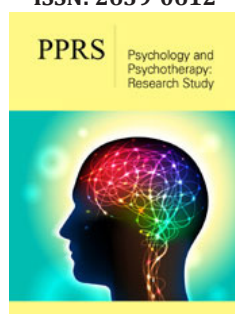


Experiences, Perceptions and Needs of Mexican Infants in their Family Dynamics: A Study based on Grounded Theory

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Abstract

The objective of the study was to explore in Mexican boys and girls, what their family represents for them, as a reference of the value it has in the face of imminent social problems, which are a serious symptom that the family, as the basis of society, is losing its fortress. 191 boys and girls with an average age $M=8.4$ ($SD=1.7$) participated in a descriptive study with a cross-sectional design. The results show that the family represents happiness, affection, union and coexistence for them. As pleasant situations they highlight: walks, playing, being together as a family and showing support. The least pleasant situations are: the death of grandparents, anger, lawsuits and the separation of parents. Most said they felt happy with their family, which can be an indicator of psychological well-being. It is concluded that the value that children give to the family, serves adults to pay attention and care for the family.

Summary

The objective of the study was to explore in Mexican boys and girls, what their family represents for them, as a reference of the value it has in the face of imminent social problems, which are a serious symptom that the family, as the basis of society, is losing its strength. 191 boys and girls with an average age $M=8.4$ ($SD=1.7$) participated in a descriptive study with a transectional design. The results show that the family represents happiness, affection, union and coexistence for them. As pleasant situations they stand out: walks, playing, being together as a family and showing support. The least pleasant situations are: death of grandparents, anger, lawsuits and the separation of parents. Most said they felt happy with their family, which can be an indicator of psychological well-being. It is concluded that the value that children give to the family serves adults to pay attention and care for the family.

Keywords: Family; Perspective; Boys; Girls

Introduction

What experiences, perceptions, and needs do infants express regarding the dynamics of their family? It is a question to which little attention has been paid in the field of developmental psychology and psychoeducational interventions, taking into account the complexity of social problems on it, it is assumed that boys and girls are part of it, and as such, their well-being is inherent in the interaction within it and in the proper functions attributed as a fundamental pillar of the development and training of people [1]. Knowing the experiences of the little ones with respect to their family is to give voice to their own experiences, affections, and values around it, allowing researchers to give a place to the expressions and perceptions of childhood by "considering that they are not passive objects in social structures... but they are active subjects in the construction and determination of their own lives and of society" (p. 44) as Sosenski [2] So then, the experience of a boy or girl who also lives and observes their family context can contribute to reassessing the role of the family in our current society and mobilize scholars of human behavior and social groups to generate strategies of promotion and prevention with respect to the value of well-being in the family and its impact on other contexts of action.

Qualitative research focused on the family as a unit of analysis generates knowledge about the relationship of this social group with the health of its members and the population as

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a whole. It aims to reflect the multiple and complex interactions between society, family, and their needs; on the other hand, it recognizes the void of making new epistemological openings that support evidence-based research to address complex study objects that generate comorbidities derived from the interaction. family [3]. Scientific production in the field of family studies is increasing, but as an emerging need, it is necessary to break paradigms and trends in established scientific communities [4].

Family in childhood

The family, according to Díaz, Ledesma, Díaz and Tito [5], is considered a social group where the ties that are strengthened between its members have been characteristic in the passage of time and history. Although these have assumed special characteristics depending on the time and cultural context, within them, there are certain functions and tasks that play a transcendental role in their functionality and success. It is recognized that the family has undergone notable changes since its development it has not been a static group. This has been determined by sociocultural, economic, and demographic factors, pandemics, and disasters, it has been shown that there are no factors that generate long periods of stability, but they are mediated by these problems that have an impact on their dynamics [6].

Currently, the concept of family has changed from a classic term where it was made up of the mother, father, and children to a conception where people feel protected, loved, and happy, and the intimate, deep, and significant experience that is lived in the family, it can last over time [7]. The National Population Council [8] considers that the family is “the primary area of development of any human being that constitutes the basis for the construction of identity, self-esteem, and elementary social coexistence schemes. As the nucleus of society, it is a fundamental institution for education and the promotion of essential human values that are transmitted from generation to generation” (p.1).

According to Gutiérrez, Díaz and Román [9], the family in Mexico continues to be a vital reference where kinship ties continue to be valid, and the members of this institution go to it to solve problems and seek support despite the time, of the social, technological, and demographic changes that can be experienced today. Its relevance covers place when conceiving that within the family is where its members feel loved, and the parents remain present throughout the life of the children, so the attachment that develops between its members, parents, and siblings usually lasts a lifetime. Likewise, it is within the family that the basic principles for human development are built, and the behavior models to follow are formed Suárez, Veléz [10].

The family, in the same way, fulfills the functions of mutual support among the members, both in daily life and in moments of difficulty, upbringing and teaching values, norms, and strategies to face life [7], as well as the preparation to occupy social roles, control impulses and develop skills to relate to others and face social demands [10]. The family represents the most intimate system the human being has after himself by granting a sense of belonging and an affective bond with other people. According to Hernández, Valladares, Rodríguez and Selin [11], it is necessary to become

aware of the value that the family has in the development of boys and girls, as well as in the development of society since the social problems we currently face are a serious symptom that the family, as the foundation of society, is losing its strength and it is essential to implement actions that rescue it and one way to do it from our perspective is to start from the conceptual reference that children have about the family.

Social representation of the family in childhood

Sánchez and Lombardo [12] refer that there are few investigations that have been carried out on the social representation of the family in childhood. A study carried out by these authors, where they explored the representation of the family in children from 4 to 11 years of age, both in preschool and elementary school, in the city of Mar de Plata, Argentina, searched through word association, the drawing of the family and a semi-structured interview, to answer the following questions: how do children define the family? how do they represent it? And what are the functions that the children are assigned to the family? as well as what is the distribution of the activities and functions of its members? As a result of their research, they found that three levels of conceptualization of increasing complexity could be differentiated on the notion of family. Said levels, refer to Sánchez and Lombardo [12], can be related to the period of psychosocial and cognitive development of children.

As a result of this study, they identified that the first level referred to the numbering of its components or a description of activities, especially in children aged 4 and 5, who defined their family by the number of its members or else by a description of activities such as: living together, eating together, going out and walking, together with expressions of loving and caring feelings. In the same way, they report that the functions of the family are those of self-preservation, recreational and emotional support. The self-preservation functions were associated with the condition of satisfying the basic needs of food, clothing, and housing, which have to do with the preservation of life. The recreational function had to do with leisure activities and the use of free time with the family. Observing that in the children's drawings, families could be seen walking, sharing games, or celebrating. Finally, the function of affective support referred to the establishment of ties or links, as well as to providing affection, care, protection, and security to the members. That is to say, to the function of support and protection that the family can give.

The second level of conceptualization of the family implied a greater decentering. In this, children from 6 to 11 years old could consider the perspective of the other, without ceasing to conceive that the family was central in their lives. Its functions were located in self-preservation but also in aspects such as living in the same house, socialization, education, as well as the affective ties that unite the family. This could be seen in the drawings where hearts appeared, all the members holding hands or with the written word “love.” The third level of conceptualization of the family reported by these researchers in their study mentioned the family as a social institution, where the family transcends the child's life and considers other families. That is, at this level, the notion of us is

conceived, placing the child as one more member of the family. The reciprocity of giving and receiving stands out at this level. Within this are located children from 9 to 11 years of age.

In the same way, Andrade [13] refers that the psychological meaning of family is expressed in words such as union and love. A study was carried out by Áviles [14] on the psychological meaning of the family of children 10 and 12 years of age through natural semantic networks who were living in a nuclear family and children from single-parent families in the city of Toluca, Mexico. , reported that when faced with the phrase "For me, family is..." the children of both groups agreed to define it with the words love, affection, important, happiness, beautiful, happy, united, living together, and life. While those who lived in a nuclear family defined it as beautiful, good, respectful, friendly, and friendship. Children from single-parent families used the words: loving, hardworking, fun, supportive, and valuable.

In the behavioral dimension, unity, coexistence, hardworking, being together and helping, and not fighting, among others, stand out. As part of the functions dimension, the words support, health, care for me, security, education, and well-being were used. The members considered mom, dad, brothers, people, and uncles. Given the representations that children are assigned to the family, it should be noted that according to the previous study, there are certain differences according to age, which can be explained by the cognition of each stage of development. On the other hand [15] in a study carried out with 9 children between the ages of three and four and their respective parents or caregivers, from Bogota, whose objective was to account for the imaginaries and representations family members built by children and their parents and their relationship with the socio-affective dimension, found that the meaning of family is related to the quality of interactions, and the possibility of generating encounters with others to share and communicate feelings; in addition to the places and life experiences that are interwoven with the social context.

A study carried out by Tonon, Benatuil and Laurito [16], on the perception of well-being by children from 8 to 12 years of age in their family and school environment in Argentina, reported as central components of this well-being in the family, the pleasure of playing with his siblings and spending time with his family, the signs of love, care, attention, help, security and company from his parents, in addition to having economic and job stability in the family. Likewise, satisfaction was linked to the possibility of sharing spaces and family activities, as well as playing with siblings. Considering the home as a space where they feel safe and comfortable. In this study, situations that reflected difficulties in their family environment were also revealed, such as the separation of parents or fights between them, which generated anguish and lack of comfort at home, which was considered an important factor: that could have effects on the level of satisfaction of minors.

Therefore, according to this study, the family is considered the main source of well-being in childhood (Tonon, Benatuil, Laurito [16], which according to Ryff (1989) and from a multidimensional model, it is understood that the Psychological well-being is made up of six dimensions, several of which begin in the family environment or by interaction with the closest members of our

family: "the positive evaluation of oneself and one's past life (self-acceptance), the sense of growth continual and development as a person (personal growth), the belief that one's life has purpose and meaning (life purposes), the development and maintenance of quality and trusting relationships with others (positive relationships with others); the ability to effectively direct one's life and the environment to satisfy needs and desires (by mastering the environment); and a sense of personal self-determination (autonomy)" Tonon, Benatuil, Laurito [16].

In order to understand the meaning that psychological well-being has in child development, we must recognize the tendency that has existed in behavioral sciences to analyze it from a hedonic philosophical perspective, affirming that states of happiness depend on positive affect and the absence of negative feelings. immediately Ryan & Deci, 2001. On the other hand, recent studies show that not only this current is important, but also from the Aristotelian eudaimonic philosophy (reflected through the so-called Nicomachean ethics), affirms that psychological well-being must be taught from an early age based on meaning and commitment. for life, constituting important pillars today in the construction of new theoretical positions in which childhood is involved.

Therefore, it is important to recognize that the analysis of well-being in childhood and their perceptions of the world that surrounds them, today needs renewed theoretical and methodological models, due to the evident changes that society is facing. It is vitally important to take into account issues that have been forgotten at this stage of life, especially those that especially involve the perception of their family environment and the impact it has on their well-being, as well as the acquisition of specific skills to their present and future lives Domínguez-Serrano, Pérez [17]. In this sense, the interest in knowing and understanding what makes them happy, what gives them satisfaction and what generates well-being or discomfort in a boy or girl with respect to their family environment, can contribute to understanding the way in which the family is perceived, the notion of it and its importance for the proper functioning of society.

So then, given the relevance of the family and the impact it has on the child's development, and its social effect, the present study aimed to explore in Mexican boys and girls, what their family represents for them both in pleasant situations and painful or unpleasant, in such a way that it serves as a reference to carry out actions that strengthen in them the value and conservation of the family as the main group that generates personal and social well-being. The family and the education of emotional regulation for well-being must address various areas: family, school, community, regional, national, and international that start from facilitating knowledge of essential freedoms and rights to the development of attitudes such as tolerance and understanding of individual and social problems García, Cáceres, Bautista [18].

Method

Participants

Were 191 boys and girls of basic education from 1st to 6th grade of a public elementary school in Pachuca, Hidalgo, Mexico, who were selected according to a non-probability sampling for

convenience. Of the total number of participants, 29(15%) were from 1st grade, 33(17%) were from 2nd grade, 34(18%) were from 3rd grade, 34(18%) were from 4th grade, 28 (15%) from 5th grade and 33(17%) were from 6th grade, of which 93(48%) were girls and 98(52%) were boys, with an average age $M=8.4$, $SD=1.7$, and an average number of family members of $M=5$, $SD=4.1$, being the minimum number of members two and the maximum 9.

Research design

The study design was non-experimental and cross-sectional with a descriptive scope.

Instrument

A questionnaire was prepared for the purposes of this research with ten open questions, of which two of them were completion sentences, and the other eight were direct questions. Through these, we sought to explore the following family dimensions:

- A. Conception about their family (My family is...)
- B. Pleasant situations (Write down a situation where you and your family have been happy, What do you like most about your family?)
- C. Unpleasant and/or painful situations (Write down a situation where you and your family have gone through a difficult and painful moment)
- D. How do family members react when they are angry, and what makes them angry?
- E. Is there something in your family that causes you to fear, tell us what it is
- F. What don't you like about your family?)
- G. Living with others (8. When your family lives with other people, what is it like?)
- H. Perception of their feelings as a family
- I. How do you feel with your family?
- J. The members of your family feel -write how each one of them feels if you know-

Procedure

The educational institution was visited to present the research project and request authorization for its realization. Since the authorities granted the permission, the parents were summoned through the professors of the institution in order to inform them about the project and request their informed consent. With the consent of the parents, we proceeded to the classrooms of 2 to 3 groups per day until the applications were completed. When the psychology students who were supporting the research arrived at the groups, they introduced themselves to the groups, the reason for their presence was explained to them, and their support was requested, respecting the children's decision to want or not to participate. After their acceptance, they were given instructions on what they should do. In the case of the 1st-grade children, there was a greater approach with them to support them in writing their

answers since several of them were just learning to write. When the application to all participating groups was concluded, the authorities were thanked for their support.

Ethical aspects

As part of the ethical aspects, based on the psychologist's code of ethics, care was taken to safeguard the data of the participants in order not to violate their rights. In the same way, the characteristics of the research were reported, doubts about the treatment and reporting of the data were clarified, and informed consent was requested from the parents as well as from the children themselves.

Analysis of data

The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics based on the frequency with which certain family conditions occurred, as well as content analysis.

Result

Result of the conception of family dimension

According to the results, it can be observed in Table 1 that regarding the conception that children have about the family, starting from the phrase, My family is... 19.6% consider it happy, while 12.3% the refers to as cheerful and affectionate. There are those who refer to the presence of positive and negative emotions, such as being happy and angry (13.9%). Given the answers of the minors, it can be said that in general, they conceive it with more positive than negative attributes, among which are also union (1.1%) and coexistence (0.6%) in a lower percentage. Only 5% looked at the members of their family to refer to it.

Table 1: Conception of family by minors to the approach My family is...

Dimension Family Conception		
My family is...	f	%
Happy	35	19,6
Cherful	18	10,1
Good	4	2,2
United	2	1,1
Happy and angry	25	13,9
Cherfull and affectionate	22	12,3
Good and loving	12	6,7
Angry and affectionate	3	1,7
String character	1	0,6
Serious and calm	1	0,6
Angry	1	0,6
Pretty and nice	18	10,1
My parents, my brothers	9	5,0
Unanswered	25	14,0
Normal	2	1,1
We live together	1	0,6

Note: Own Elaboration.

Dimension pleasant situations in the family

In this dimension, situations of happiness were explored, as well as situations or aspects that they like in their family. Regarding the situations of happiness, it can be seen in Table 2 that walks (34.1%) and being together as a family (13.4%) are the most frequent answers given by the study participants. Although it could

be observed that apparently the meetings on special dates are also a reason for happiness, as well as playing together. Regarding what they like most about their family, showing support (16.2%) and being happy (19%) are the most frequent responses given by minors. Followed by displays of affection (8.4%) and that the family is together (8.9%), as well as going out together (12.8%).

Table 2: Situations of happiness and what do you like most about your family.

Dimension Pleasant situations		
Write down a situation where you and your family have been happy	f	%
Walks (going to the park, cinema, beach, fair)	61	34,1
Parties	15	8,4
Play	19	10,6
Arrival of family members at home	5	2,8
Watch movies and cartoons	4	2,2
Being together as a family	24	13,4
Meetings on holidays such as Christmas, Children's Day, Visit relatives	19	10,6
Expression of positive emotions	1	0,6
What do you like most about your family?		
That hugs me, his affection	15	8,4
Everything	8	4,5
That is happy	34	19,0
That is united	16	8,9
That I am with them	1	0,6
That don't scold me	1	0,6
That is sporty	1	0,6
That we go out to places	23	12,8
That understands me	4	2,2
Dimension Pleasant Situations		
What do you like most about your family?		
Are funny	3	1,7
We are always happy and never fight	1	0,6
That they always support each other	29	16,2
That we are happy even if something bad has happened	1	0,6
That we live together every day	8	4,5
Play with my mom or with them	4	2,2
My parents and family	2	1,1
Separation of family members	1	0,6
Unanswered	26	14,5
Acquisition of an asset	1	0,6

Note: Own Elaboration.

Dimension of unpleasant and painful situations

Regarding unpleasant or painful events, situations were investigated where the child and his family have had a difficult and painful time, as well as what they do not like about their family and how their family members react when they are angry. In relation to situations where the minor and his family have gone through a difficult and painful time, the deaths of grandparents, parents, or pets stand out as the most frequent (41.3%), followed by illness (10.1%) and separation of the family (7.8%). It is important to

highlight that a significant percentage of the participants, especially the younger ones, did not respond to this approach (Table 3). As for the question, what do you not like about your family?, the minors answered, "let them get angry" (32.4%) and "let them fight" (20.7%) as the most frequent (Table 3). Within this same dimension of unpleasant or painful situations, in the question How do the members of your family react when they are angry?, in Table 4 it can be observed that responses such as "They hit me" (34.1%), "They scold me" (23.5%) and "Scream" (11.2%), having a lower frequency "we talk" (1.7%).

Table 3: Unpleasant, painful and disliked situations in your family.

Category Unpleasant or Painful Situations		
Write Down a Situation Where you and your Family have gone through a difficult and Painful Time.	f	%
Death (grandparents, parents or pet)	74	41,3
Separation	14	7,8
Illness	18	10,1
Fighting (between parents and/or siblings)	6	3,4
Not playing	3	1,7
Lack of money	1	0,6
Scolding or hitting from parents	11	6,1
Sleep	2	1,1
Day of the dead celebrations	3	1,7
Always sad	1	0,6
The park	1	0,6
Unanswered	27	15,1
Never	7	3,9
When inside I want to go to soccer and my family doesn't want to.	1	0,6
What don't you like about your family?		
That they get angry	58	32,4
That they play pranks on me	1	0,6
That they fight	37	20,7
What don't you like about your family?		
Everything	2	1,1
That they scold me	16	8,9
That they don't pay attention to me	1	0,6
That they are sad	4	2,2
That they gossip with me	1	0,6
That they hit me	1	0,6
That it's boring	1	0,6
That they are very greedy	1	0,6
That we are not together	1	0,6
That they check everything	1	0,6
Their work	1	0,6
Their members	1	0,6
Unanswered	30	16,8
Nothing	10	5,6
That they are sick	1	0,6
That they are conformists	7	3,9
That we are separated	1	0,6
The daily coexistence	3	1,7

Note: Own Elaboration.

Table 4: Family reactions when they get angry.

Dimension Reactions When they get Angry		
How do your Family Members react When they are Angry?	f	%
Hit (mom or dad)	61	34,1
Scold (mom or dad)	42	23,5
Shout	20	11,2
They send to do homework (mom or dad)	7	3,9

They put chili in my mouth (my mom)	1	0,6
They stop talking (parents and children)	7	3,9
Falls asleep (mom or dad)	4	2,2
Throw things (dad)	1	0,6
Dad or mom make us do something (housework)	2	1,1
Talk	3	1,7
Unanswered	27	15,1
Nothing	4	2,2

Note: Own Elaboration.

Perception dimension of their feelings as a family

Finally, regarding their perception of how they feel with their family, in Table 5, it can be seen that the minors responded feeling happy (64.8%), followed by happy and protected (15.6%), being only one of the cases. (0.6%) who external to feel sad.

Table 5: Perception of your feeling in the family

Category Perception of your Feeling as a Family		
How do you feel with your family?	f	%
Happy	116	64,8
Happy and loved	3	1,7
Happy and Protected	28	15,6
Sad	1	0,6
Loved	1	0,6
Unanswered	30	16,8

Note: Own Elaboration.

Discussion and Conclusion

The Family is a space for education for emotional regulation, coexistence, and well-being from the hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives

The results of this study allow us to verify that family ties and the functions that the family fulfills today continue to be the same as those that have been observed throughout history despite the changes and types of family members that occur in the Mexican culture. Its significance is valid today and will surely continue to be so in the future. As Gimeneo as cited in Lozada [7] suggests, the family is conceived as the group where the person feels protected, loved, and happy, beyond the classical notion that referred to the way in which it was made up (father, mother, and children) and are expressed in the social fabric. The participants precisely define the family as happy, cheerful, and affectionate, which according to Ryff (1989), is the development and maintenance of quality relationships and trust with others (positive relationships with others); the ability to effectively direct one's life and the environment to satisfy needs and desires, are some of the important references to consider that there is psychological well-being. The study shows a trend toward predominant family education as a culture in hedonic well-being by expressing that the only way to achieve happiness is based on pleasure with low social recognition of well-being based on commitment and a sense of updating the child's human potential.

Stability or instability of the family as a psychoeducational space

Likewise, as Gutiérrez, Díaz, Román [9]) mention, the family continues to be an essential support reference for emotional stability among its members. As the children mentioned, the displays of support are what they like the most about their family, above the expressions of affection that were reported in a lower percentage. However, it is important to consider that the family is the bosom where its members feel loved and attachments last a lifetime, as Suárez and Veléz [10] point out. If these links are not generated, they constitute sources of emotional instability that affects their behavior with a tendency to aggressiveness and even more complex mental health processes; Therefore, it can be considered that one way to manifest these affective processes is through the signs of acceptance, support, and care of the other Maglio et al. [16].

Similarly, the data reported in this study coincide with those found by Sánchez and Lombardo [19] in terms of the presence of the family's self-preservation, recreational, and affective support functions when children respond that one of the causes of happiness is being together as a family and taking walks together, which according to Tonon, Benatuil, and Laurito [16], are also considered as causes of satisfaction, stability, and psychological well-being in the minor.

Recurrence of positive and negative emotional states from a sociocultural perspective and its impact on gender education

As for unpleasant and painful situations, it is also true that all kinds of experiences are lived in the family that impact future behavior, such as violence between peers, losses, separations, expression of emotions continuously devaluing the positive value of negative emotions and the exaggerated tendency to always function with the resources of positive emotions in an exaggerated way, such as the prohibition of anger and dual speech (angry parents are confused with the term compliance with rules expressed through shouting or hitting. This dual problem may not make clear the terms that favor the contents of emotions and their benefits in regulating behavior, which can be a cause of anguish and have an impact on the level of well-being of boys and girls Tonon, Benatuil, Laurito [14] Hidalgo is considered one of the states with the highest rate of femicide due to family scenarios based on stereotypes. of gender due to the tolerance of an androcentric, unequal, and violent

patriarchal macho system against women of all ages; said forms of asymmetrical power relations are reflected in femicides in the ways of depriving them of life and in the archetypes of violence exerted on their bodies Cante, Loaiza [20].

It is important to highlight that this study gives voice to boys and girls, allowing researchers to have a different view of addressing the issue and of valuing children as important social actors, leaving aside the adult view to know from their own perspective what they have to say. The value that children give to the family can help adults pay attention and care to the family [21] and not miss out on spaces for coexistence, support, and displays of affection. As Hernández, Valladares, Rodríguez, Selin [11] refer, it is necessary to raise awareness about the socializing value of the family, where the first positive bonds between parents and children are acquired, and the first social relationships are established, where family cohesion is appreciated in strong emotional ties, mutual support, carrying out activities together and displays of mutual affection.

According to these authors, “feeling an acceptable degree of family satisfaction will induce family members to exchange emotions and feelings, to develop appropriate, cooperative interaction patterns, as well as to validate and strengthen the mutual image of each member” (p.342). The family, as Restrepo [22] refers to it, has been, is, and will continue to be a constant in which values are learned, security, trust, and refuge are generated among its members. It is where each one of the members is recognized and accepted regardless of the economic, cultural, intellectual, religious, and living conditions of each one of their members.

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