

“My granny lives in a computer”: Experiences of Transnational Grandparenthood

Sulette Ferreira & Charlene. L. Carbonatto*

Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

*CONTACT: Charlene Carbonatto, Department of Social Work and Criminology, UP, South Africa. Email: charlene.carbonatto@up.ac.za

Abstract

Emigration is increasingly becoming a reality for South Africans. To date, research on emigration has largely focused on the economic effect and the associated loss of expertise on the country. To a lesser degree research has focused on the devastating effects of distance and the lower intimacy levels on intergenerational relationships of transnational families. The relationship as it was known has changed, face to face communication is replaced by technology-mediated communication (TMC). Using open-ended interviews, this qualitative study used a thematic analysis to explore the personal experiences of South African grandparents, as they transitioned into their role as transnational grandparents (TNGs). The theoretical framework underpinning this research was ambiguous loss. “Missing out” was a central theme identified, which featured throughout the study like a golden thread.

Keywords: Adult-child; emigration; intergenerational relationships; loss; transnational grandparent

Introduction

Emigration is a complex socio-cultural phenomenon that impacts not only the emigrant, but also those left behind: the ones that must deal with the aftermath of this decision (Marchetti-Mercer, 2009). To date, the available literature on the exodus of professionals from South Africa has focused predominantly on its economic effects and the loss in expertise in the health and technology sectors. In contrast, studies on the social and psychological impact of emigration on those left behind are conspicuously absent (Aviram-Freedman, 2005; Venter & van Wyk, 2018). The lives of all family members, across generations, are forever changed when relatives decide to emigrate (Clark et al., 2009). To gain more insight on the psychosocial impact, this qualitative study examined the lived experiences of grandparents who are separated from their grandchildren through emigration.

Grandparents’ involvement with grandchildren is positively associated with the wellbeing of both parties (Barnett et al., 2010). Increased longevity means that it is not uncommon for grandparents to live long enough to see a grandchild enter adulthood and even middle age (Silverstein & Marengo, 2001). This allows for an extended relationship between grandparents and grandchildren over a longer period. The phrase “it takes a village to raise a child” originates from an African proverb and conveys the message that it takes many people (“a village”) to provide a healthy environment where children can flourish. Grandparents in the South African culture, form a crucial part of this “village” and children benefit from this close relationship throughout their lives.

Transnational grandparenting

“I can never hold them again. That holding ... It’s suddenly just, it’s gone [sad]. The distance ... [crying] the [silence] that I can’t hold them, that I can’t press them against me [emotional]. I talk to them, and I see them on Skype, but they don’t actually know who they are talking to, and my grandson said to my son: “My granny lives in a computer.” (P1, female, 65, translated from Afrikaans).

This participant quotation illuminates the effect of distance on the transnational grandparent (TNG). For this grandmother and grandson, the geographical distance hinders physical contact, and both parties experience loss to various degrees. Losing out on face to face communication and not being able to be in physical close proximity, this grandmother describes herself as the grandmother living in a computer. In a globalized world, it is becoming increasingly common for grandchildren to be separated from grandparents by large geographical distances (Ivan & Hebblethwaite, 2016). Their regular face to face communication is replaced by two lifelines of communication: technology-mediated communication (TMC) and visits. TMC is a ubiquitous feature of transnational families, as it is affordable, widely accessible, highly adaptable and is cherished by transnational family networks to preserve a coherent sense of familyhood.

Geographic distance as a crucial factor affecting the grandparent-grandchild relationship, is well documented. In their study on American grandparenthood, Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) identify the three most important factors influencing the frequency of grandparent-grandchild contact as “distance, distance and distance.” Nesteruk and Marks (2009) identify various forms of “distance,” namely geographical or physical distance, linguistic distance, and cultural distance. Nesteruk and Marks (2009) pronounce that emigration has a strong tendency to loosen family ties and disrupt these relations. It becomes challenging to maintain intergenerational relationships and a sense of cultural heritage between family members that reside in different countries and on different continents (Nesteruk & Marks, 2009).

As families continue to disperse across the globe, grandparents’ roles are defined by cultural and geographic barriers, and they feel deprived of their socially and culturally accepted role as grandparent (Sigad & Eisikovits, 2013). Grandparents must adapt to the rules of a changing culture, to retain relationships with their grandchildren living abroad. Although not emigrants themselves, these grandparents are participants in a transnational lifestyle that calls for new approaches to interact with their grandchildren and secure attachment bonds with those living abroad (Nedelcu, 2017).

Ambiguous loss

Emigration has been described as “one of the most drastic life changes and transitions an individual can face” (Goldin, 2002, p. 4). Pauline Boss (1993) explains that emigration is a systemic interactional phenomenon that never really ends. When an adult-child emigrates, the relationship between the parent and that child changes. For the parent left behind, dealing with this loss and consequent grief can be extremely difficult. In addition, the attachment to the grandchildren intensifies the grief process for the parent who is left behind, even more. Pauline Boss defines this phenomenon as an “ambiguous loss,” which refers to “an incomplete and uncertain loss, a distinctive kind of loss that defies closure” (Boss, 1993, p. 3).

Ambiguous loss, where families experience ongoing uncertainty and sadness (Boss, 2000), occurs for instance amongst families of a missing person, children of Alzheimer's patient, emigrants who crave their country of origin, or the parents left behind after the emigration of their adult-child(ren). There are two types of ambiguous loss: firstly, physical absence with psychological presence, and secondly, physical presence with psychological absence. In both these types, those who suffer the loss, must deal with something very different from ordinary, "clear-cut loss" (Boss, 2007b). This type of loss freezes the grief process by complicating it, since there are no prescribed rituals for dealing with it. "Without information to clarify their loss, family members have no choice but to live with the paradox of absence and presence" (Boss, 2007a, p. 105).

The parent who is left behind faces a drastic life change because of the loss of the relationship as it was known; not only with the adult-child(ren), but most often with the grandchild(ren). The ambiguous loss of transnational separation leads to boundary ambiguity when parents, partners, and children across borders are physically absent, but psychologically present. In this regard, Boss explains: "For the émigré as well as the family left behind, it remains an ambiguous loss. Parents and siblings are still alive but may never be seen again. The concept of perceiving one's loved ones as psychologically present when they are physically absent, results in boundary ambiguity" (Boss, 1993, p. 376).

Materials and methods

This article reflects on the thematic analysis of one theme from a doctoral thesis, with first author as principle researcher (Ferreira, 2015, p. 213). Ethics approval was granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the university and the research was guided by the following research question: "What are the experiences of South African parents left behind once their adult-child(ren) have emigrated?"

This qualitative study used a phenomenological research design (Nieuwenhuis, 2020), including 24 participants, of which the first was selected through non-probability purposive sampling, followed by the rest through snowball sampling (Strydom & Delpont, 2011). The selection criteria included: had to be a South African citizen of any race, culture, religion, or gender, living in the Gauteng province; aged 50 to 80 years old, fluent in English and a parent whose adult-child(ren) had emigrated and lived abroad for at least one year. Of the final 24 participants, 16 were females and 8 were males. The ages of participants varied from 52 to 79 years. All participants had adult-children living abroad for a number of years and thus had experience of being part of a transnational family. All participants signed voluntary consent forms that provided their permission to: participate in the interviews, audio record their interviews, use direct quotations and protect their identity through pseudonyms. Face to face unstructured interviews were conducted with 24 participants, five were joint interviews with couples. After transcribing each voice recording verbatim, the ATLAS.ti program was used to categorize the vast amount of unstructured data into themes and sub-themes for further analysis. The participants are referred to in the interview quotes as P1 or P2 to protect their identities. Follow-up interviews were conducted with some of these participants in recent times by the principle researcher, referred to as Pi.

Results

The data analysis presented four main themes namely, emigration of the adult child, emigration loss, intergenerational relationships and transnational communication. The theme intergenerational relationships, focused on in this article, has two sub-themes: becoming a grandparent and becoming a transnational grandparent (TNG) and the consequent change in the fulfillment of the grandparent role prior to emigration and post-emigration, which follows.

Becoming a grandparent

The results show that the participants experienced the event of becoming a grandparent as unique and rewarding and associated this experience with a sense of wellbeing. The spiritual, even mysterious encounter of the role of being a grandparent is evident. It was frequently compared to a religious experience and seen as a gift from God bestowed upon them. A participant reflected on his thoughts at the birth of his first grandchild:

“With the birth of my first grandchild, it felt as if I am present at the day of the Creation. There where everything started, there it started for me in my life. I saw the wonder of the Creation happen before my eyes. With every grandchild thereafter, it was the same.” (Pi, male, age, 2021).

Becoming a grandparent is associated with certain traditional values and various self-imposed responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to emotionally ground the grandchildren by telling them stories about their parents growing up. Particularly effective was the way in which one participant used a photo album of her son as reference for the grandchild.

“I see the role of the grandparent as being very, very important. Firstly, they remind your children that they were children too. Grandparents should be the soft place when parents are angry with children or are disciplining their children. The grandparents are the corner of love that kids run to, for affirmation of love. It is also important for kids to know where they come from. So, in other words, you have a history ... Those stories ground you ... And I think, that is why grandparents should be there, because they can tell you about your parents” (P7, female, 78, translated from Afrikaans).

The role of a grandparent is multi-dimensional, as it takes on many forms and varies in intensity (Bengtson, 2001; Ruiz & Silverstein, 2007). The participants seemed to realize that without being prescriptive or dogmatic, they could live life in a way that could subtly have a positive impact on the child:

“As far as I am concerned, the role of a granny is not that of an educator, it is not her duty or the duty of the grandpa to educate ... the education process is covert, not deliberate. Grandma and Grandpa are there for the enjoyment. But through that enjoyment you have a certain influence on your grandchildren.” (P12, female, 74, translated from Afrikaans)

The role of grandparents is loving and less formal than that of the parents, as one participant described—“gentle and soft—a marshmallow granny.”

“The biggest plus of all, you get a grandchild. You don’t love your grandchild more than your children, you love your grandchild in an indescribable way to know that this is the child of your child and all you want to give is love. That is why grandparents are supposed to be there because they give the lollypop when mommy says it is bad for your teeth. That is the role, the lollypop.” (P8, female, 57)

Grandparents’ involvement can range from actively taking care of their grandchildren full time, to only seeing their grandchildren on rare occasions. Most participants who lived in close proximity to their children, provided crucial support to their children and grandchildren. This was especially true during early childhood when grandparents were actively involved in the day-to-day care of their grandchildren. The following participant’s grandchildren had their own bedrooms in their grandparents’ home:

“The children stayed with us, they were all over us. It’s suddenly just, it’s gone [very sad]. You miss a moment’s cuteness, the involvement with one another, I miss it a lot [blows nose]. And for such a long time they were part of my life. They brought such joy into our house.” (P1, male, 63, translated from Afrikaans)

Caring for grandchildren offers grandparents a relationship charged with powerful, affective components. Caring is synonymous with actively doing something, to show affection. One participant took so much pride in describing the caring relationship she has with her grandchild:

“So, I literally raised him and seventeen months later, she had a baby girl and the same story. And when she worked night shift and her husband worked, and he sometimes had to go away, then they would stay with us and sleep over. I don’t think they knew which home was actually theirs” (P1, female, 65, translated from Afrikaans).

The next theme explores how the experience of becoming a grandparent pre-emigration, changed post-emigration.

Becoming a transnational grandparent (TNG)

In the participants’ journeys of their child’s emigration, the process of becoming a TNG can be described in three phases: pre-emigration, the act of emigration and post-emigration. Although each participant progressed through the same phases, each one’s experience proved to be unique.

Pre-emigration phase

The process of becoming a TNG commences when the adult-child informs their parents that they are either contemplating emigration or have already made the decision to leave South Africa. Participants reflected mixed emotions and thoughts when their adult-child informed them of their emigration plans and frequently mentioned that it was better for their children and especially the grandchildren to emigrate. In making sense of the emigration, the participants stated that the happiness of their adult-children and grandchildren made it necessary to emigrate and therefore they supported their children’s decision.

“And for me it was a terribly difficult prospect to imagine that they would be there, so far away from us. I know that Australia is very far away, but in the end... I do not mourn because my children are gone, I mourn because my children have to leave. It is terrible for me that we are in a country today where it is better for your children to go away ...”

“Why would I want my children to feel guilty because they decided to improve their lives and to create a better life for their children? I can’t do that. So... if I allow myself to wallow in loss it would take away from all of our lives. Definitely, and that is not why we are here. We are supposed to live our own lives. Part of life is letting your children go. Mine just went a bit further (laughter).” (P5, male, 66, translated from Afrikaans)

When discussing their children’s decision to emigrate their vulnerability due to their aging was frequently mentioned. Being elderly, they envisioned their future with the support of their children and grandchildren (Neikrug, 2003). The loss of practical hands-on support from their children increased feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty that accompanies the complex process of aging. This altered view of the future can lead to questioning their own value and meaning. In the following quotation the participant verbalized her ambivalence regarding their children’s decision to emigrate:

“She said to me, “we are leaving for C in six weeks’ time.” For me it was like a death bell ringing ... because I have four children, three boys and ‘M’ is my daughter, she is my third child and she and I had an incredibly close bond... From my corner ... from my perspective ... for old people it increases the wish to die, you wish you could rather go ... [long silence] because what is important to you, is in any case no longer there [very sad].” (P7, female, 78, translated from Afrikaans)

Even before the children and grandchildren had left, the participants experienced feelings of uncertainty and anticipated loss. The pre-emigration phase is followed by the actual emigration, when an adult-child and grandchildren physically leave the country, it is seen as the first tangible experience of becoming a TNG.

The emigration phase: “Saying goodbye”

The second stage of the emigration process for the parent who stays behind in South Africa signifies the physical act of emigration: the “airport goodbye.” The airport featured frequently as a definitive link in the chain of emigration events and signified the end of the relationship as it was known. It is the most visual event marking the crossing over from grandparent to TNG.

The majority of participants had grandchildren who were born in South Africa, with whom they had already developed a close bond. Grandparents experienced letting go of the children as well as grandchild(ren) as excruciating. A participant narrated her airport experience as follows:

“I had an unbelievably close relationship with that little girl there in the painting, she was three and a half when she left. We were literally, this now sounds terribly dramatic, literally torn apart at the airport when they left ... And it is awful when those little bodies go through customs.” (P7, female, 78, translated from Afrikaans)

Post-emigration phase: “Experiencing loss”

During interviews with participants, the possible loss of a future relationship with their children and grandchildren was frequently expressed. This participant quotation reflects this possible loss of the relationship with their grandchildren as it was known, together with her shattered future aspirations:

“It is the death of the possibility of the relationship. Definitely between me and my grandchildren, definitely. It is a part of you that gets cut off. Uhm, you see other people with their children, and you long for that relationship. When you see the children coming here and greeting and hugging and everything, seeing their parents and bringing them a flower or just a petal or something like that, and knowing that next week you can see them again and you think ... there’s nothing like that for you, nothing.” (P12, female, 74)

It was important for the participants to be part of their grandchildren’s lives, and to meet the expectations of this preconceived role of being a grandparent. Looking after the grandchildren is one of many supportive roles that grandparents can no longer fulfill. Participants frequently mentioned they were afraid that they might miss defining moments and everyday happenings in the lives of the grandchildren, following the event of emigration, as reflected on by this participant:

“It was as if I had lost them. Totally. And even though your mind says to you, “you will probably see them again,” realizing you will not see your grandchildren grow up.” (P14, male, 69, translated from Afrikaans)

The routine use of information communication technologies (ICTs) proved to be particularly useful in fulfilling their role as TNGs, by enabling participants to adapt to new ways of communicating. ICT’s helped bridge the gap between TNGs and their grandchildren’s new world:

“But it is terrible to know ... you speak with your grandchildren over the telephone, but they don’t actually know who they are talking to. Like the younger one went to his father, and said, “where is your mommy?” My son said, “she is overseas” and he said, “have you lost her, because I can’t see her anywhere.” And my son said, “no no, you speak to her on the telephone sometimes.” That Sunday when he spoke to me, he said, “Granny, you can come here and you can sleep in my bed, there is a place for you, you don’t have to be lost anymore.”” (P13, female, 68, translated from Afrikaans)

Discussion

The study explored how grandparents experienced their changing roles from “becoming a grandparent” to “becoming a TNG, pre- and post-emigration of their adult-children. While “becoming a grandparent” was considered a major milestone for the participants; “becoming a TNG” was met with mixed feelings.

Becoming a grandparent is a life-altering experience with significant emotional implications. Participants cherished and valued the title of being a grandparent and described it as a spiritual, in some cases, even a religious experience. Grandparent-grandchild relationships are beneficial to both the child and the grandparent and serve as a crucial link in the wellbeing of both generations. On the one hand, this relationship creates a sense of wholeness and purpose in the life for aging grandparents. On the other hand, by spoiling grandchildren, teaching them about religion and spirituality, sharing the family history, passing on experiences, knowledge and skills, as well as transferring values, grandparents have a positive effect on the development and socialization of their grandchildren (Bengtson, 2001; Ruiz & Silverstein, 2007).

The loss of certain elements in performing this unique role is a double-edged sword: the grandparent who was looking forward to this new role, is now deprived of performing this role to its fullest, and the grandchild is missing the personal experience and loving role of this important relationship. The adult-children's decision to emigrate left the participants with mixed emotions. They experienced feelings of ambiguity, insecurity and fear and were relieved that their grandchildren would be raised in a more stable and secure country, with better educational prospects. Support and closeness from loved ones, gave participants a sense of security, but this, however, was replaced with vulnerability due to the emigration. These findings match those of Nesteruk and Marks (2009), who postulate that while emigration holds definite advantages for the emigrant family, for example, a safe environment to raise children; it also holds certain disadvantages, such as sacrificing extended family ties and connections. Participants who were left behind, felt that they were missing their envisioned role and experienced ambiguous loss.

The onset of the emigration experience for the parent left behind, begins when they are informed by their adult child that they are either contemplating emigration or have already made the decision. Participants attempted to make sense of this life-changing decision, based on the reasons given by their children, which influenced their experience of the emigration journey. Many felt that the children had a better future abroad, living in a crime-free environment and having better educational opportunities for their grandchildren. In most instances, the participants confirmed how difficult it was to be without their children, conceding that the children were better off and had made the correct decision. This altruistic attitude of the parent creates a safe environment for the children to explore and make a meaningful life in a new country (Ferreira & Carbonatto, 2020).

During the pre-emigration stage, participants had the opportunity, although only for a limited period, to fulfill the typical role of being a grandparent. The results indicated that participants' expectations of their role after the emigration did not diminish from their expectations before the emigration. However, the role that participants fulfilled pre-emigration as grandparent, changed post-emigration and their assumptive world of being a grandparent was altered.

The act of emigration and the airport-goodbye, symbolizes the transformation from being a grandparent to becoming a TNG. It was evident that it was excruciating to let go of the grandchildren, especially when there was frequent contact between grandparent and grandchild and a close relationship had been formed.

Part of the experience of becoming a TNG was the fear of missing out, especially on important milestones in their grandchildren's lives. Furthermore, participants were reliant on their adult-children to inform and share important information about their grandchildren. By

only sharing snippets of their grandchildren's lives, the undertone of sadness became a prominent theme. These participants grieved over the loss of "what could have been" and "what should have been."

Geographical distance caused a reduction from being actively involved in the lives of grandchildren, to making use of technology to maintain the connection. Participants identified two lifelines in staying connected to their adult-children and grandchildren, namely ICT or TMC and visiting (either the children abroad or the children visiting the parents in South Africa). Participants had access to a wide range of communication platforms, yet frequent communication was hindered by time differences.

One of the fundamental desires of TNGs is "being there" in the same geographical space as their children and grandchildren, to be able to experience them with all their senses. Participants frequently expressed how they miss the touch and spontaneous hugs of their grandchildren who reside elsewhere in the world.

This study found that grandparents who remain in South Africa after the emigration of their adult-children and grandchildren, had the need to fulfill their grandparent roles, however, they had to make various paradigm shifts due to the geographical distance. These findings confirm the detrimental impact of distance on the grandparent-grandchild relationship. The subsequent lack of physical contact between loving grandparents and their grandchildren, creates the visual image of a granny living inside a computer. Their involvement was reduced to a laptop or smartphone screen image.

Although geographically far apart and often separated by multiple time zones, the participants were resilient to adapt, making sense of and accepting their new and altered roles. They found their own unique way to stay emotionally connected.

Acknowledgments

Each participant that shared their emigration journey.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Sulette Ferreira (PhD) is a registered emigration therapist in private practice in South Africa, specializing in the emotional effect of emigration (pre-and post-migration). She focusses on the emigrant and those left behind (parents, siblings and grandparents). Her research interests include transnationalism and the effect on intergenerational relationships.

Charlene L. Carbonatto (PhD) is a full-time Associate Professor, Dept. of Social Work & Criminology, University of Pretoria, South Africa, specialized in social work in health care, with research interests in loss, grief, geriatrics, HIV and infertility.

References

Aviram-Freedman, E. (2005). *Making oranges from lemons: Experiences of support of South African Jewish senior citizens following the emigration of their children* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Western Cape.

Barnett, M. A., Scaramella, L. V., Neppl, T. K., Ontai, L., & Conger, R. D. (2010). Intergenerational relationship quality, gender, and grandparent involvement. *Family Relations*, *59*(1), 28–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1741-3729.2009.00584.X>

Bengtson, V. L. (2001). Beyond the nuclear family: The increasing importance of multigenerational bonds. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *63*(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2001.00001.x>

Boss, P. (2000). *Ambiguous loss: Learning to live with unresolved grief*. Harvard University Press.

Boss, P. (2007a). *Loss, trauma, and resilience: Therapeutic work with ambiguous loss*. W.W. Norton & Co Inc.

Boss, P. (2007b). Ambiguous loss theory: Challenges for scholars and practitioners. *Family Relations*, *56*(2), 105–111. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2007.00444.x>

Boss, P. G. (1993). The experience of immigration for the mother left behind: The use of qualitative feminist strategies to analyze letters from my Swiss grandmother to my father. *Marriage & Family Review*, *19*(3–4), 365–378. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1994-21125-001>

Cherlin, A., & Furstenberg, F. (1986). *The new American grandparent: A place in the family, a life apart*. Basic Books.

Clark, R. L., Glick, J. E., & Bures, R. M. (2009). Immigrant families over the life course research: Directions and needs. *Journal of Family Issues*, *30*(6), 852–872. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X09332162>

Ferreira, S., & Carbonatto, C. L. (2020). A license to leave South Africa”: A qualitative study of South African parents’ narratives of their children’s reasons for emigration. *Social Work*, *56*(3), 860. <https://doi.org/10.15270/52-2-860>

Ferreira, S. (2015). *Parents left behind in South Africa after the emigration of their adult children: An experiential journey* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. University of Pretoria. <http://hdl.handle.net/2263/50900>

Goldin, J. (2002). Belonging to two worlds: The experience of migration. *African Journal of Psychiatry*, *5*(4), 4–8. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ajpsy.v5i4>

- Ivan, L., & Hebblethwaite, S. (2016). Grannies on the net: Grandmothers' experiences of Facebook in family communication. *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations*, 18(1), 11–25. <https://doi.org/10.21018/rjcpr.2016.1.199>
- Marchetti-Mercer, M. (2009). South Africans in flux: Exploring the mental health impact of migration on family life. *African Journal of Psychiatry*, 12(2), 129–134. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ajpsy.v12i2.43730>
- Nedelcu, M. (2017). Transnational grandparenting in the digital age: Mediated co-presence and childcare in the case of Romanian migrants in Switzerland and Canada. *European Journal of Ageing*, 14(4), 375–383. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10433-017-0436-1>
- Neikrug, S. M. (2003). Worrying about a frightening old age. *Aging & Mental Health*, 7(5), 326–333. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360786031000150702>
- Nesteruk, O., & Marks, L. (2009). Grandparents across the ocean: Eastern European immigrants' struggle to maintain intergenerational relationships. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 40(1), 77–95. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.40.1.77>
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2020). Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques. In K. Maree, (Ed.). *First steps in research*. 3rd Van Schaik.
- Ruiz, S. A., & Silverstein, M. (2007). Relationships with grandparents and the emotional well-being of late adolescent and young adult grandchildren. *Journal of Social Issues*, 63(4), 793–808. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2007.00537.x>
- Sigad, L. I., & Eisikovits, R. A. (2013). Grandparenting across borders: American grandparents and their Israeli grandchildren in a transnational reality. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 27(4), 308–316. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JAGING.2013.06.002>
- Silverstein, M., & Marengo, A. (2001). How Americans enact the grandparent role across the family life course. *Journal of Family Issues*, 22(4), 493–522. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019251301022004006>
- Strydom, H., & Delpont, C. S. L. (2011). Sampling and pilot study in qualitative research. In A. S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C. B. Fouché, & C. S. L. Delpont (Eds.), *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human services professions* (4th ed., p. 547). Van Schaik.
- Venter, I. C., & van Wyk, N. C. (2018). Experiences of vulnerability due to loss of support by aged parents of emigrated children: A hermeneutic literature review. *Community, Work & Family*, 22(3), 255–266. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2018.1517729>