or you know, if you went to the doctor and got some bad news, I couldn't tell that over text messaging with anyone. I would have to be face to face" (Participant 014). In this example, the desire to reveal highly emotional and personal information in a face-to-face setting is consistent with the research of Haythornthwaite and Wellman (1998), who found that richer means of communication, such as face-to-face communication, are more appropriate for discussions concerning personal issues. One grandmother expressed similar sentiments and explained that personal information of this nature, such as health concerns or death, should be revealed in a face-to-face setting or over the phone.

P: Um...like if someone is on their deathbed, or has been in a serious accident...you know, something like that. I wouldn't want to send that through a text.

I: Uh hmm...And why is that?

P: Because that is something personal that you need to talk to someone instead of sending them a text. To me a text is basically...a lot of times it's like a cop out on stuff. (Participant 016).

As stated, this grandmother explained that one would "cop-out" if they chose to reveal such information to somebody they cared about through text messaging, explaining that revealing such information through text messaging would be an easy way out of the situation and a way to not actually deal with the grave news and its potential effects on family members.

Another grandmother, when explaining her reasons for not wanting to reveal bad news to her granddaughter via text messaging, in this case an example of a family emergency, identified that such a revelation could cause undue stress and worry for her granddaughter. This particular conversational moment is depicted in the following excerpt:

P: If it was a family emergency of any kind. I certainly wouldn't want to send that in a text. I would want to talk to her

I: And why is that?

P: Well because I think if I texted her, if my husband had to go to the hospital or something, I wouldn't want to send that in a text. She would be a wreck. Whereas if I had say "Papi went to the hospital and fell off of the ladder but he's.." you know, (inaudible) even more than the text in that case because she could hear my voice and know I was not that concern and neither should she be. (Participant 019)

Thus, in this situation, the inability for text messaging to effectively express affective aspects of communication would cause unnecessary worry in the grandchild. A phone call or face-to-face interaction, in situations of conveying bad news, was often preferred over text messaging.

Research Question 2a

Research Question 2a asked, "What are grandparents' motivations for using text messaging to communicate with young adult grandchildren?" The axial coding process of analysis resulted in one overarching category related to grandparents' motivations for using text messaging, their grandchildren.

Grandchild as Motivator

The grandparents' grandchildren in this study often served as the main motivating reason for grandparents to use text messaging as a means to communicate with them. Grandchild as motivator was demonstrated through several themes, including grandchild as teacher, "the way youngsters communicate," and grandchildren are busy.

Grandchild as teacher. Several grandparents highlighted the important role their grandchildren played in teaching them how to use text messaging and encouraging them to text message. As such, the grandchildren became the teachers to their grandparents in demonstrating to them how to use text messaging. This is apparent through the explanation of one grandfather participant:

So, he actually showed me how to use it whenever, uh, my other daughter, his aunt, bought me a phone...bought us the phone...[name omitted - wife] doesn't use it very

much, but, he [grandson] came over to the house and showed me how to text message everything so that you know, I can text you...so I was like Ok. (Participant 018)

In this particular situation, the grandson expressed interest in texting his grandfather and was motivated to teach him so they could text each other on a regular basis. This demonstrates a type of role reversal in the GP-GC relationship, as grandparents are typically seen as teachers to grandchildren (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). However, in the domain of technology, where grandchildren are often experts on the topic when compared to their grandparents, grandchildren have advice and knowledge they can share with their grandparents.

In several situations, the grandchildren's willingness and desire to teach their grandparents how to use text messaging served as the impetus for grandparents to begin texting their grandchildren and other people as well. One grandmother explained this vividly when she stated,

Like I said I didn't – when I got my phone I really didn't know how to use the phone. And he [her grandson] came home one day and said “hey grandma, do you text?” I said “no how you do that?” and he taught me how to text. And I been texting – I text my sister, I text my daughter, and I just start texting, you know, and I feel good about it. (Participant 023)

This grandmother clearly stated she did not know how to use the phone and text messaging until her grandson taught her. As a result, not only was she able to use text message to communicate with her grandson, but with other people as well. Thus, the grandchild as teacher theme highlights the important motivating factor grandchildren served when teaching their grandparents how to use text messaging.

"The way youngsters communicate." In addition to grandchildren teaching their grandparents serving as a motivating factor for grandparents to use text messaging, grandparents were often moved to use text messaging through their realization that the adolescent and young adult generations use text messaging as a primary mode of communication. Longmate and Baber

(2002, as cited in Harley, Winn, Pemberton, & Wilcox, 2007) asserted that communication via cell phone, especially through text messaging, has become the prime choice medium for young adults. Thus, "the way youngsters communicate" theme, an In-vivo code taken directly from a participants' expression, represents grandparents' realizations that they would get a better response from their grandchildren if they text messaged them more regularly. One grandmother expressed this sentiment when she stated,

I see it as that generation's way of communicating. So if I want to communicate I need to communicate on their level and not expect them to go, you know, the effort of the telephone, or even the email has become almost obsolete. Not obsolete, but ummm, but we'll go with that I guess. (Participant 006)

As noted, this grandmother expresses that using text messaging as a tool for communication is a generational thing and is something she must accommodate to in order to communicate with her grandchild.

Several other participants expressed similar notions claiming that text messaging was just a natural thing for young adults to engage in and it was the only way one could reach them. A prime example of this is expressed through the statements of one grandmother when she claimed that texting is "second nature to them" and that "if you want to get them, that's the quickest, easiest way" (Participant 019). Furthermore, a grandfather stated,

Because that's the – that's the thing with the young kids! You wanna – if you wanna keep in touch with them it seems to me like it's kind of very unusual for me – but it's kinda strange that the kids – a lot of kids – they'll be in the same room and rather than talk to each other, they're texting and that is just – to me that is just weird.

Thus, these grandparents recognized the prevalence of text messaging among the younger generation and understood it as something "that they do." Therefore, in many instances, grandparents began text messaging their young adult grandchildren because they understood it is one of the best ways to reach them in this age of technology, as one grandmother noted:

Well as with all the grandchildren – and these answers pertain to all of them basically – I found that they respond to texting, the kids respond to texting better. If I email someone, they may or may not respond within a day or two. But generally texting is an immediate response. (Participant 006)

This grandmother further explained that she found texting to be "more immediate" than other modes of communication, including voice calling, as she stated: "I found with emails or with calling, you leave a message and you may not hear for, who knows when, so." Therefore, in addition to recognizing that young adults are more prone to using text messaging, this grandmother also realized that her young adult grandchildren will more quickly respond to a text message.

Several other participants also noted their grandchildren's quicker responses to texting.

One grandmother noted,

I found out with - well with Kacey and a lot of people who are younger - they are quick if you text them - they answer you back quicker than if you pick up the phone and call them. You get a faster response. (Participant 014)

Thus, the grandparents' recognition that their grandchildren provided a more quicker, immediate response to a text message versus a phone call or email motivated grandparents to adopt text messaging as a mode of communication with their grandchildren. Grandparents in this study understood that most of their young adult grandchildren were prone to carrying their phones with them and in the position to check their phones frequently.

Hence, the generational popularity of text messaging served as a motivating factor for grandparents to use text messaging with their grandchildren, as they understood the immediacy in feedback such a medium would provide for them. Consequently, grandparents also felt the need to accommodate to the younger generation in order to sustain the relationship. One grandmother highlighted this aspect of accommodation when she stated,

And um...I think it's a benefit to know that, um...that, I have been willing to learn to do this type of thing, which was not my regular mode of communication. Up until recently, you know, maybe until the last three or four years. And I think she probably appreciates the fact that I'm reaching out to her that way rather than being stubborn and wanting her to follow my rules. (Participant 020).

By explicitly stating she is "reaching out to her" and not "being stubborn" by only using her "regular mode of communication," she underscores the accommodating nature of grandparents' transition to using text messaging as a tool to communicate with their grandchildren. Thus, text messaging allows grandparents to be on a similar communicative level with their grandchildren.

Grandchildren are busy. Finally, in addition to their grandchildren's encouragement to use text messaging and to grandparents' understanding of the generational popularity of text messaging, grandparents were motivated to use text messaging with their young adult grandchildren because they saw text messaging as a way to communicate with the least cause for disturbance in their grandchildren's busy lives. Grandparents often explained that their grandchildren were busy individuals and text messaging provided the best means of reaching them. One grandmother expressed this when she noted,

And, you know, she doesn't have much time during the day because she's either studying or she's working or something like that. And if she thinks of something, she can just very easily text me one little thing, and I can text her, acknowledge back. (Participant 022)

As this grandmother indicated, text messaging offered an easier means for her granddaughter to respond to her while studying or working. This grandmother later emphasized that she felt text messaging allowed her to continue communicating with her granddaughter while not "imposing on her time."

One grandmother even noted that she often responded more to her granddaughter's text messages rather than initiate them due to the fact that she knows her granddaughter has a busy life: "She kind of just lets me know what's going on and then I respond. I know she's working;

she's busy and has a husband, so I respond to her texts more I guess than I initiate them" (Participant 005). This grandmother further highlighted the busyness of younger adults when thinking of her granddaughter and providing reasons for why she texts her, stating, "Well because I know how busy young people are and you know how many things that they have on their agenda all the time." Thus, grandparents in this study reiterated the busy lives of their grandchildren as reasons to text message them.

Therefore, through text messaging, grandparents are accommodating to the lifestyles of their grandchildren by using this medium as a means of communication. This was apparent when one grandfather mentioned text messaging was a convenient means of communication for his grandson: "I guess this is the most convenient thing for him Um, because like I said, he's busy" (Participant 018). Through this conversation, it was apparent that this grandfather did not particularly find text messaging convenient, but instead used it for his grandson's benefit.

Other grandparents expressed text messaging as a means of accommodating to their young adult grandchildren's lives when they emphasized the ability of text messaging to not be intrusive. Grandparents often cited that because text messaging was not as invasive, did not disturb the lives of others, did not interrupt others, or did not hold up people, it was a better communication choice for communicating with their young adult grandchildren. Because, as several grandparents noted, text messaging was "quick and easy," they often felt less concerned about using this means of communication to talk with their grandchildren as opposed to calling them. One grandfather's statements exemplify this sentiment:

I personally use text messaging a lot over just calling on a phone because a text message, you uh, I don't feel like I'm intruding into something they might be doing cus I send a text message they can - they can look at it, answer it, when they have time. So that's the main reason I use a lot of text message- I don't like to intrude any - intrude into people's lives any more than I have to. (Participant 017)

This grandfather expressed concern with what his grandson may be doing and did not want to interrupt him, therefore, he chose to text message him because his grandson could answer it when he had the time. Thus, the asynchronous nature of text messaging is seen as beneficial to grandparents, as the receivers of their messages can respond whenever they are available. This is consistent with Rettie (2006), who indicated that the asynchronous aspect of text messaging allows it to be less intrusive. Another grandmother expressed this sentiment, stating, "when I might be hesitant to phone her because of her being in class or busy...uh, I feel like a text does not intrude as much as a phone call does" (Participant 020). Regardless of what their grandchildren are doing, when grandparents send them the message, they will always receive the message and it will be there waiting for them in their phone's message inbox when they have the time to look at it and respond.

Thus, the overwhelming perception of text messaging as "not as intrusive" as a phone call was an important factor driving grandparents to use text messaging to accommodate to their grandchildren's busy lives. These grandparents were well aware of the different strains and pulls on their grandchildren, especially as many of their grandchildren were juggling work, school, and, for some, families. Thus, while they desired to stay in contact with their grandchildren, they felt text messaging offered a means of contact without them becoming "a bother" to their grandchildren.

As highlighted, the motivations of grandparents in this study for using text messaging often centered upon grandchildren, as grandchildren encouraged their grandparents to use texting through teaching, as grandparents understood the popularity of text messaging among younger adults, and as grandparents tried to accommodate to their young adult grandchildren's busy

lifestyles and communication preferences. Hence, the grandchild, in many instances, was the motivator for the grandparents to use text messaging as a tool for communication.

Research Question 3a

Research Question 3a asked, "What are grandparents' perceptions of text messaging as a means to communicate with their young adult grandchildren?" Through the analysis process, open codes were reduced to two main categories relevant to this question. The first category, bittersweet acceptance, underscores grandparents' acknowledgement of the usefulness of text messaging in the GP-GC relationship, but their lack of preference to use this medium to communicate with their grandchildren. The second category, bridging the distance: creating connectedness highlights the positive outcomes grandparents perceived about using text messaging with their grandchildren.

Bittersweet Acceptance

As aforementioned, this category titled "bittersweet acceptance," underscores grandparents' acknowledgements of the usefulness to communicate with their grandchildren via text messaging while highlighting their low preference for using text messaging to communicate with their grandchildren. Participants in this study seemed to hold dichotomous views about text messaging, as they knew using such technology allowed them to communicate with their grandchildren, but many did not prefer to use this medium. Thus grandparents' perceptions of text messaging in terms of communicating with their grandchildren can be characterized best as bittersweet. The following themes explain this category in greater detail: texting is not preferred and any communication is better than no communication.

Texting is not preferred. Through several statements made by grandparents, it was clear that many grandparents in this study did not prefer to use text messaging to communicate with

their grandchildren, but resorted to using it because it enabled a higher frequency of successful communication with them. One grandfather stated,

Trust me. I'd much rather like him call me every Wednesday, but, you know I'm not going to pester him with that. But, he uh, you know, he does give us calls every once in a while. But he texts me every day, or every week. So, you know, I'm happy with that. I know he's a busy young man. (Participant 018)

This grandfather clearly indicates he would rather receive a telephone call from his grandson, but regardless, still is able to appreciate the communication he has with his grandson through text messaging. One grandmother even noted that text messaging is "not my preferred method" (Participant 019), but she finds it necessary due to the many scheduling conflicts she and her granddaughter have, which make it difficult for them to contact each other with a phone call.

Furthermore, one grandmother stated she "can get along with the text message" because she knows her granddaughter is busy (Participant 015). In this instance, the phrase "get along with" indicates that this woman is reluctantly accepting text messaging, especially as she qualifies this with a reason when stating her granddaughter is busy. Hence, the prevailing attitude among participants in this study seems to demonstrate the saying, "If that's the way, then that's the way," as one grandparent exemplified when claiming, "Well, I really don't like it too much, but you know, these days and times that's what they doing" (Participant 016). Thus, many grandparents in this study did not see text messaging as an optimal means for communication.

It is important to note that while they did not see it as an optimal means to communicate, they also knew that it was not their only means of communication. As aforementioned, text messaging supplemented communication via other means (i.e., telephone or face to face); hence, grandparents did not have to solely rely on text messaging to communicate with their grandchildren. Therefore, text messaging is communication that grandparents do not always prefer, but they do not have to use it as their only means of communication with their

grandchildren. Hence, the fact that grandparents can contact their grandchildren through other means counters their lack of preference for text messaging.

Furthermore, even though grandparents expressed their preference for other communication mediums, some grandparents noted that text messaging offered a quick and convenient form of contact. Hence, as one grandmother stated, some grandparents preferred texting to an extent. This was reflected by my participant reviewer when she stated, she prefers to communicate via text messaging to an extent as "during the day, texting is a much easier way to communicate, but during the evening, phone calls are nice" (Participant 022). The convenience that texting afforded for daily communication was reiterated by another grandmother who stated, "It [texting] don't interrupt her [her granddaughter]" and it don't interrupt me" (Participant 015). Therefore, text messaging was not always the preferred method of communication with their grandchildren, but for some grandparents it offered a quicker means to communicate with them, especially when the topics discussed via text messaging did not require a phone conversation. So, as this grandmother noted, for some grandparents it was preferred to an extent, and that extent was that they knew they would be able to talk to their grandchildren on the phone.

Most often, however, grandparents noted that text messaging was not preferred. When described this way, grandparents in this study usually provided reasons for not deeming text messaging as an optimal means of communication; these reasons generally reflected generational differences. One grandmother stated, "well I am older, of course, so to me face to face is much better" (Participant 015). Another grandmother even noted that her granddaughter is aware of her desire to hear her granddaughter's voice, stating "Because she knows that I am old school and she and her friends I'm sure mostly text. But, I'm old school. She knows I love to hear her voice"

(Participant 019). This notion of "being old school" proliferated throughout many of the discussions on the drawbacks of text messaging and the reasons for why it was not a preferred medium. In fact, one grandfather provided a story that exemplified this age divide:

Well, I mean, you know, back in my day, we did just fine without the phone. You know, I guess, you know people are getting busier and busier as the future moves on, so it's kinda hard to find time to speak to each other. Back in my day, you know you actually went down (inaudible) and see your family or give them a call or something. But, you know, I mean, you know the future is moving on and I can stop it. (Participant 017)

In this case, the grandfather demonstrates that he does not prefer to use text messaging but finds it necessary as people become "busier and busier."

Coupled with this notion of "being old school," grandparents also prescribed a lower quality of communication to text messaging as they saw it as lacking a sense of intimacy that a phone call or face-to-face conversation could provide. As noted, this was often due to the lack of nonverbal cues conveyed through text messaging. Reflecting aspects of social presence theory (Walther, 1992), participants emphasized the need for "human contact," as one grandmother stated, "sometimes you have to have that human contact, like talking to each other face to face - you have to have that" (Participant 014). Furthermore, one grandmother thoroughly touched upon the notion of human contact when she explained why she thought face-to-face communication offered a higher quality of interaction than text messaging, "You can hug and touch and see the person's emotions and see their face...you can see everything. You're able to touch them and hug them. Doing text you can't do that" (Participant 016). In addition to identifying the lack of human contact in text messaging, several participants expressed a desire to just hear the voices of their grandchildren. One grandmother stated that the familiarity of hearing her granddaughter's voice created a greater sense of intimacy, as she stated: "Because I

just, as I say I think it's so much more personal. To me, you feel closer when you hear their voice" (Participant 005).

While many grandparents in this study did not prefer to use text messaging and thus often prescribed text messaging a lower quality of interaction, most all participants expressed high satisfaction with text messaging. In many cases, grandparents appeared to adjust their expectations of being satisfied to what the medium of text messaging could provide for the relationship. One potential reason for this adjusted expectation could be that grandparents are happy with any form of communication that connects them to their grandchildren. This idea that any communication is better than no communication was a dominant theme expressed by the participants in this study and lends to this notion of bittersweet acceptance of text messaging as a means to communicate with one's grandchild.

Any communication is better than no communication. The notion that "any communication is better than no communication" emerged as a dominant theme in this study. While grandparents did not always prefer to communicate with their grandchildren via text messaging, they were still satisfied with what text messaging could provide them: a means of communication, regardless of form. One grandfather participant expressed this when he stated,

It's enjoyable because if that's the way the youngsters communicate, and if, if they're not gonna communicate with me by phone or email because they don't have the time or the inclination, then I would definitely prefer to get a little text to say "hi grandpa how are you doing, I love you." And then that's...that's something. It's not the best, but I think it's much better than not having it at all. (Participant 002)

Thus, as this grandfather stated, communication by text is better than not having communication at all. This is also reflected by a grandmother who stated, "I enjoy any contact with my grandchildren, but it [text messaging] would not be my first choice" (Participant 019). While this conveys this grandmother's lower preference of text messaging, it also indicates that she enjoys

the communication text messaging can provide, as it offers her a means to stay in contact with her grandchildren.

Overall, grandparents in this study, while not always choosing text messaging as their number one preference, are satisfied with text messaging because it can provide a means of contact with their grandchildren, regardless of how deficiently humanistic the communication is through this means. Thus, text messaging is not always an optimal communication means for these grandparents, but grandparents accept it as a minimal means for maintaining contact with their grandchildren. As such, grandparents in this study seem to be satisficing (i.e., the combination of "satisfy" and "suffice,"), accepting text messaging as "good enough" (Yang & Chiou, 2010). They are choosing the available means they have for maintaining frequent contact with their grandchildren, even though it is not always the preferred one. Often as a result of the frequent communication text messaging can provide, they are able to bridge the distance that separates them from their grandchildren, creating a sense of connectedness.

Bridging the Distance: Fostering Connectedness

While text messaging may be deficient in terms of media richness and social presence and may not be a preferred means of communication, the medium did offer several important benefits to the GP-GC relationships in this study. Grandparents noted they were able to maintain more frequent contact with their grandchildren, which helped foster a stronger sense of connection to their grandchildren. Researchers (Katz & Rice 2002) have noted similar results, claiming that media can engender feelings of interconnectedness even when people are geographically separated. These feelings of interconnectedness often resulted from the higher frequency of communication text messaging affords.

Several grandparents noted the benefits of text messaging for their relationship with their grandchildren, as they were able to maintain more frequent contact with them. As one grandmother noted, "it keeps me, uh, a little bit more in constant, not constant, in more frequent, um...communication with her" (Participant 020). This same grandmother also noted the importance of the reliability in contacting her granddaughter, as she knew her granddaughter was within reach of a text message. One grandmother in particular noted the benefits of the reliability of the frequency at which she could contact her grandson, stating

When I feel like I need to talk to him, and it's late in the night or something, then I will text him – and then he texts me right back and I feel real good about that you know. But sometimes I will call him late at night and I can't get him, I get his voicemail and I be kinda worried, but when I text, seems like he gets it and texts me back. Yeah, so that makes me feel pretty good about that. (Participant 023)

As she noted, text messaging with her grandson fostered in her a sense of security when her grandson would text her back. Furthermore, sometimes just knowing their grandchild was in reach of a text message was enough to foster a feeling of connection. For example, one grandmother identified this when she stated that through text messaging, she "knows she can always reach them," thus making her "feel like you always have a contact there" (Participant 019).

Thus, maintaining the lines of communication was strongly regarded as a benefit. The grandparents in this study held their grandchildren dear to them, and text messaging allowed them to convey that message. One grandmother noted this when she discussed what she perceived to be the benefit of using text messaging in her relationship with her granddaughter. She stated,

Just because you know they are so special to us and we are so far away and we just feel that any communication is just letting them know that you know they're in our thoughts always. As you mature and become grandparents you know it gets so much more

important that you keep that connection and that conversation and...I don't know, uh - never want to lose that line of communication. (Participant 005)

Thus, text messaging allowed her to keep her relational connection open with her granddaughter despite the distance that separates them. In addition to enjoying the ability of text messaging to foster a feeling of connectedness through more frequent communication, several grandparents noted the high degree of closeness text messaging was afforded. As one grandmother stated,

It's like - it's like when I text her - it's like she's right there, just not the face, she's just right there. And I can just text her any time of the night, the morning, or the day. And uh...she is going to get back with me - it's like, it's just like - and when I hear from her it's just like I done seen her. (Participant 015)

For this individual, text messaging fostered a degree of connection that allowed her to feel the presence of her granddaughter.

Several other grandparents noted a similar feeling. For example, one grandmother noted that text messaging allowed her to feel like she was part of her grandchildren's events, stating, "It gives me an opportunity to feel like I'm part of it. You know, I'm part of being there with them when they are going to their cotillion tonight" (Participant 019). Similarly, one grandparent explained text messaging helps her feel like she is a part of her granddaughter's life, claiming the benefit of text messaging is "just, the ability to, um...be a part of her, you know, be a part of her life" (Participant 020). Thus, through frequent communication, grandparents are able to maintain a sense of connectedness to their grandchildren, and to some degree, a feeling of "presence."

Selective Coding: Establishing a Framework

As previously mentioned, selective coding integrates the categories established during the axial coding process to generate a core category that explains the phenomenon in question. In this case, the selective coding process integrates the six categories previously discussed (i.e., relational communication, task communication, text messaging is not-for, grandchild as

motivator, bittersweet acceptance, and bridging the distance) to provide greater theoretical understanding for grandparents' uses of text messaging. The main storyline of grandparents' uses of text messaging based on the data analyzed is as follows: grandparents accommodate to their young adult grandchildren's preferred communication style (i.e., text messaging) and lifestyle in order to maintain more frequent interaction with them and to foster a stronger sense of connection to them.

While some grandparents indicated that text messaging was convenient for them to use, most often their reasons for using text messaging centered upon their grandchildren (i.e., on them as teachers, on their preferred mode of communication, on their busy lives). This underscores the accommodating nature of their uses of text messaging for engagement with their grandchildren. Grandparents expressed that they preferred to communicate with their grandchildren via other means, but would take what was available to them to more frequently interact with their grandchildren. Therefore, text messaging in the GP-GC relationship, from the perspective of the grandparent, operates on a dual positive-negative continuum as text messaging is not always a desired form of communication, but can still offer an important line of connection from grandparent to grandchild, one that can even possibly foster a feeling of "presence" of their grandchild.

Discussion on Grandparents' Uses of Text Messaging

The categories that emerged concerning grandparents' uses of text messaging provide insight into grandparents' perspectives of how this medium functions within the GP-GC relationship. As indicated, six main categories emerged related to the three research questions about grandparents' uses of text messaging: relational updates, task communication, text messaging is not for, grandchild as motivator, bittersweet acceptance, and bridging the distance.

Combined, these categories paint a picture for the role of text messaging in the relationship from the grandparent perspective, demonstrating that grandparents primarily use this communication medium as a means to accommodate to their grandchildren's busy life style and preferred mode of communication. Despite their lack of preference for using this technology with their grandchildren in most instances, grandparents in this study did note that text messaging does keep them more frequently connected to their grandchildren, which strengthens the feeling of connection they have to their grandchildren.

While many grandparents did not prefer using text message to communicate with their grandchildren, these results demonstrate that text messaging plays an important role in the communication between grandparents and grandchildren in this study. First, text messaging, with its ability to increase the frequency at which grandparents and grandchildren communicate, can foster a sense of "connected presence" (Christensen, 2009; Licoppe & Smoreda, 2005). According to Licoppe and Smoreda (2005), connected presence underscores the ability for technological interactions and face-to-face interactions to be woven together to create a stream of connection that fosters a sense of presence through technology. Therefore, while a grandparent may only communicate with his or her grandchild via the telephone once or twice a week, the supplementary communication that occurs through text messages creates a feeling that the grandchild is always within reach. Hence, grandparents and grandchildren may be separated by geographical distance and engage in limited face-to-face engagements, but the higher frequency at which these dyadic members can communicate with the use of text messaging in the relationship has the ability to foster a feeling of connected presence.

Licoppe and Smoreda (2005) noted that the feeling of connected presence occurs regardless of the content of communication, indicating that the act of "keeping in touch" is more

important. And grandparents in this study primarily used text messaging for this reason - to keep in touch - as they checked in on their grandchildren's wellbeing and engaged in "small talk" about their grandchildren's daily life activities. As noted, grandparents' conversations with their grandchildren via text messaging rarely involved intimate, personal topics, as grandparents expressed that text messaging is not an appropriate means to convey such information. Instead, the short, expressive messages they send their grandchildren, the "I'm thinking of you" or their reaction to something their grandchildren had told them, becomes a repetitive interaction, which has the capability of filling in the absence of their grandchildren due to their physical separation (Licoppe & Smoreda, 2005). Therefore, even though grandparents may not identify text messaging as a preferential choice and may largely frame their reasoning for using this technology in terms of their grandchildren, it does aid in keeping the lines of communication open and helps foster a stronger feeling of connection to their grandchildren.

Second, not only can text messaging foster a feeling of connected presence and thus help bridge the distance that separates grandparent from grandchild, it can also enable grandparents to engage in their nurturing grandparent role even when their grandchild is not physically present. Text messaging offers grandparents a quick means to provide social and emotional support when a phone call or face-to-face visit is not possible. According to Kornhaber and Woodward (1981), this grandparent role is highly important to a grandparent's sense of self. Therefore, their ability to continue to offer nurturing acts to their grandchildren, at a higher frequency than afforded by the telephone, can help them fulfill an important grandparent function.

In addition to providing an important means of connection, it appears that text messaging helps aid in maintaining contact between the grandparent and grandchild without middle generation (i.e., parental) involvement. Harwood and Lin (2000) noted that most contact between

young adult grandchildren and grandparents seems to occur when the middle generation is present. Hence, outside of family social events that place all generations of a family in the same room, contact between grandparents and grandchildren is limited. However, based on the frequency at which these grandparents communicated with their grandchildren via text messaging, it appears that text messaging counters the need for the middle generation to encourage contact between their children and their children's grandparents.

Grandparents indicated that their grandchildren often initiated conversations with them through text messaging and even encouraged them to use text messaging as a means to keep in contact. Thus, while some have claimed that the lack of the middle generation's push for their children to communicate with their grandparents would lead to a decline in GP-GC interaction as grandchildren age (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986; Harwood & Lin, 2000), the results of this study indicate that the use of text messaging helps grandchildren maintain more frequent contact with their grandparents. However, this should be understood in light of the relational closeness of the GP-GC dyads in this study. While not assessed here, it is possible that the degree of closeness mediates the grandchildren's willingness to communicate with their grandparents outside of parental involvement in the relationship.

While grandchildren's encouragement for grandparents to use text messaging is a potential indicator for how grandchildren and grandparents maintain the relationship outside of the middle generation's involvement, it also was noted as a motivating factor for grandparents to begin using text messaging in the GP-GC relationship. In these instances, the traditional grandparent teacher roles and grandchild learner roles (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981) are reversed, as grandchild becomes mentor and grandparent becomes mentee. With text messaging, most grandchildren hold the "expert knowledge" on the communication tool when compared to

their grandparents and, therefore, can guide their grandparents in using the technology. Mead (1970) indicated that as new technology emerges in society, it will be increasingly important and necessary for younger individuals to teach older adults how to use and engage new technologies to avoid potential marginalization. Due to the popularity of text messaging among young adults, this appears to be happening on the small-scale interpersonal level when young adult grandchildren teach their grandparents to use text messaging. As such, grandchildren can continue to use their preferred communication tool to communicate with their grandparents, maintaining lines of connection within the dyad without having to always rely on voice calls.

In addition to grandchildren's encouragement of their grandparents' uses of text messaging, grandparents also reported that they adopted text messaging predominantly because their grandchildren used the medium the most and because they perceived the medium to be less intrusive in their grandchildren's busy lives. Hence, grandparents' adoption of text messaging was largely framed in terms of their grandchildren, indicating that they were accommodating to their grandchildren's needs and preferences. For many grandparents in this study, text messaging was not an optimal communication medium, but it allowed them to maintain the line of contact with their grandchildren so they appreciated what it could offer. In using text messaging, grandparents are reaching out to their grandchildren as a way to meet them on "their level," despite their preference for other communication mediums.

When grandparents explained why they did not prefer to use text messaging, several grandparents explicitly marked their age as "older" by indicating that they were "old school" so they just preferred a more traditional means of communication. This highlights their embodiment of age-related stereotypes about older adults and technology. This is not to say that these grandparents truly did not prefer the technology, as they most likely do prefer the telephone or

face-to-face communication to text messaging; however, when framing their reason in terms of age and not their actual dislikes of the medium (e.g., text messaging lacks the ability to convey nonverbal cues), they emphasize their embodiment of social stereotypes that label older adults as resisters of technology. Grandparents in this study did not necessarily reflect their age as a handicap, but instead expressed it more neutrally by essentially stating it as "just the way we are" (Coupland, Coupland, Giles, & Henwood, 1991).

Interestingly, alluding to their lack of preference of text messaging as "just the way we are" is also how they expressed young adults' preferences for technology - by claiming that text messaging is natural for young adults and adolescents to use. Hence, the use of text messaging in the GP-GC relationship exists in a context of age salience from the grandparent perspective, as grandparents who did not prefer the technology often attributed their lack of preference to their old age and attributed the high use of technology by younger adults to their young age. This perspective further underscores the accommodating nature of grandparents' uses of text messaging as a means to communicate with their young adult grandchildren. Grandparents choose to use text messaging because of their grandchildren. On the flip side, however, it does benefit them as well; they can continue to interact with their grandchildren more frequently than if they solely relied on telephone voice calls and face-to-face communication.

Hence, many grandparents use text messaging as a result of their grandchildren and continue to use text messaging because of the benefits it provides to the relationship. This supports one of the tenets of the uses and gratifications theory that highlights a person's use of a medium is also influenced by the gratification they achieve when using the medium (Lin, 1993). In this case, the grandparents are attempting to maintain more frequent contact with their grandchildren, which text messaging successfully provides them, so they continue to use the

medium. Furthermore, in terms of uses and gratifications theory, grandparents are seeking the gratification of affection as they primarily use text messaging as a means to feel closer to their grandchildren and to show them that they care about them (Wei & Lo, 2006). Therefore, as Wei and Lo concluded, the cell phone, in this case text messaging, as a supplemental communication, offers an important way to maintain relationships, helping strengthen relational bonds.

CHAPTER 5

THE GP-GC RELATIONSHIP AND FACEBOOK

In this chapter, I discuss the prominent categories that emerged in relation to the research questions concerning grandparents' uses of Facebook with their young adult grandchildren and the emergent theoretical framework based on these themes. A brief discussion specific to grandparents' uses of Facebook with their young adult grandchildren follows the results explained in this chapter.

The grounded theory analysis for grandparents' uses of Facebook with their young adult grandchildren resulted in 38 open coded categories. These 38 categories were reduced to 7 through the axial coding process, as open coded categories were integrated to reflect similar dimensional themes. For Research Question 1b, three categories emerged: Lurking, Active Facebook Engagement, and "Guarded" Communication. For Research Question 2b, two categories emerged: Grandchild as Motivator and Convenience. For Research Question 3b, two categories emerged: Limits "Cookie Jar Grandma" and Satisfied Nonetheless. In this chapter, I explain these seven categories as they relate to the research questions guiding this study while providing examples from participant responses. All names have been changed to maintain participant confidentiality. Following the category explanations, I describe the central storyline that connects these categories, depicting the underlying theoretical framework of this data.

Research Question 1b

Research Question 1b asked, "For what purposes do older adult grandparents use Facebook to communicate with their younger adult grandchildren?" When asked to describe their typical engagement with their grandchildren on Facebook, three prominent categories emerged:

lurking, active Facebook engagement, and "guarded" behavior. I explain these categories in the following sections.

Lurking

Grandparents often took an observational role when using Facebook in their relationship with their grandchildren, where they examined their grandchild's profiles and updates but did not actively comment in response to them, thus not making their presence known. As one grandmother noted, "I can go in and look at their wall and, you know, catch messages to other things umm...and I don't always have to reply but I can see what's going on in their lives" (Participant 001). Similarly, one grandfather stated, "yeah, I don't like to engage on Facebook, but I do like to get on there just to see what they're saying" (Participant 007). This behavior characterized as observing the updates and profiles of others without actively commenting in response to them is closely related to the notion of lurking, a concept prominent in computer-mediated communication research on online forums (Wellman & Gulia, 1999).

Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2009) applied the concept of lurking in their study on Facebook user behaviors, stating that Facebook user respondents noted they would view user profiles without commenting on them. Despite the apparent connection of lurking to Facebook profile viewing, most research on Facebook behaviors tends to apply the term "Facebook stalking" (Bornow & Barkhuus, 2011; Cajigas, 2011; Kennedy, 2009; Lewis & West, 2009; Urista, Dong, & Day, 2008). Studies have rarely agreed on a conceptual definition of Facebook stalking, as some have characterized it as a type of random browsing of user profiles (Cajigas, 2011) and others have noted it as a surveillance of friends and family (Kennedy, 2009; Lewis & West, 2009). While there are differences that exist between each of these concepts, underscoring all of them is that they describe various techniques to obtain information about others.

To conceptualize the observational behavior here, I choose the term lurking because Facebook stalking is often considered to have negative connotations (Bornow & Barkhuus, 2011; Urista et al., 2008). People often note that Facebook stalking is "creepy" (Bornow & Barkhuus, 2011) or is considered a type of "snooping" behavior (Urista et al., 2008). Furthermore, individuals who engage in Facebook stalking typically indicate feelings of guilt for exhibiting such behavior (Bornow & Barkhuus, 2011; Kennedy, 2009; Lewis & West, 2009). These conceptualizations of Facebook stalking do not accurately depict the way grandparents in this study described their behavior.

Rather than indicating feelings of guilt or indicating that their behavior is "creepy," grandparents in my study saw their activities as a means to stay updated on the lives of their grandchildren and did not express any concern or indication that their behavior had negative connotations. Instead, grandparents often described lurking behavior as a means to stay updated on their grandchildren's lives. For example, one grandmother stated Facebook allowed her to "stay on top of what's going on with him [her grandson] in his life right now" (Participant 001).

Due to the various features of Facebook, including the ability to post "status updates," communicate with friends via the Facebook "wall," and post pictures, grandparents are able to observe all of these things (if their grandchildren allow them to see it) to stay updated on their grandchildren's lives. As one grandmother stated,

It is an easy way to check on the kids or basically they know I do this all the time, so if they put pictures or something on there and I think - okay, let me go look and see what new pictures they put up for the kids or of the kids or that type of thing. It is very good for that. (Participant 004)

As this grandmother noted, she observes her granddaughter's posted pictures to see what her grandchildren (and great-grandchildren) are doing. Furthermore, this particular example diverges from the notion of Facebook stalking, as her granddaughter is aware she looks at her profile

(even if she does not post comments, thus exhibiting lurking behavior). Therefore, in many cases, Facebook can be seen as a way for grandparents to maintain a connection to the lives of their grandchildren as it allows them to peer into their grandchildren's activities. One grandmother's comments reflected this, as she noted Facebook is like a "window" into her granddaughter's life (Participant 021). This analogy of the window conveys a sense of observation and looking. Thus, while many grandparents do not always directly engage with their grandchildren through Facebook, they are able to use what they see on Facebook to maintain connection to their grandchildren.

In addition to engaging in lurking behavior to stay updated on their grandchildren's lives, grandparents sometimes lurked to monitor their grandchildren's behavior. While the lurking behavior previously described is focused more on staying updated with their grandchildren, here grandparents seem to actively monitor their grandchildren's profiles to ensure that their grandchildren are engaging in appropriate behavior. As such, this closely relates to the concept of interpersonal electronic surveillance (IES), which Tokunaga (2011) described as "mindful and goal-oriented behavior in which contacts of all sorts, including close friends, romantic partners, business associates, or family members, can be placed under surveillance" (p. 706). As one grandmother noted, "basically what I use it for to keep up with her and be sure that she's running with the right people" (Participant 013). In this instance, the grandmother wanted to ensure her granddaughter had good friends and would often examine her friends' comments and profiles to guarantee her granddaughter was with the "right crowd." Essentially this grandmother is watching out for her granddaughter's wellbeing.

Another grandmother explained similar monitoring behavior, indicating the importance of watching out for the "red flags" grandchildren might display on their profiles (Participant

010). This grandmother described a scenario explaining how Facebook helped her intervene in her grandson's life and prevented a bad situation from occurring. She stated,

Then he let me know how serious the relationship was – it's his first love – so he's so deeply so emotionally involved with her and um, it also put red flags up because it made me realize that there's a potential of drugs with this girl, and it made me do some grandma snooping – and I'm afraid of you to know this – because it might cause problems for all the other grandmothers and the kids may not want to talk to us – but I'm a nosy grandmother and I kind of did some checking in the background and kind of know her family history. And then I let her mother - his mother know – pay attention pay attention. That has been – it's been a godsend.

I: so it gives you insight into their lives and what's going on?

P: yeah and, I can, well – umm – not intervene, but ward off a few of the red flags, you know, pay attention this is serious. I've been through too many children, and too many grandchildren to know you can lose a child too easily. And that, that you got to pay attention to the red flags even when they're pink.

She indicates strong surveillance behavior in this scenario when she emphasizes the importance of paying "attention to the red flags even when they're pink." In this case, red flags are the warning signs that her grandson displays through Facebook. Her use of Facebook as a way to monitor his situation helped her watch out for his wellbeing. She even called Facebook a "godsend," expressing deep appreciation for it, as it has aided her in preventing problems in her grandchildren's lives from spiraling out of control.

As this grandmother indicated, her observation of a "red flag" on her grandson's profile led her to take intervening steps to prevent potential negative situations. Thus, lurking behavior can induce active engagement outside of the realm of Facebook. Several other grandparents noted a similar engagement with their grandchildren outside of Facebook based on what they had seen on their grandchildren's profiles. One grandmother noted she often calls her granddaughter to gain further understanding of something she has posted on Facebook. This is apparent when she stated, "If there's something in there that I don't understand or that I want to know more

about, well then I may get on the phone and call her" (Participant 004). Another grandmother stated that when she feels uncertain about her grandchildren's apparent absence on Facebook, she calls them to make sure they are okay. She stated,

You know, like I say, if they're not on there and there hasn't been anything in a couple of days you know that would have caused me to feel uncomfortable - why are they not there - then I may get on the phone and say "Hey," you know, "how are you guys doing?" If we got a problem....or something like that. (Participant 004)

Hence, when some grandparents are concerned with something they notice on their grandchildren's Facebook profiles, they often expose their lurking behavior to their grandchildren to approach them about their concern, rather than communicating with their grandchildren via the options available on Facebook.

This exposition of lurking behavior also occurred when grandparents in this study explained that they were moved to discuss with their grandchildren things they noticed on their Facebook profiles over a phone conversation, rather than on Facebook itself. As one grandmother stated, "I don't tend to actually comment as much on Facebook as I do, just umm, kind of being aware of what she's doing and seeing things on there and discussing it with her when I'm on the phone with her" (Participant 021). Another grandmother noted similar behavior stating, "I look at her Facebook just about every day. As far as actually interacting with her, sometimes I'll comment on it, other times I'll text her or talk to her on the phone about what I see" (Participant 013). Thus, what grandparents learned from their lurking observations was sometimes discussed during conversations with their grandchildren through other means than Facebook. In other instances, some grandparents were moved to respond to their grandchildren via Facebook based on what they had learned from their grandchild's Facebook profile, denoting active involvement via Facebook.

Active Facebook Engagement

While many grandparents identified lurking behavior as the primary way they used Facebook in their relationship with their grandchildren, several grandparents also noted that they took more active roles on Facebook to communicate with their grandchildren via the tools Facebook provided (e.g., the Facebook wall, Facebook chat, private messaging). In some instances, lurking behavior led to this more active role, as what grandparents learned via their observations prompted them to communicate with their grandchildren via Facebook. For example, one grandmother stated, "if there is something that's bothering me I can respond back to them, message back to them saying 'hey what's up, what's going on'" (Participant 001). Hence, rather than moving the inquiring conversation to a phone call or text message, this grandmother approaches her concern about her grandson's wellbeing through Facebook.

Several other grandparents mentioned that they often respond to what their grandchildren post on Facebook. One grandmother mentioned,

Usually it's something that they have put on there that happened to them, and I would respond, you know like today my oldest granddaughter got her class ring, or was ordering her college ring. And I communicated back about her ring. The one that's in Portland, I communicated with her about her dancing. She dances up there, and it's usually something to do with her activity that day. (Participant 008)

As this grandmother noted, she engages her grandchildren on Facebook about the content of their posts. And while many grandparents identified their Facebook activity as responses to what their grandchildren post, a few grandparents noted that they too share information with their grandchildren via Facebook. For example, one grandmother noted she updates her grandson about the occurrences in her life via Facebook, as she stated:

So I've been sending him pictures and talking to him about our remodeling. And, uh...you know, things that he has, uh, grown up with that has changed here. So we get to talk about that. It's just, uh, you know, just little things that go on in life that's fun to share with him. (Participant 012).

As this grandmother explained, she likes to update her grandson on her life through Facebook.

Most grandparents, however, spoke of their active Facebook activity in terms of either responding to their grandchildren's posts, as aforementioned, or inquiring into their grandchildren's lives to check-in with them and assess their wellbeing. Many grandparents mentioned they use Facebook to talk about what is going on in their grandchildren's lives. For example, when one grandmother was asked what she and her granddaughter talk about through Facebook, she responded, "Basically what she's doing" (Participant 009). Thus, conversations grandparents engaged in with their grandchildren through Facebook often focused on their grandchildren's lives. Topics of conversations varied, ranging from their grandchildren's school and extracurricular activities, to their jobs, to their children. As one grandmother noted, "right now, our biggest topic is baby. That's our biggest one because right now, it's a big thing. She's having the first little girl; I've got 7 [great] grandsons and so she's having the first little girl" (Participant 004).

In addition to inquiring about their grandchildren's daily lives, grandparents also used Facebook to assess their grandchildren's well-being, as one grandmother noted, "I will send messages just to make sure everyone is okay" (Participant 008). These inquiries into their grandchildren's state of emotional wellness and into their daily life activities place grandparents in the position to offer support and encouragement to them. Hence, like text messaging, Facebook offered an avenue for grandparents to display the nurturing role of a grandparent (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981).

Related to this nurturing role, several grandparents touched upon the notion of encouragement and support when discussing how they use Facebook. Vitak, Ellison, and Steinfeld (2011) indicated that Facebook is often used as a tool to convey social support, which

was demonstrated in this study. One grandmother noted it offers her the means to encourage her grandson in his hobbies, as she stated, "I use it to encourage him because right now he's acting" (Participant 001). Another grandmother emphasized that she uses Facebook as a tool to express encouragement and support when her grandchildren are undergoing hard times. For example, when asked about the ways she uses Facebook with her granddaughter, this grandmother noted,

Usually encouragement, usually ummm...like during a breakup with the boyfriend – umm, if she really really liked him and if he's like really a loser (laughs). You got me going into my grandmother – talking to the team – really really. (laughs). I try to encourage her, that - you know that if it's meant to be – if God wants him to come back into her life – don't let other people bring you down, don't let other people make fun of you for liking him, for having him, you know. (Participant 010)

In this example, the grandmother demonstrates how she expresses support to her granddaughter during an emotional relationship break-up and explains how she used Facebook to engage in her grandmother "talking to the team" mode. Thus, even though she is not physically present to engage in this type of grandmother talk with her granddaughter, Facebook enables her to express this type of support.

This grandmother also noted how she uses her own profile to act as support and encouragement for her grandchildren and other young adults by maintaining a positive profile and posting uplifting messages. As she stated, "there are ways that we can get messages through to them [young adult grandchildren] by having an upbeat positive Facebook ourselves, as grandparents" (Participant 010). Hence this grandmother not only spoke direct messages of support to her granddaughter and other grandchildren, but also posted messages that acted as indirect measures of support and encouragement.

Overall, while lurking was the predominant activity grandparents described during the interviews, several grandparents noted more active engagement with their grandchildren by responding to their grandchildren's Facebook posts, inquiring about their daily activities and

well-being, sharing with their grandchildren about their own lives, and offering support and encouragement. Thus, not only does Facebook provide a "window" or "lens" into the lives of their grandchildren, as one participant noted (Participant 021), but it also allowed them to engage with their grandchildren when they desired. Despite the ability for engagement, several grandparents noted that their communication via Facebook was often "guarded," avoiding personal and emotional topics.

"Guarded" Communication

The term "guarded" in the title of this category is an In-vivo code that emerged through two participant explanations of their uses of Facebook to communicate with their grandchildren. These two participants noted that they exhibited "guarded" behavior on Facebook that restricted their communication from emotional and personal topics. In many cases, this was due to the public nature of Facebook and the limited ability for Facebook to convey nonverbal communication. Similar to the results about grandparents' uses of text messaging, the avoidance of emotional and personal topics on Facebook was a theme reflected by a majority of the participants in this study.

As aforementioned, several grandparents noted they would avoid sending highly emotional information via Facebook. As one grandparent stated, "I wouldn't talk to him about real emotional things because on Facebook, it would be too easy to misunderstand" (Participant 001). Thus, in this case, this grandmother noted emotional topics are more equivocal when communicated through Facebook, alluding to the inability of Facebook to not convey emotions in their totality. Like text messaging, this reflects the media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Walther, 1992), as Facebook communication is considered a leaner medium for conveying emotions. This grandmother noted the specific cues lacking in Facebook, such as "facial

expressions," "bodily expressions", and "vocal cues". These cues aid in a fuller understanding of a person's emotional state and the inability for these cues to be present on Facebook makes it difficult for one to understand emotion conveyed through the medium.

In addition to some grandparents' reluctance to convey emotional information on Facebook, multiple grandparents noted that they also avoided displaying personal information. In several instances, this was directly related to the public nature of Facebook, as one grandmother noted: "Well, you have to remember that that is public - very public. So you don't want to get into personal things" (Participant 009). Hence, knowing that others could see what they write on their grandchildren's walls or in relation to their pictures limited them from writing about personal topics.

Most often, grandparents noted that if they wanted to share something personal, they would call their grandchildren instead of communicating it through Facebook. For example, one grandmother stated,

But I try to keep it just to an everyday conversation. I don't try to get in with any – I don't want to get on there and put out my whole life story on how I feel about things. So if it's something personal then I'll get on the phone and call her. If not, then I'll just leave a question or leave an answer and then I'll go about. (Participant 004)

As this grandmother noted, she tries to keep her conversations on Facebook to "everyday" topics without personal information; if necessary, she calls her granddaughter to talk about personal topics. This notion of keeping Facebook talk to an "everyday conversation" was repeated by several other grandparents as well. For example, one grandmother stated, "well...anything private wise, I wouldn't want to [write on Facebook]. You know anything about them that I wouldn't want anyone to see. You know other than just normal conversations where if you had company in your home listening to you" (Participant 008). The idea of keeping her Facebook conversations to a "normal conversation" with others listening illustrates how people can "listen"

to one's conversations on Facebook, thus making it inappropriate to reveal personal information because other people can witness such disclosures.

When asked to explain the nature of "personal" to clarify what would constitute a personal issue, grandparents most often noted things such as illness or death. For example, one grandmother stated, "you know if someone happens to get sick. I don't - I would hate to read on Facebook that 'hey, my mom is almost croaking, give me a call.' You know...that type of thing" (Participant 004). In addition to illness, one participant stated that "personal family issues" and "family plans" were too personal to reveal on Facebook (Participant 009). Finally, several grandparents noted that they would not want to reveal information that would be considered personal to their grandchildren. For example, one grandmother stated she would not reveal information "that somebody else can use further down, against her [her granddaughter], or anybody" (Participant 003). Hence, the nature of personal varied according to whether it was considered personal for the grandparent or for the grandchild.

Overall, the main categories that emerged to address RQ1 demonstrates that grandparents exhibit lurking behavior on Facebook to stay updated on their grandchildren's lives. To a lesser extent, some grandparents actively engaged with their grandchildren on Facebook, often as a means to express support or encouragement. However, active engagement was usually limited because of the public nature of Facebook; grandparents felt the need to maintain "guarded" communication that limited their ability to fully express emotional and personal information.

Research Question 2b

Research Question 2b asked, "What are grandparents' motivations for using Facebook to communicate with young adult grandchildren?" Through axial coding, grandparents' reported motivations were integrated into two main categories. Similar to the results concerning

grandparents' uses of text messaging, this study also revealed that grandchildren served as a motivator for grandparents to use Facebook as a tool for communication. The second motivating factor grandparents identified centered on the notion that Facebook is a convenient tool to use. Thus, grandchildren as motivator and convenience are the two categories that identify and describe grandparents' motivations for using Facebook to communicate with their grandchildren. The following section provides more information on these two categories.

Grandchildren as Motivator

Similar to the results for grandparents' uses of text messaging, many grandparents revealed that their grandchildren served as the central motivator for using Facebook to communicate with them. Themes reflecting grandchild as motivator include "that's where they are" and grandchildren are busy. I discuss these two themes in the following sections.

"That's where they are." Grandparents who used Facebook to interact with their grandchildren indicated they use it because they know their grandchildren are on Facebook. The title for this theme is an In-vivo code taken from a participant's response when explaining why she uses Facebook to interact with her grandchildren. She stated,

I do that because that's where they are. I mean that's the same way with the telephone, uh, you call them and a lot of times they do not answer, they cannot answer, you don't know where they are or what they're doing. But texting - kids will answer a text. So we've learned that if you want to talk to them you send a text first, locate them, and then you can talk to them on the telephone. Same thing with Facebook. When you're there, I can see when they're on, and I can respond to them. And if I see they've been on, it tells me that they're okay. (Participant 008)

As this grandmother noted, her granddaughter is less inclined to answer a telephone, so she must use an alternative means to access her, such as text messaging or Facebook. She is able to respond to her granddaughter on Facebook and in seeing that her granddaughter is on Facebook, she feels a sense of security in knowing that she is okay.

Similarly, another grandmother noted that while she prefers to call her grandchildren, "they don't like to communicate that way. They'll send me emails [via Facebook messaging] - so I email message more than anything" (Participant 013). Hence this grandmother is led to Facebook to communicate with her grandchildren because that is how her grandchildren choose to communicate. She recognized that Facebook is "the best way to get a hold of the grandchildren if they won't pick that phone call." As such, these grandparents are accommodating to their grandchildren's preferred method of communicating so they can stay in contact with them.

In addition to accommodating to their preferred method of communication, one grandmother indicated that Facebook fills a "gap between the grandparents and the grandchildren" as grandchildren do not communicate real issues with their grandparents on a regular basis, but they do on Facebook. As she noted,

But as far as communicating, they don't! It's almost like there's a gap between the grandparents and the grandchildren and somebody's got to fill that gap, and if - a lot of the grandparents are retired. A lot of the grandparents don't have a 9 to 5 job and they're on at 2 in the morning when they can't sleep. And um, when those teenagers are reaching out, that's when they're sending the messages - two a clock in the morning. And if you can decode what they're going through, they won't be cutters, they won't be druggies, they won't be. (Participant 010)

In recognizing that Facebook is where young adults and adolescents "go," she understood that Facebook could become an important tool for her in communicating with and helping her grandchildren. Hence, Facebook filled the gap that she felt existed between her and her grandchildren.

Grandchildren are busy. In addition to noting that their grandchildren were more prone to using Facebook as a communication tool, several grandparents also noted that the asynchronous nature of Facebook ensured contact with their grandchildren as their grandchildren maintained

very busy lifestyles. For example, one grandmother explained that while talking face to face is easier, the time may not be available for that due to her grandson's busy schedule. She stated,

It's a lot easier to talk face-to-face but you don't always have the time to do that. If he [her grandson] is tied up in rehearsals or if he's tied up with classes, it's just easier to message back and forth and know that I've messaged him and I know that later on that he'll reply back when he has time. (Participant 001)

Hence, because both parties in a conversation do not have to be present at the same time to communicate, Facebook allows participants to interact with each other when they have different schedules.

One participant noted the value in using Facebook to communicate with her granddaughter due to her granddaughter's busy and changing schedule. When asked why she used Facebook with her granddaughter, she stated, "Because sometimes she's not available to take the phone call. I don't know what her class schedule is and her work schedule, and so I don't want to interrupt her" (Participant 009). Hence, Facebook offers this grandmother an opportunity to communicate with her granddaughter and not disturb her granddaughter at the same time.

Convenience

In addition to being moved to use Facebook because of their grandchildren's proclivity to use the social networking site, grandparents were also motivated to use Facebook because of the convenience Facebook afforded them. Many grandparents identified that Facebook was an easy means to maintain contact with their grandchildren. As one grandmother noted,

You know, we used to, like the Church - if anyone was ill, the only way we knew about it was usually by a phone call or we happen to talk to someone and they tell us so and so is in the hospital. Facebook lets you keep up with a lot of people in a short period of time. And if someone is ill or hurt then you've got a number [of people] that knows it immediately. It's not like you have to go on at telephone chain and call them. (Participant 008)

This grandmother compared Facebook to the way information used to travel through church communities prior to the age of the Internet. As such, she said Facebook is similar in that one can keep up with a lot of people, but it is essentially a quicker means to deliver this information. Hence, for this individual, Facebook was a more convenient means of receiving information about a number of individuals, including her grandchildren.

Another grandmother stated a similar perspective about the convenience Facebook affords to stay updated on the lives of multiple people, claiming she uses Facebook because:

It's easy. I use Facebook to keep track of all my kids. And Megan will tell you between, uh, my husband's kids and my kids, I have 11 kids and 24 grandkids that I claim. And it's difficult to keep track of all of them, and Facebook makes it easy, without being on the phone all the time. (Participant 001)

As she stated, she has many children and grandchildren that she desires to maintain connection to; hence, Facebook offers a convenient means to maintain contact with multiple people. As she noted, she does not need to be on the phone all the time, or engage in the "telephone chain" as one grandmother indicated. Hence, because Facebook allows individuals to maintain contact with numerous people at once, it becomes a prime means for staying connected with family members. As one grandmother explained, "like I say, almost all the kids have Facebook, that's just the way we communicate. And I think it's an easier way for me to get on and see - okay, who's on today, who's on now?" (Participant 004).

In addition to the convenience Facebook offers in maintaining multiple contacts, grandparents also spoke of the convenience Facebook allowed in maintaining more day-to-day contact with their grandchildren. For example, one grandmother stated, "You know, I don't talk to her but once a week, maybe, so I kind of know what's going on the days I'm not talking to her" (Participant 021). She offered this as her greatest motivation, as Facebook can keep her updated on her granddaughter's life between their phone conversations. On a similar note, another

grandmother stated that keeping up with her grandchildren would "be very difficult without it [Facebook]" (Participant 004). In particular, the visual aspects that Facebook offers through displays of photographs makes her ability to stay updated on her grandchildren's lives more easy and convenient: "You know it wouldn't be as easy [without Facebook] as being able to go in and call the [grand] kids and see what pictures she took today of the kids" (Participant 004).

The ease of maintaining this day-to-day contact and of staying updated on the lives of their grandchildren was often coupled with the fact that Facebook was a convenient and easy way to bridge the distance that separated some of these GP-GC dyads. For example, one grandmother, when asked to explain why she uses Facebook, stated, "Well, it's easy. He's far away and, um...you know" (Participant 012). Several other grandparents noted the importance Facebook in distant GP-GC relationships, as one grandmother responded, "Because we can keep up with what she's doing. She's not home now, and so we don't get to see her real often. It kinda keeps up in the loop so to speak as to what's going on with her." (Participant 019). This mirrors Urista et al.'s (2008) findings that highlighted young adults and adolescents use Facebook to communicate with their family members as it offers a convenient means to maintain interaction.

Hence, overall, many grandparents noted that their motivations were connected to their grandchildren, as their grandchildren were more prone to using Facebook as a communication means and were often so busy that the asynchronous nature of Facebook communication ensured grandparents the ability to maintain contact with them. However, many grandparents also noted the importance of the convenience that Facebook afforded them in maintaining multiple contacts and staying updated with everyone, especially when their grandchildren were separated from them by significant distance. Grandparents found the convenience and ease of use as a motivating factor to communicate with their grandchildren.

Research Question 3b

Research Question 3b asked, "What are grandparents' perceptions of Facebook as a means to communicate with their young adult grandchildren?" The grounded theory analysis revealed two categories for this question: Limits "Cookie Jar Grandma" and "Satisfied Nonetheless." The first category, Limits "Cookie Jar Grandma," highlights how the public nature of Facebook restricts the participants' grandparenting role when executed through the social networking site. The second category, satisfied nonetheless, underscores how despite the limitations of Facebook, given what the social networking site offers, they are satisfied with it as a medium to interact with their grandchildren.

Limits "Cookie Jar Grandma"

The title for this category, limits "cookie jar grandma," is an In-vivo code from the statements of one participant who mentioned that Facebook is limiting when grandparents want to be the "cookie jar grandma" (Participant 010). She offered the following explanation for this,

There have been times I've wanted to just grab her, hug her, and hold her and say 'drop that loser he's going to break your heart' and I can't. It, it does tie hands as grandparents and it does limit our ability to be the cookie jar grandmother. To where we can put them in the kitchen, sit down and eat cookies and talk to them about Johnny's doing dirty. And say "really, you shouldn't go for a guy like that." It does - like I said it's a cloud - there's a cloud set up, there's a barrier between us. And um, but at least we're communicating. And I think that's the key, at least we're communicating.

As she mentioned, Facebook limits grandparents' ability to be the full nurturing grandparent.

While grandparents are able to offer encouragement and support, they cannot engage in their desired level of nurturing behavior, what this grandmother titles "the cookie jar grandmother." Furthermore, in a sense, this grandmother indicated that she cannot be completely honest with her grandchild on Facebook, as she claimed: there is a "cloud" that exists between her and her granddaughter. She later explains this cloud as generation resistance, claiming,

umm, it seems like there's a cloud that we have to – that we have to break through as grandparents, because of our generation. If I hadn't had the technology abilities that I have, I probably would not be a Facebook grandma. Because the lingo um, - and they don't want us in their lingo, they don't want us in their dress, they don't want us in their – they want us in the bleachers cheering. They don't want to see us down below meeting their friends. That's probably the best analogy I can give you. (Participant 010)

Thus, the cloud for her is the resistances she experiences from her granddaughter in letting her observe and access her life. As she stated, "they don't want us in their lingo, they don't want us in their dress..." She calls herself a "Facebook grandmother" and is thankful for the ability to understand her granddaughter's life, but she also understands there are limits on how far she can take her nurturing role on Facebook.

Part of this limit on the grandparent role on Facebook is attributed to the publicness of communication on the social networking site. This same grandmother explicitly indicates this in the following excerpt when she explains how her communication is on Facebook with her granddaughter:

It's kind of cold, because all of her friends are looking at it. And she doesn't want – all of the teenagers are this way – they don't want to be known as “ugh so you tell your grandmother everything? Well then I can't trust you.” And so it's very generic. When we're face to face. It's more real. It's more – you know when so and so Angela said this and Alex said this – and I'm going “yeah well honey you can't believe what she says you know, she's got problems.” And they're good friends, and I wouldn't dare do that on Facebook, because there is a social norm on Facebook that that grandparents can't cross. And I've made that mistake – a long time ago.

Hence, because of the publicness of Facebook posts, this grandmother is limited in her ability to display the grandparent nurturing-role and to offer support and advice to her granddaughter. As she noted, her granddaughters' friends can see what she posts and she does not want to break the social norm that guides GP-GC interaction on Facebook. Vitak et al. (2011) noted that there is a privacy trade-off when seeking or providing social support through Facebook. This seems to be enhanced in the GP-GC relationship as the grandchild may suffer or perceive negative social

feedback from peers due to the grandparents' demonstration of support. This was evident in another grandmother's story when she explained how her grandson scolded her because of what she wrote on his Facebook wall. She stated that he said, "Mimaw, that embarrassed me! Don't put that on there!" (Participant 011). Since then, she learned to not fully exhibit her grandmother role on Facebook and decided to limit what she tells him through Facebook.

Another grandfather noted the negative influence the public nature of Facebook posts have on engaging in "real" communication with his granddaughter. He explained that because multiple people are watching, it limits his ability to be completely honest and express feelings. As such, he cannot engage in an authentic conversation with his granddaughter via Facebook. The following conversation excerpt demonstrates his position about the limits Facebook imposes on engaging in authentic communication with his granddaughter:

P: it's not communication when you're talking – let's say on Facebook to someone – when you know that 50 other people are sitting on the sidelines listening. You know that's not communications. When I think of communications I think of people being truthful and expressing feelings, but you can't do that when you got people sitting all around you listening to your every word. You know, I don't think of that as communicating.

I: I see what you mean, it seems very inauthentic.

P: yeah. Good word. It's phony. I think when you communicate, it's gotta be from the heart, from the soul, you gotta be free and honest. But you can't do that when you got everybody sitting around you listening in on a private conversation. You can't have a private conversation. That's the – I guess that's the key – you can't have a private conversation. So you can't communicate. I can do that in an email or a phone call, but I can't do it on Facebook.

As he mentions, the inability for him to hold a private conversation on Facebook leads him to not see Facebook as offering a real means of communication. Several grandparents reiterated the public problem of Facebook, noting that Facebook is not as personable as a phone call or face-to-face conversation because "everybody can hear" (Participant 013).

In addition to the limits of the public nature of Facebook on the grandparents' ability to engage in full GP-GC talk, another grandmother noted that her ability to grandparent is limited by the lack of nonverbal cues on Facebook. As she explained, she cannot engage in true "grandma and grandson talk" (Participant 011) on Facebook. She stated, "the communication is there [in face-to-face conversations], how much I love him, I hug him. Emotion is put in when we are together talking. You can't do that on Facebook." Hence, the lack of nonverbal cues can limit the grandparenting role on Facebook. While not always directly connecting this to a limit on their ability to grandparent, many grandparents did note how the inability to fully express nonverbal cues led them to limit emotional talk due to the potential of misunderstandings.

Hence, these "Facebook grandparents" were often limited in their ability to fully enact their grandparent roles on Facebook. This was often a result of the publicness of Facebook. As grandparents explained, this public site restricted their desire to be nurturing and supportive on Facebook. Furthermore, the inability to nonverbally communicate with their grandchildren was also seen as limiting when trying to enact grandparent roles through Facebook.

Satisfied Nonetheless

While grandparents mentioned the limits Facebook placed on their ability to engage fully in their nurturing and supportive roles, they still indicated that they were satisfied with what Facebook had to offer. Facebook communication was not an ideal situation, but it was better than not communicating with their grandchildren at all. As one grandmother indicated, even though she cannot be personal with her grandson on Facebook, she does not expect for the social networking site to offer that, so she is satisfied with what Facebook is able to provide for her in her relationship with her grandson. She stated,

It doesn't bother me that I can't be up close and personal to him because I know I wouldn't be that way on Facebook -- I wouldn't expect it to be a humanly thing. It does not got a human factor, no emotional factor. (Participant 011)

Since this grandmother does not expect to engage in a more intimate communication on Facebook, she is satisfied with how Facebook allows her to engage with her grandson. Similarly, while one grandfather did not think Facebook communication constituted "real communication," he still indicated that he was satisfied with what Facebook provided him for his relationship with his grandchildren. His satisfaction with Facebook stemmed from the ability to "keep track of [his grandchildren]" through Facebook (Participant 007). Essentially, these grandparents understood that Facebook was limited in its ability to allow full engagement with their grandchildren, so their expectations of what Facebook could offer them for their relationship guided their assessment of Facebook as a medium for interaction. As one grandmother noted (Participant 009), she was satisfied with what she expected from Facebook.

In many instances, the expectations these grandparents had for Facebook was solely as a means to stay connected with their grandchildren. Facebook was not seen as a favorite means to communicate, but it allowed grandparents to engage in some form of communication with their grandchildren. This is reflected by the words of one grandmother when she stated, "It's a means to communicate. It's not my favorite but it's something that's available" (Participant 009). Thus, Facebook offered a means for grandparents to stay connected to their grandchildren.

Several grandparents noted that Facebook also opened up the communication between them and their grandchildren. For example, one grandmother stated,

Well it certainly opens up the lines of communication. I would think that it would [help the relationship] depending on how it is used. In my particular case it does. (pause)
Oh...my husband says we feel a little closer to them. (Participant 021)

Hence, not only can Facebook open up the lines of communication, but it also, in this instance, enabled these grandparents to feel closer to their grandchildren. This grandmother later explained that such often resulted from the fact that Facebook exposes information about their grandchildren (e.g., things they do, their thoughts) that they may not hear about in a typical phone conversation.

Therefore, in a way, Facebook enables grandparents to learn more information about their grandchildren, especially as adolescents and young adult grandchildren typically engage in high levels of self-disclosure on Facebook (Christofides, Muise, & Desmarais, 2009; Christofides, Muise, & Desmarais, 2012). Several grandparents reiterated this notion, as one grandmother stated,

The communication is more...I can pick up more information in a 24 hour period by watching Facebook than I normally would if I was just to stay in touch with him...I may call him once a week or something like that depending on their schedule, my schedule and such and there would be a lot of things I wouldn't catch or I wouldn't know about. And when you're talking to somebody like I'm talking to you...you forget things. Where on Facebook their constantly posting things, so you're gonna catch it. (Participant 001)

This grandmother explained that because Facebook supplements her communication via telephone conversations with her grandson, she is able to gain more information about him.

Another grandmother stated something similar, noting, "It's a window into her life. You know I don't talk to her but once a week, maybe, so I kind of know what's going on the days I'm not talking to her. (Participant 021). This reflects Vitak et al.'s (2011) findings that social networking sites, particularly Facebook, offer another channel through which people can maintain relationships with their close ties. Facebook has the ability to "fill in the gaps" so to speak. Or as this grandmother stated, it offers a "window" into their grandchildren's lives.

Since Facebook offers a window into their grandchildren's lives, it also gives them the ability to watch their grandchildren grow up. One grandmother noted the importance of this when she stated,

Well sometimes it [the communication on Facebook] can seem superficial, but to me it's more real, because I see her as, uh, I see them as 16 and 17 and 18 and 19, and 20. I can see them growing up on Facebook. Because it makes you back off as the one that wants to protect them and the one that wants to keep them babies....And what it does, it helps us to see them in the position we were in at that age. (Participant 010).

Hence, not only does Facebook offer a means to maintain connection to one's grandchildren, but for some, it allows them to understand that their grandchildren are maturing and also helps them to relate to them as they remember their own lives as teenagers and young adults.

Overall, the grandparents in this study seem satisfied with what Facebook offers them, even though it is not the ideal situation as a grandparent. They can still, however, through Facebook, peer into the lives of their grandchildren and maintain contact with them when they are not able to communicate with them over the phone or in a face-to-face encounter. The grandparents in this study understood that Facebook could not offer a "complete grandparent experience," and therefore adjusted their expectations for what Facebook could offer them. Thus, many grandparents were satisfied with the way Facebook allowed them to engage with their grandchildren.

Selective Coding: Establishing a Framework

Through the selective coding process, a core category emerges that integrates the categories created during the axial coding process. In this case, the selective coding process integrates the seven categories previously discussed (i.e., lurking, active Facebook engagement, "guarded" communication, grandchild as motivator, convenience, limits "cookie jar grandma,"

and satisfied nonetheless) to provide greater theoretical understanding for grandparents' uses of Facebook in their relationships with their grandchildren.

The emergent framework for grandparents' uses of Facebook with their grandchildren demonstrates that grandparents use Facebook as a supplemental communication to "fill in the gaps" in their knowledge of their grandchildren's lives when they are unable to talk with them on a frequent basis, as this mode of communication offers a convenient form of interaction that often provides more information than they could gather in a telephone conversation. As grandparents indicated, they usually learn more information about their grandchildren through Facebook even when they are just lurking and not actively engaging with them. While grandparents do exhibit an accommodation to their grandchildren's preferred technological mode of communication by using Facebook (to an extent), this is countered by the fact that grandparents saw the medium as a convenient form of contact and it allowed them to gain information about multiple contacts in a short sitting at a computer. Grandparents indicated that communication via Facebook limits their ability to enact the complete grandparent role (e.g., engaging in supportive and emotional communication), but they do not expect Facebook to provide that for their relationship and, therefore, are satisfied with what this technology can provide for their relationships with their grandchildren.

Discussion: Facebook within the GP-GC Relationship

The categories concerning grandparents' uses of Facebook provide greater insight into how grandparents' use this medium in their relationships with their young adult and adolescent grandchildren. As previously noted, seven categories emerged relating to the three research questions concerning grandparents' uses of Facebook: lurking, active Facebook engagement, "guarded" communication, grandchild as motivator, convenience, limits "cookie jar grandma,"

and satisfied nonetheless. When viewing these from a holistic perspective, Facebook emerges as an important tool for grandparents to keep track of their grandchildren, as it offers them a window through which they can peer into their grandchildren's daily lives. While, like text messaging, grandparents exhibited accommodating behavior to their grandchildren when using Facebook as they knew their grandchildren used the medium often and that their grandchildren had busy lives, this did not emerge as prominently with this medium because grandparents also noted that Facebook was a convenient tool. Furthermore, Facebook offered more than just a means of contact, but a way to monitor their grandchildren's lives and to watch them grow and mature across the years. Hence, the multi-modality of Facebook was particularly beneficial, despite the constraints Facebook placed on grandparents' abilities to engage in the complete nurturing and supportive grandparent role due to the publicness of the media.

As aforementioned, grandparents in this study exhibited a tendency to use Facebook to accommodate to their grandchildren's busy schedules and preferred form of communication. This is consistent with the results on grandparents' uses of text messaging, but to a lesser extent, as grandparents in this study seemed to enjoy the convenience that Facebook afforded them in keeping track of multiple contacts. Hence, for grandparents with many grandchildren, Facebook provided a convenient location for updates. Furthermore, grandparents seemed to enjoy the Facebook venue as it provided them with pictures of their grandchildren and conveyed their grandchildren's interests. Hence, Facebook acts not just as a medium of communication, like text messaging, but as a window into the lives of their grandchildren.

Facebook emerged as an important tool in the grandparent-grandchild (GP-GC) relationship, especially for relationships characterized by significant distance separation. Similar to grandparents' uses of text messaging, the ability for Facebook to supplement phone and face-

to-face conversations can promote "connected presence" (Christensen, 2009; Licoppe & Smoreda, 2005) within the GP-GC relationship. Fostering connected presence may occur more effectively through Facebook than text messaging, as grandparents are able to witness and read about their grandchildren's activities through the multi-modal social networking site. The ability to see photographs that document their grandchildren's activities and to read their grandchildren's status updates help "fill in the gaps" of interaction within the GP-GC relationship. As indicated by the results in this study, grandparents use the information they learn on Facebook in conversations they have with their grandchildren. Thus, what they see and read on Facebook is woven into their telephone or face-to-face conversations. This creates a more constant stream of interaction between grandparents and grandchildren, which can foster a feeling of connected presence.

Facebook not only can foster a sense of connected presence for grandparents in the GP-GC relationship, but it also enables grandparents to learn more about their grandchildren than they would learn through other means (such as on the telephone or in a face-to-face conversation). Reflecting the research of several scholars (Christofides et al., 2009; Christofides et al., 2012), grandparents in this study noted that young adults and adolescents tend to reveal more information via Facebook. Grandparents use this information, not only to understand their grandchildren's interests, but to monitor their grandchildren's behaviors as well. As such, grandparents are looking out for the grandchildren via this social networking site, even though they mostly do this "behind a curtain" as they tend to more often "lurk around" their grandchildren's Facebook pages than engage in active interaction with them through the site.

Grandparents' main behavior of lurking on Facebook, characterized as viewing a person's Facebook profile without commenting thus not making one's presence known (Pempek et al.,

2009), is fundamentally different from what scholars (Bornow & Barkhuus, 2011; Cajigas, 2011; Kennedy, 2009; Lewis & West, 2009; Urista et al., 2008) and popular opinion define as "Facebook stalking." Facebook stalking is accompanied by feelings of guilt in those who engage in such behavior (Bornow & Barkhuus, 2011; Kennedy, 2009; Lewis & West, 2009) and is negatively marked as "creepy" (Bornow & Barkhuus, 2011). Even though grandparents are examining their grandchildren's profiles often without providing their grandchildren with indication they have done so via Facebook, grandparents do not associate their behavior with negative connotations. Instead, they see it primarily as a means to stay connected and "in-tune" to their grandchildren's lives.

However, lurking in this case is also fundamentally different from the traditional conceptualization of lurking on online forums or other social networking sites (Pempek et al., 2009). The difference that emerges from lurking in the GP-GC relationship as opposed to a person engaging in lurking behavior on a stranger's social networking profile concerns grandchildren's awareness of their grandparents' observational behaviors. As aforementioned, grandparents commonly discuss what they learn on Facebook about their grandchildren in conversations with them in person (whether through face-to-face or the telephone). Therefore, while grandchildren may not know when their grandparents are observing their profiles, they still are cognizant of the fact that they do, as grandparents discuss with them the information gained from their profiles. Hence, lurking in close familial relationships may manifest differently from the traditional concept of lurking that occurs in stranger or acquaintance relationships.

Several reasons emerged for grandparents more prominent lurking behavior than active Facebook engagement. Most of these reasons were connected to privacy concerns, as grandparents indicated they were more "guarded" with what they would post on Facebook

because of the public nature of the medium. Even though Facebook offers more private means of interaction, for example private messaging or "chat," most grandparents in this study were unaware of how to use these features or chose not to use them. As such, their concern for the public nature of Facebook limited Facebook's ability to offer them a more intimate means of contact. Thus, if grandparents wanted to reveal something to their grandchildren that was not characteristic of "small talk" that occurs in an everyday conversation, they would choose the telephone for such disclosures. This reflects Coyle and Vaughn's (2008) conclusion that social networking sites are not often used for disclosing important and emotional communication. For grandparents, the context of Facebook was not appropriate for engaging in personal conversation other than the "every day conversation" for which some would use Facebook. According to Petronio (2002), context is one of the five factors that influence people's willingness to disclose. Therefore, because grandparents saw Facebook as an inappropriate context for the revelation of personal information, they developed their own rules for disclosing information through Facebook, rules that limited them from revealing personal and emotional information on Facebook.

In addition to the public nature of Facebook limiting grandparents' active engagement through Facebook, grandparents also noted that it constrained their ability to fully engage in their nurturing and supportive grandparent roles. Hence, while Facebook offers an important line of contact for this relationship, it limits grandparents' abilities to grandparent as they desire, such as providing advice or support. In many instances, grandparents were restricted by the public nature of Facebook because they did not want to do anything on Facebook that their grandchildren would perceive as embarrassing. Grandparents are aware that their grandchildren's friends have

access to their Facebook profiles as well, and to preserve their grandchildren's relationships and status with their friends, grandparents limit their interaction with them on Facebook.

The limits on grandparents' abilities to embody the "cookie jar grandma" underscore the existence of potential social norms and boundaries on Facebook that guide familial interactions. West, Lewis, and Currie (2009) concluded similar results to this in their examination of young adults' perceptions of parents' uses of Facebook. The young adults in West et al.'s study viewed Facebook as something that parents do not and should not use and indicated that with parents joining Facebook, boundaries were necessary. Results suggested that young adults were hesitant to become friends with their parents on Facebook for fear of embarrassment and because of social norms. Grandparents in this study seemed to be cognizant of these boundaries established on Facebook by younger adults and typically abided by them. While parents may be less inclined to abide by these Facebook rules, as indicated by the results of West et al.'s (2009) study, grandparents attempted to preserve their relationships with their grandchildren by not intervening on Facebook and limiting visible interaction with their grandchildren.

Despite these limits on grandparents' abilities to embody their desired role of grandparenting, this did not lower grandparents' satisfaction with the medium, as they understood the constraints inherent in Facebook when using the medium in a personal familial relationship. Grandparents accepted these constraints and focused on the positive aspects of connection that Facebook provided them in the GP-GC relationship. Before Facebook, grandparents who lived at a distance from their grandchildren could not see them frequently; however, through photo sharing on Facebook, grandparents can see their grandchildren on a weekly basis. And, if grandchildren are frequent profile updaters, grandparents are able to witness what their grandchildren do and think daily. While Facebook has its limits, for

relationships characterized by infrequent face-to-face contact, Facebook can provide a strong bridge from person to person. Thus, while scholars have contested the influence of online communication in the quality of interpersonal relationships (Ledbetter et al., 2011; Walther & Parks, 2002), this study indicates that online communication through Facebook can positively enhance personal relationships.

CHAPTER 6

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore grandparents' uses of technology, namely text messaging and Facebook, in the grandparent-grandchild (GP-GC) relationship to understand how these technologies influence the relationship and aid in relational maintenance. Many GP-GC relationships are characterized by geographic separation (Harwood & Lin, 2000), but with the advent of short messaging services and social networking websites, grandparents no longer have to wait for the holidays or for a phone call to interact with their grandchildren. Instead, they have access to technologies that put them within arm's reach of communicating with their grandchildren at potentially every minute throughout the day. Few researchers have examined the impact of technology use in the GP-GC dyad (Harwood, 2000a; Holladay & Seipke, 2007; Hurme, Westerback, & Quadrello, 2010), providing a nascent understanding about technology use in GP-GC relationships. This exploratory study extended the work of these scholars through seeking to understand grandparents' purposes for using text messaging and Facebook with their young adult grandchildren, grandparents' motivations for using these technologies within the GP-GC relationship, and grandparents' perceptions of these technologies as they influence the relationship.

Through 23 interviews with participants from across the United States, grandparents shared their experiences about technology use in their relationship, highlighting how they typically use Facebook or text messaging, why they use these technologies to interact with their grandchildren, and what they think about these mediums as they influence the relationship. Following grounded theory analysis, six categories emerged addressing the research questions for grandparents' uses of text messaging (i.e., relational communication, task communication,

text messaging is not-for, grandchild as motivator, bittersweet acceptance, and bridging the distance) and seven categories emerged addressing grandparents' uses of Facebook (i.e., lurking, active Facebook engagement, "guarded" communication, grandchild as motivator, convenience, limits "cookie jar grandma," and satisfied nonetheless). For text messaging, these categories combine to underscore how grandparents primarily accommodate to their grandchildren by using the medium, which results in more frequent interaction and helps to foster a stronger sense of connection to them. While accommodation emerged as a theme in the Facebook results as well, the predominant framework that manifested was that the convenience of Facebook helps grandparents supplement their communication with their young adult grandchildren, as Facebook "fills in the gaps" in their knowledge of their grandchildren's lives when they are unable to talk with them on a frequent basis through other means. Hence, while both text messaging and Facebook offer essentially supplemental communication in this relationship, one emerges more out of accommodation and the other out of convenience. This is not to say that grandparents who use text messaging do not find the service convenient, but the predominant theme throughout the interviews was that they use it more because of their grandchildren, not because of the convenience it may possibly afford them.

This study highlights the influence of technology in the GP-GC relationship and is significant for several reasons. First, despite the infiltration of information and communication technologies across the world, academic research addressing how older adults use these technologies is sparse (Selwyn, 2004; Selwyn, Gorard, Furlong, & Madden, 2003). This is especially true for technologies, such as text messaging and Facebook, that are often associated with the young adult and adolescent populations. While young adults may be considered high users of these mediums, older adults' uses of these mediums are on the rise (Zickuhr & Madden,

2012). According to Zickuhr and Madden, more than half of adults older than 65 have a presence online and incorporate the Internet into their daily lives. And while email use is still the most frequent communication tool for older adults on the Internet, their social networking site usage continues to increase, for example, rising 150% from 2009 to 2011. Furthermore, Zickuhr and Madden maintained that as of February 2012, one-third of older adult Internet users frequent social networking sites. These researchers noted that nearly 70% of older adults own and use a cell phone on a regular basis as well. Thus, consistent with Zickuhr and Madden, the results of my study indicate that some older adults use technology on a regular, frequent basis.

Furthermore, as my study indicated, older adults frequently use technology to keep up with family members, reflecting findings by Fox (2004) and Brantzaeg, Luders, and Skjetne (2010).

Therefore, examination for how older adults use technology, especially concerning their use in familial relational matters, proves an area ripe for study. Harwood (2000a) noted that studies of communication technology use within relationships are rarely conducted. Hence, this study falls in line with other studies (Harwood 2000a, Holladay & Seipke, 2007; Hurme et al., 2010) pioneering the examination of communication technologies as they function within relationships. Furthermore, this study builds upon the paucity of research that examines communication within the GP-GC dyad.

Despite the importance of the GP-GC relationship to both grandparents and grandchildren, few researchers (Harwood, 2000a; Holladay & Seipke, 2007; Soliz, Lin, Anderson, & Harwood, 2006) have analyzed the communication processes within the relationship. Results of this study indicate the important line of communication that text messaging and Facebook offers to grandparents as they are unable to interact frequently with their grandchildren through face-to-face or voice calling mediums. Both of these communication

technologies provide more frequent contact for grandparents with their grandchildren, helping create a more constant stream of interaction and thus potentially fostering a sense of "connected presence" (Christensen, 2009; Licoppe & Smoreda, 2005). Text messaging and Facebook, therefore, operate as important tools for maintaining the GP-GC relationship.

Theoretical Implications

The results of this study present a number of implications for theories previously applied to communication between older and young adults, including communication accommodation theory (CAT, Giles, Coupland, & Coupland., 1991) and social identity theory (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Furthermore, in the area of computer-mediated communication, the findings of this study create several implications for the media richness theory (MRT, Daft & Lengel, 1986) as well. Concerning CAT, the results of this study indicate potential relevant theoretical findings for the GP-GC relationship and suggest unique applications for the theory that have yet to be examined. CAT, according to Giles and Ogay (2007), "provides a wide ranging framework aimed at predicting and explaining many of the adjustments individuals make to create, maintain, or decrease social distance in interaction" (p. 325). CAT is based upon premises of SIT, which dictate that social interactions are negotiations of ingroup and outgroup relations (Giles & Ogay, 2007). According to the premises of CAT, people in interactions converge toward each other to minimize social distance; divergence, on the other hand, creates social distance between interlocutors by emphasizing the differences between them (Giles et al., 1991; Giles & Ogay, 2007). Convergence and divergence are seen as ways to accommodate or under-accommodate others. While predominantly focused on linguistic means of converging and diverging, the theory can also be used to understand how personal identity symbols (e.g., dress, hair style, etc.) are used as a means to minimize social distance during intergroup relations.

Researchers have commonly applied this theory to intergenerational relationships between young and older adults (Anderson, Harwood, & Hummert, 2005; Fowler & Soliz, 2010; Ryan, Giles, Bartolucci, & Henwood, 1986; Soliz & Harwood, 2006; Williams & Harwood, 2004), determining that young adults tend to overaccommodate older adults (Giles & Ogay, 2007), which manifests through patronizing speech (Hummert, 1994). To a lesser extent, this theory has been used to understand older adults' accommodating behaviors toward younger adults, primarily through examining older adults' painful self-disclosures (Fowler & Soliz, 2010). Research applying CAT to the accommodating behaviors of older adults to younger adults has concluded that older adults tend to under-accommodate younger individuals (Giles & Ogay, 2007). The results of this study provide insight into older adults' accommodating behaviors towards young adults, specifically within the GP-GC relationship. This distinction is important, as scholars (Soliz & Harwood, 2006) have noted the GP-GC relationship operates on both ingroup (through family bonds) and outgroup (through age differences) levels. Furthermore, researchers (Anderson, Harwood, & Hummert, 2005) have determined the relationships between older adults and their younger counterparts (e.g., stranger versus GP-GC relationship) have the potential to influence accommodating behaviors between the two individuals.

According to the results of this study, grandparents' uses of technology, primarily Facebook and text messaging, to communicate with their young adult grandchildren can be seen as efforts by grandparents to converge to their grandchildren and, thus, minimize social distance that may occur between them. Grandparents in this study identified that both communication technologies were meant for the young more so than for older adults (to a greater extent, this occurred for text messaging than for Facebook). Thus, these technologies can act as identity markers for young adults and adolescents. Therefore, grandparents' uses of these technologies to

communicate with their young adult grandchildren can be seen as attempts to minimize the social distance between them and their grandchildren. Technology itself becomes the point of convergence.

Interestingly, technology as accommodation has yet to be explored in interpersonal interaction. While researchers who employ CAT have identified other means of accommodation, including markers for appearance (Giles & Ogay, 2007) such as hairstyles or clothing, mediums of technologies have yet to be considered. Instead, when using CAT within the context of technologically mediated interactions, researchers (Crook & Booth, 1997; Giles & Ogay, 2007) tend to focus on the language (e.g., shorthand used in text messages) as opposed to the technology itself. Results from this study indicate, however, that communication technology mediums can potentially be considered a means of accommodation, especially when the technologies are associated with a particular group. In this study, grandparents associated the respective technologies with younger adults, indicating that Facebook and text messaging operate as identity markers for that age group. As such, following the premises of CAT, it appears that communication technologies can become mechanisms for accommodating to others in order to reduce social distance.

And while grandparents' uses of both technologies can be seen as an accommodative behavior, the theme of accommodation emerged more prominently in grandparents' accounts of their uses of text messaging than in their uses of Facebook. This is not to say their use of Facebook is not accommodative in nature, as for some grandparents, it is. However, grandparents were more prone to identify Facebook as a convenient mode of interaction that they used to communicate with others in addition to their grandchildren. Therefore, grandparents were not just using Facebook because of their grandchildren, even though that did emerge as one of

the motivating forces, but also because they seemed to find the site a convenient means to interact with other family members and friends. Furthermore, Facebook offered grandparents the ability to see their grandchildren, as the multi-modal nature of Facebook allows for photo uploads in albums in addition to textual wall postings. Thus, as being more convenient and offering more opportunities to find connection to their grandchildren, Facebook may be more pleasant for grandparents to use. Additionally, the age markers that characterized grandparents' discussions of text messaging emerged to a lesser extent in grandparents' conversations about Facebook. Thus, grandparents may not associate Facebook to youth as they do text messaging (e.g., text messaging is natural for young adults and adolescents).

Even though grandparents' uses of Facebook and text messaging can be seen as a means of convergence, grandparents also diverge from their grandchildren when using these technologies in several ways. On multiple occasions, especially with concern to the use of text messaging where the notion of accommodation emerged as more prevalent, grandparents indicated that they tell their grandchildren they prefer phone calls. They explained this as a result of their "old school" nature. By intentionally explicating their "old school" preferences, grandparents are diverging from their young adult and adolescent grandchildren, thus countering the effects of the convergence provided by using the communication mediums within the relationship. This divergence, however, serves a purposeful function, as grandparents may want their grandchildren to understand the effort they put into communicating with them. Essentially, these grandparents who use text messaging and Facebook to communicate may want their grandchildren to think that this is an extraordinary action and that they should appreciate their efforts. One of the grandparents in this study even noted this, as she explained she hopes her

grandchildren appreciate the fact she is attempting to learn and use these new technologies to communicate with them.

In addition to intentional divergence, grandparents also noted instances where unintentional divergence is created when using these technologies to communicate with their young adult grandchildren. In many cases, this resulted from a learning gap with the technology. For instance, on Facebook, several grandparents noted they were not too familiar with the privacy controls on Facebook and many seemed to not understand the private messaging services Facebook offers. Therefore, instead of communicating directly with their grandchildren through the social networking site, many grandparents opted to call them to discuss what they learned on their grandchildren's profiles. For text messaging, privacy was not of concern, but grandparents noted they were often less agile at typing, which meant it took longer to send messages to their grandchildren. Furthermore, several grandparents noted they were unwilling to use incorrect punctuation or shorthand abbreviations. Therefore, grandparents' linguistic behaviors when using these technologies create instances of divergence from their grandchildren.

Due to the nature of this study, it is impossible to understand grandchildren's perspectives on their grandparents' uses of technology in the relationship. Therefore, it is difficult to understand the outcome of the use of technology as a convergence factor, especially when this can be countered by unintentional and intentional divergences on behalf of grandparents. However, if grandchildren hold positive perceptions about their grandparents using new technology, it is possible for this to positively influence their perceptions of older adults in general. As per the intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954), a person's interactions with an outgroup member may influence perceptions of the overall outgroup; this proves to be even more powerful when the outgroup member that one has contact with occurs through an intimate, long-

term relationship (Pettigrew, 1998; Wright, Aron, & Tropp, 2002), such as the GP-GC relationship. Therefore, grandparents' uses of new technology can potentially alleviate negative stereotypes of older adults. Future studies should investigate young adults' perceptions of their grandparents' uses of new technology to come to a better understanding of their perceptions of these actions and if and how they influence their perceptions of the older adult population in general.

In addition to creating implications for CAT, the results of this study hold pertinent information for MRT and previous research on technology use in relationships as well. Both grandparents who used text messaging and who used Facebook indicated deficiencies in these technological mediums to convey nonverbal communication and emotions. This reflects MRT, which holds that communication mediums vary in their ability to convey multiple cues (Walther, 1992). Lean mediums (e.g., text messaging), which convey fewer cues, are not seen as appropriate avenues for ambiguous or emotional information, but are considered more appropriate for unequivocal messages. While grandparents' noted these concerns, this did not prevent them from using these mediums to communicate with their young adult grandchildren. However, it did prevent them from engaging in more intimate forms of communication via these communication technologies.

Despite the limited intimate contact leaner media provides, grandparents in this study still frequently relied on these media as a form of contact with their young adult grandchildren. As such, this provides support for Holladay and Seipke's (2007) conclusion that leaner media plays a relatively large role in maintaining relationships between grandparents and grandchildren separated by distance. Even though grandparents do not often use these mediums to engage in intimate conversations with their grandchildren, they relied on these mediums to convey short

messages that indicated they are thinking of their grandchildren. Furthermore, these technologies enabled grandparents to stay updated on their grandchildren's lives, allowing them to feel like they are a part of them even though they are separated geographically. The frequency at which grandparents can use these asynchronous mediums with their grandchildren can also create a feeling of "connected presence" (Christensen, 2009; Licoppe & Smoreda, 2005). Therefore, the supplemental roles of these mediums can act as powerful tools of connection within the GP-GC relationship.

Thus, as Harwood (2000a) and Holladay and Seipke (2007) indicated, communication technologies, despite their deficiencies, can enhance the connection of people in relationships. Reflecting Harwood (2000a) and Holladay and Seipke's (2007) conclusions, this study indicates that traditionally lean mediums may not be as deficient as proposed by MRT because they can foster strong connections. Consequently, this raises important questions concerning the applicability of MRT to new media, such as Facebook and text messaging. With new communication technologies, there is often a merging of rich and lean media (e.g., Facebook allows the ability to upload photos which adds a degree of richness to the textual nature of the site). Trying to decide whether a new technology is rich or lean can be challenging. Furthermore, the ability for these technologies to play a key role in fostering strong connections for people, despite their limits, inherently begs the question concerning the applicability of MRT to new communication technologies.

Finally, this study lends support to Holladay and Seipke's (2007) hypothesis that grandparents adapt to their communication situation and adjust their expectations according to each medium, therefore, maintaining satisfaction with each communication option (e.g., Facebook or text messaging). As noted through grandparents accounts of their uses of text

messaging and Facebook, many grandparents explained that the communication quality through these mediums were limited. However, when asked about their satisfaction of communicating through these mediums, nearly all participants expressed high satisfaction. In many cases, grandparents noted that the deficiencies present in the mediums were expected, and therefore, they knew to adjust to the medium (as the medium cannot adjust to the person). Thus, grandparents' satisfaction in using text messaging or Facebook to communicate with their grandchildren never wavered.

Practical Implications

Several practical concerns have emerged from the findings in this study. As indicated in this study, it is apparent that some grandparents use new communication technologies to help supplement the face-to-face and phone communication they have with their grandchildren. However, with concern to Facebook, it was noted throughout the interviews that several grandparents were uncertain of the privacy controls on Facebook and even unaware of the ability to engage in private chat or messaging with their grandchildren through the site. Therefore, education on how to appropriately set privacy controls on Facebook and how to use private communication features the site offers could be beneficial for grandparents who choose to use this site to interact with their grandchildren. Considering the older adult population usage of social networking sites is rising (Madden, 2010; Zickuhr & Madden, 2012), this could be beneficial for both older adults and social networking site holders. Older adults can learn how to set privacy features and learn about other features Facebook offers. Facebook, on the other hand, will continue to gain new users and not potentially lose customers to frustration.

With concern to text messaging, grandparents in this study often noted their inability to type fast due to their large fingers and the small buttons on the phones. This reflects the findings

of other researchers (Hurme et al., 2010) who have noted that small screens and buttons on cell phones are problematic for older adults. While this issue did not prevent these grandparents from using text messaging as a mode of communication, it can potentially cause frustration with users. Problems such as these can be ameliorated with user-friendly designs for older adults.

Limitations

While this study offered insight into grandparents' uses of technology with their grandchildren, it is not without its limitations. First, the participants in this study were relatively high users of technology, thus the results do not represent grandparents who use technology on a more sporadic basis. Furthermore, most participants were predominantly women, thus limiting the voice from the grandfather perspective. This could be a result of the grandchild referral method, as grandchildren most likely chose the grandparent they are closest to and interact with the most. Researchers (Creasey & Koblewski, 1991; Hartshorne & Manaster, 1982; Kennedy, 1992; Williams & Nussbaum, 2001) have indicated that grandchildren are usually closer to their grandmothers, with the maternal grandmother ranking first. Consequently, the majority of the participants in this study were maternal grandmothers. As such, not only is the grandfather perspective limited, but the paternal grandparent perspective is limited as well.

Second, while this study did have a rather diverse sample of participants in terms of ethnicity overall, including Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics, and mixed ethnicity, the dominant representative voice was from Caucasian grandparents, especially for grandparents interviewed about their uses of Facebook (over 80% Caucasian). A more diverse sample in terms of ethnicity could possibly result with different insights than those that emerged in this study. Furthermore, whether grandparents interviewed for this study were currently working or retired was not assessed, which is limiting as this could have some bearing on grandparents' preferences

for communication mediums and would have aided in offering further insight into grandparents' motivations for using certain technologies. Finally, this study did not assess grandparents' perceived level of relational closeness to their grandchild. While grandparents were asked to focus the interview on the grandchild they use the technology with the most, which could be an indicator of relational closeness, assessing this factor could further aid in understanding the role of communication technology in the GP-GC relationship.

Future Research

New questions have emerged based on the findings of this study. First, greater insight can be gained about the role of technology in the GP-GC relationship by understanding how grandparents use technology differently with multiple grandchildren. While not in the scope of this study, during the interviews, several grandparents alluded to choosing different mediums to communicate with different grandchildren for various purposes and even made the distinction between how they used technology with multiple grandchildren. Researchers should examine this in future studies to understand if the relationship a grandparent has with his or her grandchildren, or the grandchild him/herself, influences grandparents' purposes for using technology.

Second, highlighting the grandchild perspective on this topic could garner unique information about technology use in the GP-GC relationship from the younger generations' perspective. For example, while many grandchildren encouraged their grandparents to use text messaging, this encouragement did not emerge in grandparents' discussions about their use of Facebook. Do grandchildren prefer certain modes of communication to others when communicating with their grandparents? Scholars (West, Lewis, & Currie, 2009) have indicated that grandchildren do not prefer for their parents to interact with them on Facebook, hence,

understanding how grandchildren perceive Facebook interactions with their grandparents could add further insight to this family dynamic. Additionally, results of this study indicate that social rules and boundaries exist on Facebook, guiding family interactions. Scholars should consider exploring this topic in future research to come to a better understanding of the social guidelines that naturally emerge on social networking sites.

Finally, this study created multiple implications concerning CAT and MRT, which have resulted with new areas of study in need of exploration. First, scholars should investigate the role of new technologies as a means of accommodation in intergenerational relationships, as this study indicated that choices to use new technology as a mode of communication with one's grandchild can be considered an act of convergence. This seems to occur when technology is commonly associated with a group, such as text messaging and adolescents. Studies on these intergroup relations and technology may be a fruitful area of research for future studies. Second, researchers should approach communication accommodation within the GP-GC relationship via technology from the grandchild perspective. This could potentially garner insight for how grandchildren view their grandparents' uses of technology and could lead to a greater understanding of how, if at all, this influences their perceptions of other older adults. Finally, researchers should address the applicability of MRT to new communication technologies.

Conclusions

As grandparents and grandchildren are often separated by distance, especially when young adult grandchildren move from their nuclear home, communication media becomes an important tool for maintaining contact and aiding in relational maintenance. Extending the work of Harwood (2000a), Holladay and Seipke (2007), and Hurme et al. (2010), this study examined grandparents' uses of technology, namely text messaging and Facebook, in their relationships

with their grandchildren. Specifically, this study sought to understand grandparents' purposes for using text messaging and Facebook, their motivations for using these technologies, and their perceptions of these technologies in terms of their relationship with their grandchildren. Findings suggest that text messaging and Facebook play a supplemental communication role in the GP-GC relationship, aiding grandparents in maintaining more frequent communication with their grandchildren. For grandparents' uses of text messaging, a prominent theme of accommodation emerged, as grandparents do not always prefer to use text messaging, but use the medium as it offers them a way to maintain contact with their grandchildren when other means are not available. For grandparents' uses of Facebook, the emergent framework suggests that Facebook helps "fill in the gaps" of grandparents' knowledge about their grandchildren's lives when they are unable to communicate frequently through other means. This study suggests that both mediums play a role in maintaining the GP-GC relationship and bridging the distance that often separates the two relational partners.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR GRANDPARENTS AND TEXT MESSAGING

Demographic Information

Age _____

Sex: Male Female

Race: Caucasian African American Hispanic Asian Other

Education Level: less than high school high school some college

Bachelor's degree Graduate degree

Total number of grandchildren between the ages of 16 - 25: _____

Transition: *Now, out of those grandchildren that you just noted, pick the one that you text message the most. The rest of this interview will concern your use of text messaging with that grandchild.*

Age of Grandchild you text message the most: _____

Gender of Grandchild you text message the most: _____

Relationship to Grandchild you text message the most (maternal/paternal): _____

Approximate Distance between you and your grandchild (your geographic location, your grandchild's geographic location): _____

Transition: *As I mentioned before, this study is intended to explore grandparents' use of new technologies, such as text messaging and social networking sites like Facebook, in their relationships with their grandchildren. For this interview, however, we will focus on your use of text messaging in your relationship with the young adult grandchild you text message the most. So to start things off, I was wondering....*

1. How often would you say you use text messaging to communicate with your grandchild?
2. How does text messaging influence the content of the message you send to your grandchild?

- a. What would be an example of the types of messages you send to your grandchild via text messaging?
3. How would you say it is different from how you talk to your grandchildren face-to-face?
(Probe: Why? How?)
4. What type of information would you choose not to disclose to your grandchild via text messaging?
5. So why do you use text messaging to communicate with your grandchild?
6. What are the benefits of using text messaging in your relationship with your grandchild?
7. How would you describe the quality of interaction using text messaging to communicate with your grandchild? (e.g.: what do you get out of it, do you enjoy the interaction, do you find them productive?)
8. How does your experience text messaging meet your expectation of communicating with your grandchild via text messaging? (e.g. - are you satisfied?)
9. What do you like about text messaging to communicate with your grandchild? What do you dislike?
10. How comfortable do you feel using text messaging to interact with your grandchild?
What influences your comfort level?
11. What are the frustrations of using text messaging to communicate with your grandchild?

Closing Statement: *Well that's it! Is there anything you want to add about using text messaging to communicate with your grandchild that I didn't ask?*

Thank you so much for your time and answers. If you know of anybody who fits criteria for this study, please pass word of this study to them along with my contact information so they can contact me if they are interested. Once again, thank you so much! Have a lovely day!

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR GRANDPARENTS AND FACEBOOK

Demographic Information

Age _____

Sex: Male Female

Race: Caucasian African American Hispanic Asian Other

Education Level: less than high school high school some college

Bachelor's degree Graduate degree

Total number of grandchildren between the ages of 16 - 25: _____

Transition: *Now, out of those grandchildren that you just noted, pick the one that you text message the most. The rest of this interview will concern your use of Facebook with that grandchild.*

Age of Grandchild you text message the most: _____

Gender of Grandchild you text message the most: _____

Relationship to Grandchild you text message the most (maternal/paternal): _____

Approximate Distance between you and your grandchild (your geographic location, your grandchild's geographic location): _____

Transition: *As I mentioned before, this study is intended to explore grandparents' use of new technologies, such as Facebook and social networking sites like Facebook, in their relationships with their grandchildren. For this interview, however, we will focus on your use of Facebook in your relationship with the young adult grandchild you text message the most. So to start things off, I was wondering....*

1. How often would you say you use Facebook to communicate with your grandchild?
2. How does Facebook influence the content of the message you send to your grandchild?
 - a. What would be an example of the types of messages you send to your grandchild via Facebook?

3. How would you say it is different from how you talk to your grandchildren face-to-face?
(Probe: Why? How?)
4. What type of information would you choose not to disclose to your grandchild via Facebook?
5. So why do you use Facebook to communicate with your grandchild?
6. What are the benefits of using Facebook in your relationship with your grandchild?
7. How would you describe the quality of interaction using Facebook to communicate with your grandchild? (e.g.: what do you get out of it, do you enjoy the interaction, do you find them productive?)
8. How does your experience using Facebook meet your expectation of communicating with your grandchild via Facebook? (e.g. - are you satisfied?)
9. What do you like about Facebook to communicate with your grandchild? What do you dislike?
10. How comfortable do you feel using Facebook to interact with your grandchild? What influences your comfort level?
11. What are the frustrations of using Facebook to communicate with your grandchild?

Closing Statement: *Well that's it! Is there anything you want to add about using Facebook to communicate with your grandchild that I didn't ask?*

Thank you so much for your time and answers. If you know of anybody who fits criteria for this study, please pass word of this study to them along with my contact information so they can contact me if they are interested. Once again, thank you so much! Have a lovely day!

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