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# The preventive function of family guidance in education

La función preventiva de la orientación familiar en educación

家庭指导在教育中的预防作用

Профилактическая роль семейного консультирования в образовании

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**Oscar Santiago Barzaga Sablón**  
Technical University of Manabí (Ecuador)  
obarzaga52@gmail.com  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5303-949x>

**Harry Darío Balda Zambrano**  
Technical University of Manabí (Ecuador)  
email.harryb4@hotmail.com  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5209-2205>

**Grey Zita Gean Zambrano Intriago**  
Technical University of Manabí (Ecuador)  
grey.zambrano@utm.edu.ec  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9780-3958>

**Antonio Clarencio Guzmán Ramírez**  
Technical University of Manabí (Ecuador)  
guzmanramirez7@gmail.com  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8169-2090>

**Melisa Anabel León García**  
Technical University of Manabí (Ecuador)  
melisa\_leon17@yahoo.com  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2190-5581>

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## Abstract

This work addresses one of the most current pressing problems, the preventive role of family counseling in the context of a risk society. The objective of this research was to assess the preventive function of family counseling, in the province of Manabí- Ecuador; not from a mitigating or corrective conception, but, based on a diagnosis of the state of the prevention function of family orientation, where the factors that limit the prevention process were analyzed, taking into account the theory and methodology linked to structural aspects of prevention such as: theory and methodology of risk analysis and the theory and methodology of decision making. A proposal for a more complete definition of prevention and a characterization of the prevention function of family counseling was one of the main results. The methodology was based on the application of theoretical methods such as: scientific abstraction, the comparative method, and the functional structural systemic method. Among the empirical methods, the scientific interview and document analysis were used.

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Keywords: Prevention, family orientation, risk, decision making.

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## Resumen

El presente trabajo aborda una de las problemáticas más acuciantes de la actualidad, la función preventiva de la orientación familiar en el contexto de la sociedad del riesgo. El objetivo es valorar la función preventiva de la orientación familiar, a través de un diagnóstico del estado actual del objeto de estudio, enmarcado en la provincia de Manabí en el Ecuador. A partir de un diagnóstico del estado de la función de prevención de la orientación familiar, donde se analizan los factores que limitan el proceso de prevención, teniendo en cuenta la teoría y la metodología vinculada con aspectos estructurales de la prevención como: la teoría y metodología del análisis de riesgo y la teoría y metodología de la toma de decisiones. Entre los resultados se encuentran la propuesta de una definición mucho más completa de prevención para la orientación y una caracterización de la función de prevención de la orientación familiar. La metodología se fundamenta en la aplicación de métodos teóricos como: la abstracción científica, el método comparativo y el método sistémico estructural funcional. Entre los métodos empíricos utilizados se sitúan: la entrevista científica y el análisis de documentos.

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Palabras claves: Prevención, orientación familiar, riesgo, toma de decisiones.

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## 摘要

本文分析了作为当今最紧迫的问题之一的风险社会背景下家庭指导的预防作用。研究目的为通过对厄瓜多尔马纳比省研究对象的现状进行诊断，评估家庭指导的预防功能。根据对家庭指导预防功能状态的诊断，分析了妨碍预防过程的因素，其中考虑到了与预防建构方面相关的理论和方法论，例如：风险分析的理论和方法论以及决策的理论和方法论。最后研究提出了关于对指导的预防作用的更完整定义以及对家庭指导的预防功能的特点进行了分析。研究方法是基于理论方法的应用，例如：科学抽象，比较方法和功能结构系统方法。研究使用的实践方法包括：科学访谈和文件分析。

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关键词：预防，家庭指导，风险，决策。

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## Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается одна из самых актуальных проблем современности - превентивная функция семейного консультирования в контексте общества риска. Цель работы - оценить профилактическую функцию семейного консультирования посредством диагностики текущего состояния объекта исследования, расположенного в провинции Манаби в Эквадоре. С диагностики состояния профилактической функции семейного консультирования, где анализируются факторы, ограничивающие процесс профилактики, с учетом теории и методологии, связанной со структурными аспектами профилактики, такими как: теория и методология анализа рисков и теория и методология принятия решений. Среди результатов - предложение гораздо более полного определения профилактики для консультирования и характеристика профилактической функции семейного консультирования. Методология основана на применении теоретических методов, таких как: научная абстракция, сравнительный метод и функционально-структурный системный метод. Среди используемых эмпирических методов: научное интервью и анализ документов.

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Ключевые слова: Профилактика, семейное консультирование, риск, принятие решений.

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## Introduction

One of the functions of family orientation is the prevention work, where the conversion process of man into a subject of the historical movement presupposes the formation of the individual as an integral person and his existence as a social being. This abstraction is revealed in the existence of each man, marked by their experience through different groups of belonging, characterized by different purposes, composition and levels of organization, established, in turn, by particular social and environmental contexts.

It is a necessity that family counseling be developed by highly trained professionals. The family is the governing institution that manages the development and decides what to do and what to project; manager of development and expression of its result, what to do and project; hence the integration of family orientation work with the development of the social one, in a sui generis dimension, which allows us to become aware of the extraordinary progress that the family dimension for development currently represents. It is an integration, capable of articulating the particular being of each family, their vision of the future, their capacities and potentialities, representations and full control of the social, economic and natural environment in a developmental program (Nardone, 2014).

There is a close link between family and society. Both constitute an indissoluble dialectical unit that complement each other. The family aims to achieve the developmental, integral and harmonious growth of man and society, it tries to guarantee the development of human capacities. The family, on its socio-historical and natural context, projects, executes, and evaluates its results, which implies an expansion of its levels of participation in programs that foster sustainable and systematic action. The future cannot be built apart from the family as an institution and setting where the essences of the human being are produced, recreated and renewed, where the representations of the environment are built, expressed and transformed, trying to raise the economic,

social and cultural conditions of the worker, the organization, and the country, contributing to national progress.

The family is a consanguineous bond, a physical-environmental space, a social unit, a group of people with a specific mode of organization, linked to common needs and interests, which builds representations, values, relationships, responsibilities, actions, and development objectives that express a construction of the future. It is unfolded in a certain geographic area and is specific to a particular daily life, where the individuals can find satisfaction to their biological, social, cultural and economic needs (Pérez, 2015).

The family in its operation, generates an integration and a sense of belonging, essential for human beings, where each person finds the right environment to adapt and grow; interact with other individuals, and connect with nature advancing in the conservation, protection and control of it. This system of family organization is the bearer of its own traditions, history and identity that are expressed in the identification of interests and in the sense of belonging, which differentiate the group that integrates the same environmental space from the rest.

The development of the family is a process that aims at the qualitative and quantitative transformation of the individual and society; it depends on the consistent application of the following principles: self-generated, multidirectional, inclusive, permanent, participatory, supportive and plural.

However, it can be said that the development of the family is not always harmonious and fulfills its functions. Hence, there is a set of problems which are not solved based on its experience, knowledge and culture. So, there is the necessity of a highly qualified and professional staff to guide the family and provide methodologies and strategies to solve the most pressing problems by themselves, without the help of other people. Restoring functionality in many of these families has become one of the goals of family counseling. In the province of Manabí there are groups of professionals dedicated to family counseling who carry out important work related to the mitigation of family problems (Lentini & Fox, 2013).

Big progress has been made in family counseling work by the Universidad Técnica de Manabí, which has been recognized at local, regional and national level. The university develops a wide project of professional training, through a Specialization in family counseling; even though, there are limitations in the training that must be perfected. Among the aspects revealed in the framework of its improvement is the absence of a preventive family orientation strategy and the current orientation is essentially mitigating negative impacts.

For the reasons mentioned above, it is mandatory to prepare family counselors in the new knowledge society who have skills related to scientific thinking and creativity in problem solving. In this case, the best family orientation is not the one that allows solving the problems in families, but the one that prevents them.

It is required a restructuration on the training strategies of professional family counselors; so, they become competent and capable of facing new challenges imposed by the risk society, highly qualified in problem solving, on guidance, and also in establishing adequate prevention strategies. This paper aims to determine the impact of prevention on family counseling, an aspect that is insufficiently addressed in the scientific literature.

Social and economic policies aimed towards solving the most pressing family problems favor the training of competent counselors. This give families the possibility of solving problems related to: employment, life quality improvement , lifestyle, physical and mental health, intra-family relationships, and school-family relationship, among others.

The family can be characterized by having achieved a good quality of life, lifestyle, physical and mental health, and an adequate intra-family relationship; however, it is constituted a dysfunctional family. This fact is given because the presence of the aforementioned factors is not enough. The formation on values occupies an essential place in family life, which constitute essential regulators of human behavior both inside and outside family contexts, obtaining, at a large extent, the absence of problems. That is why, in the prevention of family dysfunction and the practice of values occupy a fundamental place.

The preventive work developed by the family counselor, can contribute to raising the quality of life and social well-being of the family. By endowing the individual with capacities and knowledge that allow them to organize, from the family, their social development perspectives, Besides, the family is also the main economic unit of society (Martínez, 2013, p.26).

Prevention through efficient family counseling can improve the family's productivity and competition in the labor markets. The economic growth and social development of the family can be associated, in certain circumstances, with the systematic work of family orientation (Rodríguez & Gómez, 2015).

In underdeveloped countries, families find conditions that are not conducive to their progress, with low levels of schooling, formation of values, employment, health indicators, life quality, and, social well-being. Consequently, the socializing function of the family is notably affected and therefore family orientation has low levels of efficiency and prevention.

Training for an adequate preventive orientation for the family entails great benefits for society, including the development of human talent that highlights the fundamental values of a society, knowledge, equity, justice, equal treatment between men and women, non-discrimination, social responsibility and the participation of everyone in the economic and social life (Pérez, 2015).

In the case of family counseling, the conception of prevention is very limited and professional training is not oriented in this direction. It only has a mitigating nature. In this sense, the importance of prevention for the family requires the adoption of legislative measures and the creation of social policies to put emphasis on social prevention.

Preventive family guidance is a process that is consciously elaborated by social policy. Its development implies the commitment to act in a transformative way on reality. The objectives of this conscious process include to guarantee the effective reproduction of stable and harmonious social relations in society. This allows the cohesion and integration of individual projects to groups, with the aim of articulating the social and economic development over a socio-political consensus (Portero, 1990).

The preventive family orientation category is used to emphasize the mobilization of the family around positive cultural purposes, in search of values, which act at the core of daily convictions that help to build and regularize family life. Prevention in the framework of the family recognizes four fundamental functions: optimizing the normative action of the family against the social behavior of any member that violates

moral norms and principles; protecting the values and interests of the family and society; socializing function, developing a systematic work of influence and persuasion in order to avoid the development of non-socializing behaviors; and comprehensive and systemic analysis of family problems that allow decision-making around existing problems and the prevention of the appearance of new ones.

In summary, from the analysis of various opinions on the concept of prevention, researchers such as Sampayo et al. (2015) consider that its content references should go beyond the family framework in attention to the diversity of social phenomena and processes that gravitate around the socializing function, the close interrelation that is established between them and the integration and cohesion of objectives that sustain it.

It is evident that in the scientific literature on prevention, in works of authors such as Bisquerra (1990), Días (2001), Alvarez (2006), Sampayo (2016) y Thompson (2018), studies around preventive family counseling are not systematized and although they refer to both categories, the relationship between them is not sufficiently founded and generally, preventive work is not addressed as a function of counseling. From a theoretical and methodological perspective, prevention should be considered as an inseparable function of family orientation.

In family counseling, it is essential to maintain a close link among communities, groups of people, institutions, organizations and individuals, being the fundamental cell for preventive work. This is a central axis in the family actions, granting them significant effectiveness, which generates changes in the family orientation methodology and allowing greater efficiency in the transformation of the family and society, preventing the appearance of non-socializing conditions (Nardone, 2014).

At present, this action is more important in the so-called risk society, a category that is addressed in the scientific literature apart from the scientific fact of the risk of the appearance of non-socializing factors in the family. Prevention based on the study of risk constitutes the cornerstone of preventive work in general terms and specifically in the preventive dimension of family guidance work.

It is undeniable that this type of preventive family orientation is inseparable from risk theory; that is why, scientific prevention is impossible without evaluating risk. In this case, risk of the appearance of non-socializing factors in the family, in turn, implies correct decision-making to counteract the non-socializing phenomena that generate family dysfunction and thus problems in the family.

Preventive family counseling can be defined as one of the essential functions of counseling, which is built on the basis of participation and sustainability and risk analysis, allowing the possibility of making appropriate decisions, avoiding the appearance of factors that have a negative impact on the functions of the family, favoring the conservation and/or restoration of its social functionality, and contributing to the integral development of its members.

However, it is clear that one of the fundamental limitations of family counseling and social prevention is that it does not adequately conceive risk assessment and decision-making as basic principles of its social action. Although, the literature mentions that this relationship is not adequately reflected. In the case of prevention and family guidance, it is considered that this constitutes the central axis of this study, given the breadth of the aforementioned theory and the fundamental problems detected in the research, it is pertinent to focus on the risk assessment process for decision-making

in the preventive work of family guidance work, an aspect that has central theoretical and methodological importance for the improvement of such process.

From the methodological-theoretical perspective, it is impossible to make adequate decisions in family counseling work, without carrying out a correct risk assessment as an inseparable part of the theory of decision-making, especially when living in the so-called risk society, where one of the great risks to take into consideration is the social impacts caused in the family.

The risk of family dysfunction defines the intermediate state between security and crisis, where the conception of risk determines the thinking and action to follow. The risk of family dysfunction implies the potential existence of threat of crisis or chaos in any of its orders. For these reasons, it is expressed from a philosophical perspective the relationship between possibility and reality.

The risk of family dysfunction is the potential possibility that an event occurs or become a reality with chaotic or disadvantageous consequences for the family organization. Dysfunction is the possibility made real or objectified. It could be the crisis in the family or the generation of disadvantageous situations. Any reality of crisis in the family function was previously a potential possibility with a negative impact on the family (Zambrano & Barzaga, 2018).

The sociology of risk is a science of evaluations over probabilities. The risks present in families constitute a potentially existing form of reality. If the family has the risk of dysfunctionality, there is the probability, on its various degrees, of becoming a reality. Knowledge of functional risk in the family implies assuming responsibility, in the form of decision-making about future events and their negative consequences for the family.

Family functional risk (Rff by its Spanish initials) is considered a damage to the family by the probability of risk, taking the form of calculating probabilities, which considers the worst case scenario. In family functional risk, the relationship between past, present and future is reversed. The past loses its power to determine the present (Zambrano & Barzaga, 2018, p.7).

The future of the family appears as the cause of the present experience, due to something immaterial, non-existent and constructed. They reflect on something that does not happen but that if given certain circumstances could happen. The more threatening the risky circumstances are in the present for the threatening future; the greater the family shock it can cause (Zambrano & Barzaga, 2018).

Intra-family risks are value judgments based on facts, it is a kind of mathematized responsibility. This means that judgments on intra-family risk can only be approached through an interdisciplinary relationship, which implies a mixture of evaluations in the framework of a future reality and the non-existent future that activates the present action, which is related to cultural importance of the universal value of the family.

The need to determine family functional risk and its perception is a consequence of the need of control that the family wishes to exercise over its future, in general, over its current life. Lack of knowledge implies fear, insecurity, lack of control and is evaluated as risk. The indeterminacies and uncertainties inherent in the diagnosis of family functional risk are part of decision-making and are considered errors.

Family functional risk is a way of evaluating unpredictable consequences for the family, its calculation develops ways and methods to make the unpredictable, predictable.

It is a way of forecasting what will possibly happen in the future. The tools include statistical representations, probabilities, predictions, expert calculations, as well as models and organizations for preventive care (Zambrano & Barzaga, 2018).

In the study that is carried out on decision-making in family counseling, it is determined that people with the aforementioned responsibility, fundamentally, are based on an empirical risk assessment, where unconscious action against risk prevails in an indefinite uncertainty, that is, indeterminacy. Increased knowledge implies that the family from family guidance can better predict the future and prevent the appearance of family functional risk and, at the same time, foresee new risks.

The existence of certain social conditions implies the appearance of new functional family risks, in this sense, the need for theoretical and methodological knowledge of risk becomes increasingly important. A family orientation based on knowledge of risk implies a spectrum of possibilities, where strategies can be conceived to face uncertainties, only accurate knowledge should force action, the denial of family functional risks makes them grow and become more pronounced each time.

Family functional risks suggest what should not be done, it is the best fertile ground for the emergence of problems in the family; denying them opens the gates of fear and everything becomes risky. In the world of risk society, the logic of control collapses from within. The risks must be made clearly at the family orientation, to affirm that they constitute a real threat, including values, cultural symbols and scientific arguments.

Family functional risks are real and are shaped by perception and the social factors that determine it. The reality of these risks is conditioned by the social impacts rooted in today's society. Knowledge about risks is linked to the history of understanding nature and the production of knowledge. The fewer family functional risks that are publicly recognized, the more risks are generated. In the theory of risk, the transformation of risk into security, confidence and certainty in overcoming the danger, is basic, which implies certainty in the future.

Currently, family functional risk is relevant in a world characterized by the loss of values, identity and the action of non-socializing conditions. These risks can only be evaluated and by the family counselor and by the family. This category has a social historical character, which in its nature combines politics, ethics, mathematics, mass media, technology, definitions and cultural perceptions. It is a form of self-assessment and rational social reflection carried out by the family counselor and by the family as a result of the social impact of their own activity.

In the bibliography, in general, no reference is made to family functional risk, but rather to the general concept of risk; therefore, it is considered necessary to give a definition of family functional risk given its theoretical methodological value for family counseling work. In family counseling work, it is essential to evaluate the aforementioned risk, which implies a decision-making process for risk prevention, where qualitative and quantitative methods are combined for decision-making, the evaluation of family functional risk and its social impact.

The previous analysis allows defining the concept of family functional risk as the potential probability of occurrence or realization of damage in the behavior of the family, which can be predicted and prevented by the family counselor, depending on the information and knowledge available, which will allow to make appropriate decisions.



This definition implies the use of another concept also with a theoretical methodological value, which is the family functional risk factor. This concept is not defined in the scientific literature and specifically in the theory of decision making for family orientation and risk theory. A family functional risk factor is understood to be the existing conditions that can potentially generate a family crisis, negative impact or chaos and constitute the damage carriers.

Addressing family functional risk from a scientific perspective implies considering the theory of family vulnerability. This expresses to what extent a family can be affected by conditions or factors of this type of risk. Family vulnerability has varying degrees of expression, ranging from very vulnerable to slightly vulnerable families. It indicates the degree of weakness or strength of various families that are facing shocking social conditions.

The scholars on this subject Zambrano and Barzaga (2018), affirm the following about the concept of family vulnerability:

The concept of family vulnerability implies an awareness of family functional risk based on knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the family and the need for its organization or reorganization to prevent a certain family crisis. It is considered that the degree of vulnerability of the family depends, to a large extent, on the intensity of the risk factor. The more vulnerable a family is, the greater the probability that the intensity of the risk factor in the family will increase. (p.8)

A very vulnerable family is one that with the presence of risk factors or conditions, with a small intensity, can suffer a great deterioration. On the contrary, those families that require the presence of very intense and/or prolonged risk factors or conditions to suffer a deterioration of their social functions are not very vulnerable.

In a family where there are a certain number of risk conditions (Cr by its Spanish initials), as the risk factors (Fr (i)) increase in quantity and intensity, to the same extent the probability that it will be objectified, become in reality, the family functional risk (Rff) and with it the vulnerability of the family. This relationship can be expressed by the following relationship:  $Rff = Fr (i) / Cr$

The objectification probability of the family functional risk, that is, causing damage, Rff, will take values between 0 and 1. The closer it is to 0, the lower the probability of generating damage, the closer it is to 1, the greater the probability of objectification, if the value of Rff = 1 then, it has ceased to be irrigation and has caused damage, it has become a reality, it has been objectified. If Rff = 0 it implies that there is no probability of damage. In reality, this probability is very difficult to achieve; it is estimated that it is close to 0 but it never reaches that value. Values very close to zero mean that there is adequate functionality in the family and the probabilities of family development are.

It can then be expressed that the family functional risk (Rff) is the probability (P) that a risk factor (Fr) with a certain intensity (i) can occur in a time (t) multiplied by the damage caused to the family (Df). The damage to the family in a social system will be directly proportional to the intensity of the risk factor (i) and the family vulnerability. This can be expressed as follows:

$$Rff = (Pr * (Fr(i)) / t) \times Df$$

The foregoing information explains why prevention is one of the basic functions of family counseling, where counselors have the fundamental objective of reducing the probability of family functional risk and with it family vulnerability, in order to avoid severe damage to the family and consequently, the appearance of dysfunctional families.

## Methodology

Assessments around preventive family counseling is a theoretical study, which based on the contribution of important researchers on the subject, presents its most significant results and limitations. This scientific perspective implies the use of theoretical and empirical research methods of the quantitative paradigm (Baptista et al., 2014, p.23).

This study was focused on theoretical methods such as scientific abstraction, which consisted in the application of operations of logical thought: analysis - synthesis and induction - deduction. This favored the decomposition of the fundamental features of the family counseling functions, determining the role of the prevention function, and then mentally integrating the analyzed parts and establishing their essential interactions as elements that are part of the theoretical core of the object of study. Induction-deduction allowed defining a series of questions around the theory of preventive family orientation and assuming an adequate direction in the treatment of the subject, object of study (Alvarez de Zayas & Sierra, 2010).

The historical-logical theoretical method allowed to critically assess the different contributions of various authors and tendencies related to preventive family counseling and especially to family functions, and the training of highly qualified family counseling professionals, in order to establish the trends and perspectives of its historical development (Alvarez de Zayas & Sierra, 2010).

The comparative method allowed to establish the similarities and differences of the various theories in relation to the preventive orientation from scientific criticism at the international, national and local level. The structural functional systemic method revealed the content of the preventive family guidance system and its interactions with the behavior of the current family orientation system (Alvarez de Zayas & Sierra, 2010, p.46).

The document analysis allowed obtaining information on the documents referring to preventive family counseling: reports, notes, scientific works, and research papers, among others. The domain analysis, which covered the descriptive aspects of the document, the taxonomy analysis, which allowed to deepen the structural aspects, the main component analysis, and the analysis of themes to establish the structural aspects of the documents referring to related covered topics were applied (Baptista et al., 2014).

Quantitative methods were also used, such as the scientific interview, applied to the counselors, aimed at obtaining information that allowed characterizing the object of study, to establish the strengths and weaknesses of family counseling and its effectiveness. To guarantee the validity and reliability of the information, the results of the interviews were compared with those obtained through the use of other methods, which allowed triangulating the information to validate the method and the research instruments used in this study.

The standardized questionnaire underwent validation. For this, the method for applying test and retest was used, which consisted on applying it on the object of study twice, with an interval of 15 days. To establish the correlation between the instruments, the Kendall correlation coefficient was applied. In the first application an error of .09 and a probability of success of .91 were obtained. In the second application an error of .07 and a probability of success of .93 were obtained. When applying the Kendall correlation method, a positive correlation of .90 was obtained, which is a very high correlation. This showed that the instrument is very reliable.

To check the internal reliability of the instrument, the Reproducibility Coefficient (Cr) was applied, which is expressed in the relationship between the number of errors in the questionnaire and the total number of responses; this value ranged between 0 and 1. When Applying the test and the retest; a Cr of .93 was obtained in the test, which is very high; and a Cr of .92 was obtained in the retest, considered also very high. This means that the instrument has a high internal consistency. For the analysis of the information, the following statistical methods were applied: the calculation and reasoning of inferential statistics; descriptive statistics for quantitative variables and non-parametric tests for qualitative variables, using comparison of proportions.

To establish an adequate characterization of the perception of families who have undergone family counseling, regarding the impact of the prevention function of family counseling in solving problems in the family, a diagnosis was made. It was applied to a random sample of 64 counselors specialized in the counseling process, between 2019 and 2020, out of a population of 153 in the province of Manabí.

The sample size was calculated through the following formula:

$n = z^2 \cdot p \cdot q \cdot N / e^2 \cdot (N-1) + z^2 \cdot p \cdot q$ , where Z is the normal distribution under the curve, (p) is the probability of success and (q) is the probability of not success and (e) is the error. It was calculated for a probability of success of 95% and an error of 5% (Quezada, 2010).

Obtaining:

$n = 1.96^2 \cdot .50 \cdot .50 \cdot 153 / .005^2 \cdot (153 - 1) + 1.96^2 \cdot .50 \cdot .50 = 146.9412 / 1.3404 = 110$ . sample size obtained from 64, nc (corrected sample size)

$$nc = n / 1 + (n / N) = 153/1 + (110/153) = 64$$

Hence, the sample size of this study was 64 family counselors.

## Analysis and results

Regarding the characterization of the function of family counseling prevention, variables such as: knowledge of prevention theory and methods, the use of prevention methods in counseling, risk analysis applied in prevention in family counseling, competencies for decision-making in the development of family counseling and the participatory nature of family counseling prevention strategies were approached. These variables were measured through a standardized questionnaire.

The standardized survey applied showed that out of 64 interviewees, 35, 55% showed that they had competences between very non-competent and non-competent in the

variable knowledge of the theory and prevention methods, the rest 29, 45%, were characterized by find yourself in the category of few competent.

In order to determine whether the difference between the proportion of interviewed family counselors is significant, located at each end of the categories, the proportion hypothesis test was carried out (Quezada, 2010). The null hypothesis  $H_0$ , established that there are no significant differences between both proportions  $p_1$  (39) =  $p_2$  (25), and the alternative  $H_1$ :  $p_1 \neq p_2$ , considered that there is a significant difference between both proportions, taking .05 as the level of significance. The  $p_v$  (p value) obtained is .296314 > than the level of significance  $\alpha = .05$ , therefore the test of the hypothesis of equality of proportions is rejected. It can be affirmed that there is a significant difference between the proportion of interviewed family counselors who have very low levels of competence in prevention and who have little competence.

It can be seen that the theoretical and methodological domain of the competencies related to prevention is low, which has a significant impact on family counseling, reflected in poor preventive work by family counselors from a scientific point of view. Everything seems to indicate that prevention is only assumed from an empirical perspective.

Regarding the use of prevention methods in family counseling for the solution of problems in families, out of 64 interviewees, 37, 58% considered that families develop these skills, in contrast to 27, 42%, who affirm that competences related to prevention are not used to solve problems.

To determine whether there is a significant difference between the proportion of counselors interviewed, who reflect good levels of competencies in the use of prevention methods in family counseling, and those who demonstrate that the level of those competencies is very low., the proportion comparison hypothesis test was performed, where the null hypothesis  $H_0$  established that there are no significant differences between both proportions  $p_1$  (37) =  $p_2$  (27); and the alternative  $H_1$ :  $p_1 \neq p_2$  considered that there are significant differences, taking as the level of significance  $\alpha = .05$ .

The  $p_v$  (p value) was .081338 > than the level of significance  $\alpha = .05$ , so the test of the hypothesis of equality of proportions was rejected. It can be affirmed, then, that there is a significant difference between the proportion of counselors interviewed who affirm that there are good levels of competence related to the prevention of problems through family counseling and those who consider that there is a very low level of prevention competencies applied to family counseling; predominantly those who affirm that the levels of these competencies are good in counseling.

The standardized survey applied showed that out of 64 family counselors interviewed, 32, 50%, in the variable use of risk analysis in preventive work, say they possess skills that range between competent and not very competent, the remaining 32, 50%, are in a range from very non-competent to non-competent. It can be seen that the proportion of competent and non-competent is the same. It is inferred that there is no significant difference. However, this can be considered a non-significant value of competence in relation to the use of risk analysis methods in family counseling prevention.

Regarding the variables related to the use of risk analysis for prevention, such as the conceptual domain of risk and risk analysis methods, which allow evaluating the competence of specialists in relation to risk, the following results were obtained:

From 64 counselors interviewed, 51, 80%, could not correctly define the risk, only 13, 20%, could give a satisfactory definition. This implies a low theoretical dominance over

risk. In relation to the mastery of risk analysis methods in the prevention process related to family counseling, 60 counselors, 94% proved to be very non-competent and only 4, 6% showed they were not very competent in the domain of risk analysis methods.

The previous results indicate that counselors have a low level of competence in terms of the theoretical and methodological domain of risk analysis based on prevention. It can be seen that the difference between the proportions is significant so it is not necessary to perform hypothesis tests.

Regarding the variable, mastery of decision-making methods in the development of competencies for the prevention of problems related to family orientation, 36 interviewees or 56% showed that they were not very competent and only 28 or 44% affirmed somewhat proficient in mastering risk analysis methods. The above data indicates that counselors have a low level of competence regarding the theoretical and methodological domain of decision-making applied to the process of preventing problems in family counseling.

In order to determine whether the difference between the proportion of family counselors interviewed is significant, the proportions hypothesis test was carried out (Quezada, 2010). The null hypothesis  $H_0$  established that there are no significant differences between both proportions  $p_1 = p_2$ , and the alternative  $H_1$ :  $p_1 (36) \neq p_2 (28)$ , considered that there is a significant difference between both proportions, taking  $\alpha = .05$  as the level of significance. The  $p_v$  (p value) obtained was  $.163524 > .05$  level of significance  $\alpha$ ; therefore, the hypothesis test of equality of proportions is rejected.

## Discussion and conclusions

It has been shown in this study that one of the most important functions of family counseling is not sufficiently addressed in the scientific literature, which is prevention; that in turn, is closely linked to risk analysis and decision-making. Professional family counseling needs, not only be oriented towards solving problems from a mitigating or corrective vision, but it must be focused towards prevention, preparing highly trained professionals who conceive the family as a participatory entity, subject and object of its own transformation; endowed with theoretical and methodological knowledge from science about prevention, risk, and decision-making.

The results corroborated that the theoretical and methodological domain of the competences related to prevention is low, which significantly affects family counseling, reflecting poor preventive work by family counselors from a scientific point of view. It indicates that prevention is only assumed from an empirical perspective.

It is contradictory that in the analysis of the variable carried out previously, the theoretical and methodological domain of prevention is very low, however, in the variable use of prevention methods in counseling work subjects said that they use prevention in their orientation work. This indicates that the prevention work they carry out does not have solid scientific bases. It is carried out from the experience of the counselors, which reduces the effectiveness on family counseling, showing the need to confer a scientific foundation on the role of prevention on family counseling, in order to achieve counseling that truly fulfills the preventive role and allow anticipating risks and possible damages to the family functions. This will allow families to build a future based on the knowledge of risks, weaknesses, and strengths.

The analyzed results indicated that counselors have a low level of competence in terms of theoretical and methodological domain of risk analysis based on prevention. Family counselors do not assess risk, do not dominate the mathematical methods of risk analysis and therefore families are not trained on risk prevention.

In the previous orientation results analysis, it is reflected, strong dependence of the families on counselors, who generally make decisions for them, receiving recommendations in the form of recipes. Families are not clear about an appropriate model to follow for decision making. This is a reflect of the marked non-participatory character that family counseling has, where the family is just the object of the counseling process and plays a passive role. The guidance provided to families in solving their problems, in this sense, is not sustainable and in many cases is not effective.

It is evident that the aforementioned limitations of family counseling do not favor an adequate prevention that the family demands for building its own future and preserving its functionality. Family counseling must be conceived as the process of construction by the family based on preventive work in a concrete socio-historical environment centered on individual and group experience, which leads to the personal and family development.

According to the results, family preventive orientation should be conceived as an interdisciplinary and multi-professional process, based on the principles of preventive intervention and development, pedagogically directed to the family as an educational agent by the guiding function it has; in order to facilitate and promote the integral development of their children, so that they become transforming beings of themselves and their environment, in coordination with the rest of the social actors that intervene in this process.

This study gives important theoretical and methodological contributions by linking the theory of prevention, risk and decision-making, to the family counseling process, establishing prevention as a fundamental function of family prevention. It also contributes to refine the definitions of risk, prevention and family guidance. It is recommended that the results of this study be used in teaching by educators and students.

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