

# Family Functionality And Life Satisfaction In College Students

Judith Cristina Martínez-Royert<sup>\*1</sup>, Milena Pereira Peñate<sup>2</sup>, María Cristina Pájaro-Martínez<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D in Science Education. Lecturer-Researcher PhD in Science Education., Lecturer-Researcher, Universidad Simón Bolívar, School of Health Sciences, Barranquilla, Colombia \_ (correspondence author) <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4468-8578>

<sup>2</sup>Mgs in Nursing. Universidad de Sucre , Sincelejo, Colombia.

<sup>3</sup>Psychology student <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9463-5036>

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Family functionality and life satisfaction in university students is related to the way they perceive their family situation and quality of life in terms of well-being, personal fulfillment according to their interests and purposes in life.

**Method:** A quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional, cross-sectional research study was conducted from August to November 2021, with a population of 862 students from the nursing student community with active enrollment in the second academic period of 2021.

**Results:** The variables linked to family functionality showed that 39.5% have a good family function compared to 0.4% with severe family dysfunction.

**Discussion:** In the population under study, the female sex predominated (96.2%) compared to the male sex (3.8%), different from the results found by Arias, Huamani and Caycho who report more participation by males obtaining greater satisfaction with life.

**Conclusion:** Regarding family functionality, 50% of the students of the nursing program have a slight family dysfunction and 39.5% have a good family function and in relation to the variable satisfaction with life, the findings (global score) obtained indicate that 35.8% of the students are in the "highly satisfied" level, 38.9% are in the "satisfied" level, 19.6% are "dissatisfied" and 5.3% are extremely dissatisfied.

**Key words:** family relationships, family, students, satisfaction, well-being.

## Introduction

Family functionality and life satisfaction in university students is related to the way they perceive their family situation and the quality of life in terms of well-being, personal

fulfillment according to their interests and purposes in life <sup>(1)</sup>. Family functionality is an influential element in the state of health <sup>(2)</sup> given that the family is considered a protective factor in the face of various daily stresses experienced by its members, in addition to providing them with protection and support <sup>(3)</sup>; it is the greatest source of social and personal support and stands as a natural support system <sup>(4)</sup>, open that interacts with its environment <sup>(5)</sup> and contributes to the care of life, including the mental health of its members <sup>(6)</sup>. The perception of each person in relation to the valuation that he/she has about his/her objectives, projects, expectations for him/herself, accounts for his/her satisfaction with life and is related to his/her mental health. When acquiring a satisfaction with life, there is a compensation due to the development of a self-knowledge of his personality, likewise this is used as a global evaluation that the subject makes regarding his life, he contrasts what he has achieved, with his challenges and expectations <sup>(7)</sup>.

Scientific evidence indicates that university students in their daily academic life are subjected to multiple and frequent situations that generate tension and uncertainty, sometimes, they have difficulties to face them skillfully and achieve academic success which leads to decrease their academic performance, increases their discomfort, As a consequence, the psychological well-being of students may decrease significantly as they perceive that the outcome of their goals and personal development may be threatened by the stressful circumstances of the academic environment, a situation that affects life satisfaction <sup>(8,9)</sup>.

International studies report that 13.0% express dissatisfaction with life, and 58.9% show some family dysfunction <sup>(10)</sup>. Other authors point out an adequate family functionality in students, which they consider as a great emotional support <sup>(11,12,13)</sup>.

On the other hand, in Colombia, studies show a slight family dysfunction in 38.7% of university students <sup>(14)</sup>, while other studies indicate that 55.2% of students have good family functionality <sup>(15)</sup>.

Another study revealed that, among 178 families, 54.4% had some degree of dysfunction, discriminated as follows: 24.8% had mild dysfunction, 16.8% had moderate dysfunction and 12.8% had severe dysfunction. Functional variations are also observed in the physical and emotional health days reported by Colombians <sup>(16)</sup>.

Regarding life satisfaction in university students, scientific evidence indicates that social orientation values are significant predictors of life satisfaction, higher social values are associated with higher life satisfaction,  $\beta = 0.23$ ,  $t = - 2.48$ ,  $p = 0.02$ . <sup>(17)</sup>. Other studies report that 13.0% of university students' express dissatisfaction with life <sup>(8)</sup>. Other researchers demonstrated a significant positive correlation between students' self-esteem and life satisfaction <sup>(18)</sup>.

The general objective of the present study was to characterize family functionality and the level of satisfaction with life in nursing students at the Universidad Simón Bolívar.

## Material And Method

Quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional, cross-sectional research study, conducted from August to November 2021, with a population of 862 students from the nursing student community with active enrollment in the second academic period of the year 2021: The sample consisted of 450 students of the Program who voluntarily participated in the study, who signed informed consent.

To evaluate the degree of satisfaction with life, the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) of Diener (1984) was used, which according to the scores obtained by the satisfaction scale allows describing the level of satisfaction with life, this is a scale that presents 5 items, indicating the answers through a Lickert scale with 5 forms of answers (1= totally disagree to 5= totally agree). The APGAR Family Questionnaire was also used. - Designed by Smilkstein, its administration is Individual and Collective, its objective is to evaluate family functionality with its components: Adaptation, participation, growth, affection and resources. The rating is made with values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 points respectively. This makes it possible to describe the levels of family functioning and to obtain the perception of the person evaluated about his or her family interaction.

After the application of the instruments through the virtual Google forms, the Excel database generated by the application was downloaded and we proceeded to organize the data in tables and graphs for both variables (family functionality and life satisfaction).

Resolution 008430 of October 4, 1993 <sup>(19)</sup> of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Colombia was taken into account, considering that it is a research without risk". The informed consent was carried out with the values imposed by the Helsinki declaration, where all research with human beings has to go through the conscious approval of these, "it is a duty to protect the life, health, dignity, integrity, right to self-determination, intimacy and confidentiality of personal information of the people who participate in research". "Every precaution should be taken to safeguard the privacy of the research subject and the confidentiality of his or her personal information" <sup>(20)</sup>.

## Results

**Table N°1 Distribution of the sample by sex**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Man	17	3,8
Woman	433	96,2
Total	450	100

**Source:** instrument application

Within the sample of the sex variable included in this study, it was found that 3.8% were male and 96.2% were female, the latter being the predominant.

With respect to the sample variables by semester, it was observed that most of the participants were in the second semester with a percentage of 24.4% (110) followed by the fifth and fourth semesters with 13.5% and 13.3% (61, 62 students) respectively, the first semester had a representation of 9.1% (41 students), the third semester 8.8% (40 students) and the lowest participation was in the sixth semester with a percentage of 8.2% (37 students).

**Table N°2. Family functionality of nursing students**

Family Functionality	N°	Percentage
Good family function	178	39,5
Mild family dysfunction	225	50
Moderate family dysfunction	45	10
Severe family dysfunction	2	0,4
TOTAL	450	100

**Source:** application of family Apgar instrument

When we inquired about variables related to family functionality, we found that 39.5% have a good family function compared to 0.4% with severe family dysfunction.

**Table N°3. Life satisfaction of nursing students.**

	Highly Satisfied		Satisfied		Dissatisfied		Extremely dissatisfied		TOTAL
	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	
In most aspects my life is close to my ideal.	79	17.5	20 5	45.5	155	34.4	11	2.4	450
My living conditions are excellent	138	30.6	22 1	49.1	75	16.6	16	3.5	450
I am satisfied with my life	204	45.3	14 7	32.6	88	19.5	11	2.4	450
So far I have achieved the important things I have desired in life.	116	25.7	21 0	46.6	88	19.5	36	8	450

If I could live my life over again I would change almost nothing.	100	22.2	17 1	38	111	24.6	68	15.1	450
With respect to my family, I feel	268	59.5	12 9	28.6	40	8.8	13	2.8	450
With respect to my friends, I feel	158	35.1	22 3	49.5	59	13.1	10	2.2	450
If you currently have a partner, with respect to my relationship, I feel	165	36.6	12 4	27.5	131	29.1	30	6.6	450
Regarding my studies, I feel	287	63.7	14 2	31.5	15	3.3	6	1.3	450
With respect to my financial situation, I feel	102	22.6	18 2	40.4	125	27.7	41	9.11	450

**Source:** application of Diener's (1984) Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) instrument.

When measured with Diener's (1984) Satisfaction with Life Scale-SWLS instrument, the findings (global score) obtained in the present study indicate that 35.8% of the students are in the "highly satisfied" level, 38.9% in the "satisfied" level, 19.6% "dissatisfied" and 5.3% extremely dissatisfied.

### Discussion

In the population under study, the female sex predominated (96.2 %) compared to the male sex (3.8 %), different from the results found by Arias, Huamani and Caycho who report more participation by males, obtaining greater satisfaction with life, and similar to those of Vallejo-Saldarriaga and Vega-González <sup>(21)</sup>, which indicate a greater participation of the female sex represented by 65.8 % and the male sex 34.2 % <sup>(21)</sup>.

The results related to family functionality in the study population indicated that 39.5 % have good family function and 50 % mild dysfunction compared to 0.4 % with severe family dysfunction, results similar to those reported by Díaz Cárdenas et al, who indicated in their study that 38.5 % of the population has good family functionality and to the results related to dysfunctionality, the current study found that 60. In relation to dysfunctionality, the present study found that 60.4% presented some dysfunctionality, similar to the findings of the study by Vallejos-Saldarriaga and Vega-González (58.9%) <sup>(22)</sup>; in relation to mild-moderate dysfunctionality, the present study found that 69% were in this type of functionality, which is similar to that reported by Díaz Cárdenas et al, <sup>(22)</sup> 54.98% and Vallejos-Saldarriaga and Vega-González 48% <sup>(22)</sup>.

Given the lack of scientific evidence that will show in detail the specific results according to the items of the SWLS instrument; it is highlighted that, in the present study, the highest percentage in: "With respect to my studies, I feel" (63.7 %) This shows that the program so

far has met the training expectations of the students. And "With respect to my family, I feel" (59.5 %). The family represents a fundamental element for the university students, as the emotional support that it represents for these young people in their transit through the University and contributes to their integral formation from the personal and professional point of view, which requires articulation and complementarity of the family<sup>(23, 24)</sup>. It is also highlighted that 9.11% are extremely dissatisfied "With respect to my economic situation, I feel"; it is worth mentioning that the students of the Nursing Program come from the socioeconomic strata 1, 2 and 3 according to what is reported by the planning and social responsibility department of the University<sup>(25)</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

The female sex was the most predominant in the study population. Regarding family functionality, half of the students in the nursing program have mild family dysfunction and one third have good family function.

In relation to the variable satisfaction with life, the findings (global score) obtained in the present study indicate that more than half of the students are located in the level of "highly satisfied" and "satisfied"; and a low proportion "dissatisfied" and extremely dissatisfied.

**Limitations of the study:** due to the covid 19 pandemic, the instruments were applied virtually, which made it difficult to strictly monitor the students in order to achieve the greatest number of participants (completed instruments).

## **Declaration of conflicts of interest:**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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