

RESEARCH REPORT

Development Psychology

Editor

Raquel Souza Lobo Guzzo

Support

Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (Capes), process nº 88887146589/2017-00.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare they have no conflicts of interest.

Received

May 16, 2021

Final version

November 8, 2022

Approved

May 2, 2023

Elderly and youth: Reflections...

Idosos(as) e jovens: reflexões...

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Article elaborated from the doctoral dissertation of C. F. S. SILVA, entitled “*Relacionamento intergeracional entre idosos e adultos jovens da mesma família: caracterização e repercussões*”. Universidade Católica de Pernambuco, 2019.

How to cite this article: Silva, C. F. S., Dias, C. M. S. B., & Vilela, D. S. (2024). Elderly and youth: reflections... *Estudos de Psicologia* (Campinas), 41, e210094. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-0275202441e210094>

Abstract

Objective

The article aims to present reflections provoked through content analysis of interviews with families on the relationship between elderly people and young adults. Specifically, to make considerations on the characteristics and perceptions of both generations regarding the interactions between them.

Method

This is a qualitative, cross-sectional, and exploratory research. Twelve elderly people between 60 and 74 years old and 12 young adults between 19 and 40 years old participated, regardless of gender, social class, education, and profession. Data collection was carried out through a semi-structured interview script and a sociodemographic questionnaire. Data analysis was directed through thematic Content Analysis.

Results

The results showed that this is an intergenerational relationship permeated by nuances characteristic of the research subjects' age groups.

Conclusion

In this sense, there is a generation gap caused by the lack of quality time invested in these relationships.

Keywords: Elderly; Family; Family relations; Young adults.

Resumo

Objetivo

Apresentar reflexões provocadas através da análise de conteúdo de entrevistas com famílias acerca do relacionamento entre pessoas idosas e adultas jovens. Mais especificamente, tecer considerações sobre as características e percepções de ambas as gerações sobre as interações entre elas.

Método

Trata-se de uma pesquisa de natureza qualitativa, transversal e exploratória. Participaram 12 idosos na faixa etária entre 60 e 74 anos e 12 adultos jovens entre 19 e 40 anos de idade, independente de gênero, classe social, escolaridade e profissão. A coleta de dados foi realizada por meio de um roteiro de entrevista semiestruturada e questionário sociodemográfico. A análise dos dados foi direcionada através da Análise de Conteúdo temática.

Resultados

Os resultados demonstraram que se trata de um relacionamento intergeracional perpassado por nuances características das faixas etárias dos sujeitos da pesquisa.

Conclusão

Nesse sentido, existe um distanciamento entre as gerações ocasionado pela ausência da qualidade de tempo investido nessas relações.

Palavras-chave: *Idoso; Família; Relações familiares; Adulto jovem.*

One could consider that the longevity revolution and the Corona Virus Pandemic are the two most significant events of the 21st century. Nowadays, it is possible to observe, in many homes, up to five generations living together. This phenomenon relates to the increase in the number of people who are living longer. As a result, the elderly have the opportunity to interact with people of a younger age, such as young adults.

The “family relations” or “Intergenerationality” is understood as the relationship between people of different age groups and has as characteristics communication, care, responsibility, loyalty, and even conflicts between individuals with or without kinship (Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde, 2021).

“Elderly”, chronologically speaking, is the person aged 60 years or older in developing countries, and 65 years in developed countries (Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde, 2021; Neri, 2008; Presidência da República, 2003). “Young adult” are the individuals between 19 and 40 years of age (Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde, 2021; Papalia & Feldman, 2013; Piletti et al., 2017).

Given the above, the present research has as a general objective to present reflections provoked through the content analysis of interviews with families on the relationship between elderly people and young adults. Specifically, to make considerations on the characteristics and perceptions of both generations regarding the interactions between them.

Method

The research in focus is qualitative, cross-sectional, exploratory, and analytical in nature.

Participants

Twelve elderly people between 60 and 74 years old and 12 young adults between 19 and 40 years old participated in the research, regardless of gender, social class, education, and profession. In all, there were 24 participants with kinship relations. This is how the 12 dyads were formed: six of grandparents-grandchildren, three of uncles/aunts-nephews/nieces, and three of mothers-children. The first six elderly people and six young adults were recommended by people known to the researcher. And the other six elderly persons and six young adults, to form the dyads, were recommended by the first twelve participants (the young adults recommended the elder, and vice-versa).

Instruments

Sociodemographic Questionnaire – Composed of information about the participants such as age, sex, education, family income, profession, marital status, religion, number of elderly people and young adults in the family, kinship with the person chosen in the study, among others.

Semi-structured Interview – Composed of questions prepared by the researcher, which complied with the objectives of the research, conducted in a semi-structured way. It is an interview in which the interviewee can discuss the topic in question without being bound to the formulated question (Deslandes et al., 2008).

Procedures

Initially, the project was approved by the UNICAP/Plataforma Brasil's Ethics Committee. After the approval by the Ethics Committee, under opinion number 1.947.588, on March 2, 2017, the researcher began the field research, precisely on March 3, 2017, ending it on July 30 of the same year.

To begin data collection, the researcher called the first 12 participants and invited them to participate in the research, explaining the importance of their contribution. After some clarification, they agreed to participate. At this point, the researcher scheduled a convenient time for them, and then visited each of them. They were interviewed separately at a place of their preference.

On the day and place scheduled by the participant, he or she was asked to read the Informed Consent Form, signing it upon agreement. After that, they individually answered the sociodemographic questionnaire and the semi-structured interview script orally. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. It was emphasized that the confidentiality of the information was guaranteed. All participants were informed about the recording of the interview as well as the annotation and transcription of the contents. All participants were assigned a fictitious name.

Data Analysis

The data from this research were analyzed using Thematic Content Analysis, referenced by Minayo (2014). This method consists of discovering the nuclei of meanings that make up a communication, the presence or frequency of which holds significance for the analytical object of interest. Operationally, it is divided into three stages: 1st stage: pre-analysis (consisting of skimming through the data, constitution of the corpus, and formulation of hypotheses); 2nd stage: exploration of the material (consists in elaborating the analysis categories), and 3rd stage: analysis and interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Characteristics of the Relationship Between the Elderly and Young Adults¹

“Subcategories”

- 1.1 Perception of the dyads regarding elderly/young adults' relationship in general
- 1.2 Dyads' perceptions of their relationship with the family (elderly/young adults)
- 1.3 Dyads' perceptions about the chosen person
- 1.4 Common activities/elements
- 1.5 Significance that one has for the other

¹ Translator's note: The speeches below [sections 1.1-1.5] were transcribed in verbatim; therefore, to maintain authenticity, the translation could contain grammatical inaccuracies as well as adaptations to account for cultural idioms.

Perception of the Dyads Regarding Elderly/Young Adults' Relationship in General

In this topic, most of them perceive a distant relationship between the two generations caused, above all, by ageism, characterized by disrespect, discrimination, exclusion, mistreatment, incomprehension, impatience, and intolerance. It is also recognized that the technological revolution (which can make those who are far away closer and may cause a certain distance with those who are close) and the young adult's lack of time contribute to the estrangement. On the other hand, it can occur, perhaps, because the older person or young adult do not want this approximation, or because they have difficult personalities. Let's take some dyads as an example:

Grandparent-Grandchild Dyad

The young person, they, there are some who approach the elderly person, but there are many who do not (...) I feel this, and I have seen people who are young and do not approach the elderly, I do not know if it is because of age. Although sometimes it is not only the young person, but the elderly don't want to get close to young people either. (Ana, 67 years old, grandmother by affinity)

(. ...) In families, the most unstructured ones, the role of the elderly is seen as a burden. So, the person usually sends them to reclusion, because they don't want to be close, this prejudice with the elderly happens (...) Many people don't pay much attention, they treat them as if they were something pass its time and is just there, waiting to die. (Adalf, 25 years old, grandson by affinity).

Uncles and Aunts-nephews and Nieces Dyad:

Hum... I think that many young people don't understand the elderly. At least some of them, right? And now there's a television campaign, so many people are talking about this, right? And there are also older people who don't have patience with young people, or with a younger person. There are elderly people who are very difficult. [She stated] I am. Nobody messes, touches my soar spot, or else. (Iris, 67 years old, paternal aunt)

I see that many young people tend to exclude the elderly, I don't see a very good relationship. Many see it as a burden for those who, let's say, are starting out in life and chasing their own things, and so on, and they end up leaving the elderly on the sidelines. They don't create that bond that should be maintained, generally they don't have much connection with the elderly. (Isis, 27 years old, paternal niece)

Mother-child Dyad:

I think, in my view, that they relate very well. Now, you know, considering both the elderly and the adult, there are some people who are difficult. Sometimes they have a history with the elderly, a history with the young person, but they're difficult in themselves. (Laura, 65, mother by affinity)

In the old days there used to be a closer relationship. Maybe because of technological revolutions, today the elderly are more forgotten because of daily life, because of time, the rush of young people (...) young people no longer want to be close to the elderly, or

even their parents, they are leaving earlier and trying to live away from them. Sometimes they even forget (Luan, 40 years old, son by affinity)

Given the listed speeches, it became evident in the perception of the dyads/groups that there is, to some extent, a distancing between the elderly and young adults, a fact shared by several authors (Augustin & Freshman, 2016; Côte & Ferrigno, 2016; Ferrigno, 2016, 2018; McKinnon et al., 2013; Souza et al., 2015). This estrangement is caused by internal and external factors, in the interaction between subsystems and family-society-culture systems. This is how the property of exchanging with the environment is configured, in which the family, as an open system, interacts with the environment affecting it and being affected by it (Bertalanffy, 2008).

Corroborating this view, Ferrigno (2018) states that, nowadays, to better understand the quality of the relationships between these two generations, it is necessary to consider the context in which we live, in which, for various reasons, especially socioeconomic ones, cause the generations to be more distant from each other. One must also consider the various configurations that the family is undertaking. The mentioned author quotes Beauvoir and Ecléa Bossi, who considered the industrial society “harmful to old age”, because it transformed the family from extensive to nuclear, due to the new demands of urbanization and labor relations, by providing greater mobility to workers and accommodation in the small spaces of large cities and, thus, the elderly were distanced from their families.

Given the above, Camilli et al. (2010) emphasize that young adults tend to have a negative perception of the elderly. This process of estrangement leads to family insufficiency, which is characterized as a process of psychosocial interaction of complex structure, founded especially in the low social support to the elderly person and in the impaired family bond (Souza et al., 2015).

On the other hand, it is recognized that the technological revolution, to some extent, can also hinder the relationship between these two generations, since not all seniors, either for not wanting to, or for not having cognitive or financial conditions, have access to this means of communication to interact with young adults and follow this evolution (Doll et al., 2016). From another perspective, when seniors and young adults are capable of using these to interact with young adults and keep up with that evolution (Doll et al., 2016). Further, when seniors and young adults have the possibility to use these technological resources, the rapprochement between these generations may happen, mainly by the decrease in the geographical distance (Torres & Dias, 2017).

However, Pinto et al. (2017, p. 290), refer that “although technology presents itself as an important achievement, human relationships need personal contact”, and further reinforce that “those who suffer most from the lack of a closer relationship are the grandparents, or those who, even without grandchildren, are seniors in a society of machines”. Therefore, it is pertinent to reflect that virtual relationships cannot replace in-person relationships.

Another important reason cited was the young adult’s lack of time, for being involved with the tasks of the acquisition phase, not having more time to dedicate to the elderly and also to receive support from them (Berthoud & Bergami, 2010; Carter & McGoldrick, 2007; G. C. A. S. Oliveira, 2015; Papalia & Feldman, 2013). Thus, in the quest to achieve these goals, distance increases, limiting opportunities for contact. Dias and Oliveira (2017) complement this by saying that, regarding grandchildren, the realization of activities with grandparents decreases after entering the university, but grandchildren continue to value their grandparents.

Another situation reported was the occurrence of distancing due to the elderly person or young adult having a difficult personality, or even because they do not desire closeness. Ferrigno

(2016) states that if, on the one hand, certain values operate to keep young people away from the elderly, on the other, sometimes it is the elderly who keep away from young people.

Regarding the fact that the elderly do not desire closeness, Carstensen (1991, 1992) states, based on the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory, that selectivity in old age increases with regard to the number of people with whom the elderly maintain social interactions. The reduction of relationships is the result of a lifelong selection process whereby, in a strategic and adaptive manner, one chooses with whom to interact to maximize gains and minimize possible social and emotional risks. Perhaps this is a way of protecting oneself.

Perception of the Dyads/Groups Regarding the Relationship they Maintain in the Family

In this theme, the dyads/groups stated that they maintain a friendly relationship with the other elderly/young adults in the family. However, they acknowledged young people having less time, because they are involved with the tasks of the acquisition phase, as well as the geographical distance, which contributes to less cohabitation and closeness:

Grandparent-grandchild Dyad:

The young adults in my family are very nice to me (...) And I don't have much dialogue with them because they don't have much time, but we get along well (...) I think they recollect that I used to play hide and seek with them as little boys, that's good, they remember it. (Benta, 65, maternal grandmother)

I have but a few elderly people in my family (...) With my paternal grandmother there is a block because we never had proximity (...) We live far away, we never had much affection and conversation, so much that until today communication is very blocked, there is a block (...) But with my maternal grandmother, it is completely different, two different people, I don't know if it is because of our religion, if we have common interests, but it is completely different. (Bella, 22 years old, maternal granddaughter)

Uncles and Aunts-Nephews and Nieces Dyad:

Look, my relationship with young adults is the most beautiful in the world, I hate those who despise them. I get along with everybody. I think the youth is beautiful (...). But the one I am most attached to is Isis, my niece, she is a wonderful girl. Not to belittle the others... Yes, but it's her. Just Isis. Although I love them all, right? My love for them is the same. But she is more communicative with me (...). (Íris, 67 years old, maternal aunt)

It's a good relationship. At least I think they like me [laughs]. (...) As for myself, I think that my relationship could be a little better, maybe because of the lack of time that we have nowadays, the rush, a lot of things to do, a lot to study. But I recognize that I could have a better relationship (...) With the little time I have, I end up doing other things, I end up not developing bonds with them, and that's something I would like to do. It's a matter of time. Sometimes you know you have to do something, but you don't do it. Because you don't have time, you are tired, sometimes you prefer to sleep, and you end up not doing it. (Isis, 27 years old, maternal niece)

Mother-Child Dyad:

It's good, thank God, I have nothing against it. (Jane, 66 years, mother)

I don't have much contact, you know. I treat them well, and the ones I spend most time with are my mother and my father. But I still have the same respect and attention [with other elderly relatives] (...) We don't cohabit much. Unfortunately, I think this happens due to lack of time, right? Nowadays it is lack of time. (Julie, 38 years old, daughter)

It can be observed that, contrary to what was perceived in the previous theme, in general there was a good perception of the relationship between the generations of the family. However, the young people's lack of time to relate to the elderly resurfaced. In this regard, Lerner (1995) states that this period of adulthood is the time when young people set new goals and want to increase independence and responsibility. During this period, most young people's time is mitigated by the activities of the acquisition phase. The said author reinforces that many young people are interested in establishing more meaningful relationships outside of family networks.

In this sense, Dias and Oliveira (2017) point out that the relationship between these two generations tends to become weaker with advancing age. On the other hand, Connidis (1989) points out that adulthood can strengthen the ties between grandparents and grandchildren, as the latter are now better able to assess their impact on their lives.

Vicente and Souza (2012), when analyzing the social networks of older adults in four-generation families in Portugal, found that participants had a family-centered, medium-sized, dense, and homogeneous network. Similarly, Zapata Lopes (2015) sought to describe the social and family support networks available to the elderly in Antioquia/Colombia. This study resulted that the elderly were satisfied with the support they received, while recognizing that the demands of young life impede greater cohabitation.

In Brazil, D. M. Silva et al. (2015) conducted a research in Jequié (Bahia), aiming to describe the dynamics of intergenerational family relationships from the perspective of the elderly, in which the results showed that there is a relationship of friendship. Similarly, D. M. Silva et al. (2015), when investigating the perception of the elderly in intergenerational homes, in the same state, found that the representational structure reveals a strong affective load of the elderly regarding the family.

Another important factor mentioned was geographic distance as an impediment to greater proximity. Vicente and Souza (2012) and Dias and Oliveira (2017) state that geographical distance affects the sensitivity of members of the family network and their ability to provide affective support to the elderly in a crisis.

Dyads' Perceptions About the Chosen Person

In this item, everyone affirmed maintaining a closer relationship with the person they chose than the other elderly/young adult relatives of the same family, regardless of blood ties; these identifications with the chosen elderly/young adult are possible due to the reciprocal receptiveness, attention, affection, and care.

The following relationship characteristics were highlighted: receptiveness, attention, care, affection, communication, presence, and respect. However, once again, the young adult's lack of time/quantity of time available to be present was highlighted as a reason for a lesser coexistence; however, it can be much more important the quality of the encounter, in the sense of the affective

exchange between them. It was also mentioned that, despite the good interaction, sometimes there are conflicts, as occurs in any relationship.

Grandparent-Grandchild Dyad:

Well, right? Despite the problem with the father [her oldest son]. You know, right? But I don't get involved, I don't have any problem. (...) Then, when I least expect it, she calls, she says: 'Grandma, I didn't call because I was working a lot, or whatever'. (Flora, 68 years old, paternal grandmother).

Very good, it's like this. She believes that my relationship with my father interferes in my relationship with her. But it has nothing to do with it, really, it is the daily rush (...) She is a very loving person, very dear (...) She is very present in my life. When we get there, she wants to bake a cake, she wants to set everything on the table, she wants us to eat, there is the chicken, there is the pasta. (Fany, 27 years old, paternal granddaughter).

Uncles And Aunts-Nephews and Nieces Dyad:

She's good. Gaby is a good girl, she always was. (...) She always behaved very well. (...) She is a top-notch girl (...). She is affectionate with me and is like that with everyone, respects people. She is, like that, very much like these people who like to help. (...) She talks to me a lot. (Gilca, 69 years old, paternal aunt)

(...) She was always very calm, there was never any friction or anything like that... calm. She worries about me, is attentive to me. So, just yesterday I was sick, then she came, brought me a bunch of medicine, gave me water, told me to take my medicine, said I should get better so I wouldn't have to go to the hospital late at night, she cared like that (...). (Gaby, 24 years old, paternal niece)

Mother-Child Dyad:

It's good. But there are also times when things get rough. We are communicative (...) She doesn't like to sit down to talk about her matters. (...) In the house, she does what she can to help (...) Now we are talking more. (Maria, 67 years, mother)

It is good, from the perspective of someone who has many children and no patience, I get along with her very well (...) Go shopping together, go to the bank together and sleep together [laughs] (...) now, I am talking more with her, because I am more at home, not working, with more time. (Malu, 33 years, daughter)

This result corroborates the findings of Dias and Oliveira (2017), who, in their research on bonds between adult grandchildren and their grandparents, the participants reported perceiving the relationship as very good. They state that the interviewed grandchildren unanimously responded that their grandparents, regardless of maternal or paternal attachment, were and continue to be special people of great significance. The authors point out that this result corroborates with the literature when it states that the significance of grandparents is associated with the type of relationship established between generations. C. F. S. Silva (2019) also stated that, in general, the

type of interaction between family members will depend on how this relationship was built over the years.

In this sense, one realizes that the behavior of every person within the family group is related to and depends on the behavior of the other, but if there is any change in one of the parts, it will cause change in all parts and in the overall system (Bertalanffy, 2008). In this context, according to the speeches listed, it is assumed that this parameter can also be extended to the relationship between uncles/aunts and nephews/nieces, and mothers and children.

On the other hand, it was also mentioned that, despite the good interaction, sometimes there are conflicts, which corroborates the findings of D. M. Silva et al. (2015) when researching the dynamics of intergenerational family relationships from the perspective of the elderly. The authors point out that, although family life is based on care, support, and family unity, conflicts are also part of family relationships. According to Bertalanffy (2008), conflicts usually characterize the negative feedback of the system to reestablish family homeostasis.

Once again, the lack of time/amount of time available for the young adult's presence was highlighted as a reason for less coexistence. However, the quality of the gathering may be much more important, in the sense of the affective exchange between them at that moment, than the amount of time, without any meaning.

Yet, the researcher, from her experience in the field of Gerontology, can infer that the fact of a young adult/elderly choosing one among other (young adults/elderly) in the same family, refers not only to the quantity and quality of moments spent together, the affective exchange, but above all, the receptiveness, the attention, the affection, the respect, and the consideration. These are elements that feed back the interaction between both and establish the family homeostasis.

Common Activities/Elements

As for the common activities/elements, "food" was the predominant aggregating element (the "food", "eating"). The way of dressing and going to church (religion) also stood out:

Grandparent-Grandchild Dyad:

Food. I like my food and so does he. (Ana, 67, grandmother by affinity)

Church (...) To be with the family, to eat. She likes it and I like it. When I go to her house, she always prepares something [food], she treats it with attention. That's it. (Adalf, 25 years, grandson by affinity)

Uncles And Aunts-Nephews and Nieces Dyad:

My food. What I prepare, everything I make she says is tasty. The cake ... everything I do is tasty. (...) Clothes too. Then I put on some clothes, and she says: - Wow, auntie, you look very beautiful. She is beautiful. Then I say: - do you like it? She says: - very much. Where did you buy those clothes? (...) Traveling too. Oh, she talks a lot (...). (Iris, 67 years old, maternal aunt)

Yes, regarding... It doesn't come to mind like that. Interests as such, I think more about the food because she cooks a lot. So, I end up liking a lot of the things she makes. A lot of the things she likes to eat, I like to eat too. So, what usually comes to my mind is this,

food-related, as she cooks a lot. So... I think more about it. Yes, you remember the person who cooks for you and that creates a bond, right?. (Isis, 27 years old, maternal niece)

Mother-Child Dyad:

Food, I always like what she makes, she likes what I make (...) Going shopping. (Maria, 67 years, mother)

Eating, I like it, she likes it (...) Going about as we're socialites; with heels, with a handbag. (Malu, 33 years, daughter)

It is observed that "food" emerged as an important element of connection between the elderly and young adults. Costa (2014, p. 13) states that "food brings generations together, strengthens ties, updates coexistence through rituals of preparation and sharing". The author perceives "cooking as a space and experience of family belonging", a way to "recall a family past, usually with memories located in childhood and extending into adulthood", that is, food as a bearer of memories.

Leal (2014, p. 69) reinforces the perception of the mentioned author, by stating that remembering the taste of family meetings, in which "cooking can bring about the taste of being together, to be able to revisit a present past, in which the main ingredient no one replaces in a family recipe, proximity", a view shared by Barbosa (2014), when mentioning that food has the gift of aggregation.

Brito (2014, p. 102) points out that "the kitchen is considered by most people the most important place in the house (...) a space for coexistence between generations, where exchanges and the strengthening of family ties were thus favored". Similarly, Rosas (2014, p. 19) points out that "through the food and table, flavors, aromas, tastes and knowledge, the kitchen became a microcosm of society and a relational space for the family". Schmidt (2010) points out that the act of eating denotes an event that provides an opportunity for socializing, meeting, and interaction among people.

Through the reflections, one realizes that food represents affection, attention, one of the ways of expressing love, bond, interaction, and care. As for activities that they do together, "talking" prevailed. Sharing family celebrations and going for walks were also highlighted.

Grandparent-Grandchild Dyad:

We spend time chatting, talking, I talk more... Also, when she comes, she has lunch with me. (Eloá, 74 years old, paternal grandmother)

Having lunch and things that we can do sitting down, inside the house. We talk about the time she worked at the hospital. (Ellen, 28 years old, paternal granddaughter)

Uncles and Aunts-Nephews and Nieces Dyad:

Talk, play, smile... learn... . (Heron, 67, paternal uncle)

He comes to the store and we just talk, where I work. And we... Yeah... we end up spending a lot of time talking, learning. I listen a lot. I really like the stories that he has to tell. That's it (...). (Hian, 23 years old, paternal nephew).

Mother-Child Dyad:

Besides talking... we go to church and, once in a while, we go for walks, we go to a restaurant, celebrate something, sometimes a birthday. (Jane, 66 years old, mother)

Talking, but not much, due to the time (...) Home chores [laughs]. We don't go out much, not unless it is to celebrate a birthday. (Julie, 38 years old, daughter).

Kennedy (1992) states that activities are a way of "doing" and "being" in the relationship between generations of older adults and young adults. The dyads/groups unanimously stated that the main activity they do together is "talking". Dias and Silva (2003), in a research with 100 young adult university students, found that among the main activities performed with their grandparents were visiting, talking, telephoning, and having lunch with them.

P. S. Oliveira (1998) states that conversations are of great importance, for it is through them that orality is preserved and renewed, strengthening bonds between narrator and listener. The mentioned author refers to the elders as bearers of the past in the present, and, thanks to their memory, they orally offer the younger ones a culture bathed in lived history. It is not a return to the past, but it is visited with an eye to the present and the future. The author notes that, through conversation, one has at his side a different person who is close to us, it is sharing, it is encouragement in moments of uncertainty. In the same way, the author points out that advice occupies a significant place in conversations between grandparents and grandchildren.

G. C. A. S. Oliveira (2015) states that the activities carried out between grandparents and grandchildren are an opportunity in which both can establish a connection, a deepening in the relationship. The author highlights that, through mutual exchange, grandchildren and grandparents simultaneously teach and learn, and this is a very enriching experience for both generations. For Dias and Oliveira (2017), time no longer seems to allow for as many activities with grandparents as during childhood and adolescence. They argue that the contact between grandparents and grandchildren in adulthood becomes more punctual, usually associated with activities such as: visits to doctors, conversations, phone calls, resolution of some difficulty, and gatherings on commemorative dates.

Among the activities they would like to share, "traveling" was predominant, and talking more and going for a walk were mentioned. In this regard, Acevedo (2003), in an article that included the elderly and young people, states that both groups shared the following expressions: staying with the family, relaxing, resting, escaping the routine, among other reasons. In this sense, the author reinforces that traveling as a family is good for your health, it is the ideal recipe for being happy and living longer, and also that families that manage to travel together replenish themselves physically and emotionally, because cohesion and affection are factors that benefit these moments, making them unique.

In this way, even short trips bring many benefits to family relationships since a quick geographic getaway helps to recharge the batteries and strengthen the bonds (Confort, 2018). In this sense, P. S. Oliveira (1998, p. 14) states that "when they go for a walk, grandparents and grandchildren are not wasting time, they are coming alive".

Significance that One Has for the Other

In this theme, a mutual positive representation predominated, characterized by attitudes, virtues, and moral values:

Grandparent-Grandchild Dyad:

She represents a good granddaughter (...) A good, worthy girl (...). (Flora, 68, paternal grandmother)

She represents, I'm getting emotional [cried]. She is a very good person [said while crying]. In spite of the difficulties she has with my aunt [with whom her grandmother lives]; anyway, there are these problems, but she is a happy person. An independent person. (...) She is very active (...) She represents love. A wonderful, happy person. (Fany, 27 years old, paternal granddaughter).

Uncles and Aunts-Nephews and Nieces Dyad:

Hian represents a nice nephew, you know? He is honest. He's not one of lies or falsehoods; whatever he has to say, he speaks the truth. I think he is a nice, honest, and sincere nephew. (Heron, 67 years old, paternal uncle)

Oh, I think he is top notch! Because it's like I said, this quality of his of being fair, of asserting himself and doing everything for the family and hustling and... loving his family, right? He is always close to everyone. And that is it. (Hian, 23 years old, paternal nephew)

Mother-Child Dyad:

He is my friend, my brother, a son of God, a fellow fighter. (Laura, 65 years old, mother by affinity)

But she represents everything to me, the fact that she likes me and has given me all the support at work (...) She gives me advice, and stops to listen to me (...) She is like a second mother. (Luan, 40 years old, son by affinity)

In general, from the listed speeches, a mutual positive significance was revealed among the participants, which corroborates national and international studies (Dias & Oliveira, 2017; Dias & Silva, 2003; Kennedy, 1990; P. S. Oliveira, 1998; G. C. A. S. Oliveira, 2015; Ramos, 2017; Sanders & Trygstad, 1993).

In this way, G. C. A. S. Oliveira (2015) states that young adults perceive that the elderly were and continue to be very significant people and of great relevance in their lives. As such, they represented love, wisdom, understanding, affection, and who contributed to their formation as adults. Similarly, Kennedy (1990), in a survey conducted with 704 young college students, states that they had a positive view of grandparents, saying that the elderly were kind, helpful, and a role model.

Sanders and Trygstad (1993), in a study conducted with 125 young adult college students, revealed that most said the relationship with grandparents was very important, they perceived grandparents as transmitters of family history, as emotional support, as counselors and confidants. This perspective is also shared by Ramos (2017) when stating that the elderly become confidants and advisors in the intergenerational and intrafamilial contingencies of the younger ones.

Ramos (2017) points out that grandparents' words and gestures are grounded in tenderness, happiness, idealization, memories of the past, and dreams of the future, generational webs of connection between past, present, and future, tradition, renewal, and modernity of cultural and

linguistic transmission. P. S. Oliveira (1998, p. 14) states that for many grandparents, “having grandchildren is the main reason for their existence”.

Finals Considerations

The present research sought to present reflections provoked through content analysis of interviews with families about the relationship between the elderly and young adults. Thus, as to the perception that the elderly and young adults have about interpersonal relationships, it became evident that both generations perceive that there is a distance. Some context, culture, social, and economic factors, in addition to modern day demands, directly influence these relationships.

As for the relationships between the elderly and young adults in the family, they affirmed maintaining a friendly relationship with the others in the family group. However, the elderly recognize the lack of time of young people for being in the acquisition phase. Consequently, the geographical distance hinders these relationships. The younger ones emphasize that they would like to have more time for the elderly.

Regarding the dyads’ perception of their chosen person, all of them stated that they have a closer relationship with the person they chose than with the other elderly/young adult relatives in the same family. In this sense, it is observed that these identifications with the chosen elderly/young adults are possible due to the reciprocal receptiveness, attention, affection, care; elements that feed back the interaction between both and establish the family homeostasis.

As for the common activities/elements, it was observed that “food” emerged as an important element of connection between the elderly and young adults. Among the activities they would like to share, “traveling” was predominant, and talking more and going for walks were mentioned. As for the significance that one has for the other, a mutual positive representation predominated, characterized by attitudes, virtues, and moral values.

In this understanding, it is possible to infer that the lack of time/quantity of time available for the young adult to be present is the main reason for a lesser coexistence. It is worth pointing out that it may be much more important the quality of the gathering, considering the affective exchange between them at that moment, than the quantity of time, without any meaning.

Faced with the considerations raised by the participants, it is understood that this is an intergenerational relationship permeated by nuances characteristic of the age groups of the research subjects. In this sense, in a way, there is a distance between the generations.

Therefore, in view of the limitations of this article, new research is necessary to deepen the studies about the relationship between the elderly and young adults of the same family, especially uncles/aunts and nephews/nieces, to contribute to an approximation between these two generations and consequent intergenerational solidarity.

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