

Quality of Living Perceived of the Young People of the Vale do Sinos / RS/Brazil

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Abstract—The objective of this study was to identify the Quality of Life level of young people from Vale do Sinos / RS. The methodology was observational, descriptive and transversal. The sample had 391 young people. The data collection instruments were the WHOQOL-Bref and a socioeconomic questionnaire. Resulting in a total average score of 52.37 points, the highest for the Social Relations Domain and the lowest for the Environment. When compared to the variables "Sex", "Income" and "Age", the one with the highest statistically significant association among the domains was "Income", followed by "Sex" and "Age". It was concluded that the QoL of young people is smaller when compared with other studies, being relevant investments in public policies.

Keywords—Young people, Quality of Life, WHOQOL-Bref.

I. INTRODUCTION

Due to the reality of young people towards the society and the consequences that social problems cause them, then compromising their quality of life (QoL), it becomes relevant to search the current situation of the youth. Besides, to verify their satisfaction level in relation to the QoL, the factors that are most influencing its concerning results and how it is possible to improve them.

Even young people, representing a large part of the Brazilian population, are the least favored in terms of social programs, once the public policies focused in this public are few and precarious. Being this the most concerning issue after they are eighteen years old, since young people are comprised between the ages of 15 and 29 years old, and after majority, they represent to be the most

injured in social issues such as health, safety and, income, according to IBGE data.

From this information about the reality of the young, another issue that becomes very relevant and debated is regarding their quality of life, because they are not privileged in many sectors of society, both for reasons of historical events, which have classified them as a group of the population that generated and participated in many events of social conflicts, as well as for their current social reality, pointed out in the high IBGE indexes, mainly concerning to unemployment and violence issues, in which the young people are represented by the large part of this population (Silva and Silva, 2011).

The young people represent 26,4% of the Brazilian population, that is, they are 50.2 million of people in the age range between 15 and 29 years old. The authors abovementioned still bring alarming information about the unemployment indexes, affirming that almost half of the country's unemployed are represented by young people. Besides, those who are employed work irregularly. As well as, there are other concerning indexes regarding the education, health, and culture.

These data are confirmed in the website of the Brazilian government, in the field of National Youth Policy (NYP), in which they point out that even with the advances already accomplished by the young people throughout the history, many of them still are poorly served. From the main elements, mentioned in the website, wherein the young people are in less favored position, compared to the rest of the population, there are the rights to health, job, education, culture, among so many others that they are constantly claiming.

Another question, besides the problems abovementioned, according to Sposito and Carrano (2003), there are few public policies that cover the young public in general, especially if its considered their chronological age, because it is demonstrated in the NYP that the young people are divided into 3 groups being 15 to 17 years old, 18 to 24 years old and 25 to 29 years old, the first group is included in the Child and Adolescent Statute (CAS), which greatly benefits them because there are several government programs that favor them, as well as a specific Law that protects and guarantees their rights. However, the second and third groups are the least favored in this issue, because of their age being comprised by the majority they are excluded from the mentioned benefits ensured by the CAS. Even though on the Government website affirming that the public policies demanded to the youth population have gained strength since 2005, with the creation of the NYP, nowadays they are still considered few and those that exist do not always have a continuity.

Besides these problems that involve the young people and the indexes demonstrated by the IBGE related to unemployment, education, health, among other social issues, there is still the financial situation. According to Aquino (2008), some research data indicate that most of the young Brazilian people live with a family per capita income of approximately half a salary, this hampers and impair the opportunities in their insertion into society. Affirming that due to these data, the QoL of these young people is very compromised.

This quality of life, in which the author refers to, it is understood in its broader concept, that is, it should not be related only to health, in its biological sense, but to questions related to the general life satisfaction. These range from physical and psychological well-being to external factors that influence it, such as lifestyle and condition of life. Thus, considering that the QoL is something beneficial and very important for people's lives (Pereira, Teixeira and Santos, 2012).

The QoL, according to Pereira, Teixeira and Santos (2012), is also characterized as something subjective, being so, answered through the individual perception of each one as to their satisfaction with the issues addressed, as well as considering their feelings such as happiness, well-being, pleasure, etc. Besides, to answer them, it is necessary for the person to reflect the events and situations that occurred within a certain period established by the data collection instrument.

The collection instrument was developed initially by the WHO Quality and Life Group with the objective to evaluate the QoL in a broad and standardized way to be

utilized in many countries and by several areas, it was the WHOQOL-100. This is formed by 100 questions and was developed from the collaboration of professionals from several countries. However, there was an interest in having an abbreviated instrument, so it did not demand a long time to be filled, but with satisfactory results, that is when WHO created the WHOQOL-Bref. In it there are 26 questions that contain four domains being: 1) Physical; 2) Psychological; 3) Social Relation; and 4) Environment (Fleck et al., 2000).

Considering the wide concept of quality of life and all the factors that denominate and influence it, also relating it to the current reality of young Brazilians, it is possible to identify the QoL level of the youth. Therefore, this search justifies itself in reflecting the reality about the quality of life level of the young people, exclusively in the age range between 18 and 29 years old, in which are the least favored in the social sectors and the less benefited in public policies. In addition to pointing out ways to improve these indexes. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify the level of Quality of Life (QoL) of the young people of fourteen cities located in the Sinos Valley/RS.

II. METHODS

The current research is characterized as observational, descriptive and transversal, with samples of young people between the ages of 18 and 29 years old, residents in the fourteen municipalities of Sinos Valley/ RS (Araricá, Campo Bom, Canoas, DoisIrmãos, EstânciaVelha, Esteio, Ivoti, Nova Hartz, Nova Santa Rita, Novo Hamburgo, Portão, São Leopoldo, Sapiranga and Sapucaia do Sul). The sample met the following study inclusion criteria: being between the ages of 18 and 29 years old; residing in one of the cities of Sinos Valley/RS, correctly fill out the research instruments; volunteer to participate in the study and sign the Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF). The exclusion criteria were: being under 18 years old or over 29 years old; do not reside in one of the cities of Sinos Valley/RS; has not properly filled out the research instruments; and not sign the Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF).

There was a sample calculation of a population of 336.396 young people with a margin of error of plus or minus 5%, which will give us a total of 391 subjects, according to table 1.

Table. 1: Sample Calculation of Young People from Sinos Valley

City	Men	based on the coefficient	Women	based on the coefficient	Total	Sample by city
Araricá	610	1	585	1	1195	4
Campo Bom	8057	9	7860	9	15917	20
Canoas	41014	47	41570	47	82584	94
Dois Irmãos	3874	4	3831	4	7705	8
Estância Velha	7520	9	5562	6	13082	15
Esteio	10375	12	10438	12	20813	24
Ivoti	2593	3	2538	3	5131	6
Nova Hartz	2463	3	2526	3	4989	8
Nova Santa Rita	2976	3	2849	3	5825	6
Novo Hamburgo	30658	35	30659	35	61317	70
Portão	4036	5	3927	4	7963	9
São Leopoldo	28184	32	27944	32	56128	64
Sapiranga	9926	11	9831	11	19757	24
Sapucaia do Sul	16936	19	17054	19	33990	39
Total	169222	193	167174	191	336396	391

Source: IBGE data 2015

The QoL level was measured using the WHOQOL-Bref, a questionnaire composed of 26 questions related to the last fifteen days prior to the evaluation. As well as, a socioeconomic questionnaire. The current research respected all the topics related to bioethical issues, as stated in the CNS Resolution 466/2012 and being approved by the Ethics Committee.

The data for this research were collected in formal and non-formal public environments, by a socioeconomic questionnaire and by the research WHOQOL-Bref instrument.

After the classification, tabulation and planning of the data collected through the two questionnaires, comparative and correlation studies were accomplished. Firstly, the data were submitted to a normality test, to later define the statistical techniques that were utilized for parametric and non-parametric data. The normality criteria ($p > 0.05$) for 4 domains was not met. Therefore, it was used a comparison test between the non-parametric mean scores denominated as Kruskal-Wallis test. The objective of the test is to compare if there is a statistical difference between the domains. For this statistical study, it was used the software "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" – SPSS – for Windows, v. 22.0.

III. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The socioeconomic questionnaire and the WHOQOL-Bref instrument were applied to a total of 392 participants.

Table. 2: Socioeconomic Questionnaire

Gender	Nº	F	%
	391		
Male		198	50,6
Female		193	49,4
Age	391		
18 a 20		197	50,4
21 a 23		86	22
24 a 26		55	14,1
27 a 29		53	13,6
Skin color	391		
Yellow		64	16,4
White		210	53,7
Black		46	11,8
Brown		71	18,2
Marital Status	391		
Single		327	83,6
Married		55	14,1
Sep/Divor		9	2,3
Student	391		
Yes		369	94,4
No		22	5,6
Employed	391		
Yes		271	69,3
No		120	30,7
Income	391		
(-) minimum wage		25	6,4
1 - 2 salaries		211	54

3 - 5 salaries		125	32
(+) 6 salaries		30	7,7
Exercise	391		
Yes		223	57
No		168	43
Times/week	391		
0		168	43
1		45	11,5
2		42	10,7
3		41	10,5
4		22	5,6
5		37	9,5
6		20	5,1
7		16	4,1
Health	391		
Excellent		78	19,9
Very Good		112	28,6
Good		142	36,3
Regular		55	14,1
Bad		4	1

Source: Elaborated by the authors

As observed in Table 2, from the 391 participants, 50.6% (198) are male and 49.4% (193) are female, with an age range of 18 and 29 years old. With reference to the age, 50.4% (197) were between the ages of 18 and 20 years old, denominated as young-young (18 to 24 years old) according to NYP.

The options chose by most of the participants are: 83.6% (327) single; 53.7% (210) white skin; 94.4% (369) students; 69.3% (271) working; 54% (211) have an income of 1 to 2 minimum wage; and in question of Physical Exercises, 57% (223) of the participants practice some type of physical exercise that varies between 1 and 7 times a week. The last question of the questionnaire is referring to the perception of their health, the alternative “Good”, found among the third of the five options, was chosen by a majority of 36.3% (142).

In the second questionnaire, the WHOQOL-Brief instrument, it was possible to obtain a comparative between their domains with the variables: sex, income, and age.

In the accomplishment of the comparative, the non-parametric Chi-Square test was used to verify if there was an association between the WHOQOL and these variables.

Table 3: WHOQOL-Bref Applied to the 391 Participants Residing in the Sinos Valley/RS

DOMAINS	MEAN SCORE	STANDARD DEVIATION
Domain 1- Physical	57.19	10.28
Domain 2 – Psychological	64.83	12.11

Psychological		
Domain 3 – Social Relations	74.23	16.95
Domain 4 – Environment	56.52	14.54
Total Domain – perc.	52.37	7.51

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Among the domains, observed in Table 3, the one that presents the highest mean score was the Social Domain, with a mean score of 74.23 points and variability around the mean of 16.96 points (74.23±16.96 points). The lowest score was the Environment Domain with 52.37 points and variability around the mean of 14.54 points. The Total Domain had the mean score of 52.37 points and variability with an average of 7.51 points.

Table 4: WHOQOL-Bref in Relation to the Sex Variable

DOMAINS	VALUE	SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL
Domain 1- Physical	24,467 ^a	,058
Domain 2 – Psychological	32,299 ^a	,014
Domain 3 – Social Relations	8,514 ^a	,667
Domain 4 – Environment	43,099 ^a	,010

Source: Elaborated by the authors

In relation to the values obtained in results analysis, as observed in Table 5, there was a statistical significance association in the Domain 2- Psychological and in Domain 4 – Environment. Both domains demonstrated a higher level to male sex. The domains referred to Physical and Social Relations did not present any statistical significance association among the genders.

Table 5: WHOQOL-Bref in Relation to the Income Variable

DOMAINS	VALUE	SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL
Domain 1- Physical	63,557 ^a	,035
Domain 2 – Psychological	82,406 ^a	,004
Domain 3 – Social Relations	55,737 ^a	,008
Domain 4 – Environment	74,226 ^a	,406

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Concerning the Income variable, only in the Domain 4 – Environment, illustrated in Table 5, there was no statistical

significance association. However, the Physical, Psychological and Social Relations Domains demonstrated significance in group 2 (1 to 2 salaries) of the Income variable. The Domain 2 – Psychological presented the highest significance level, followed by domains 3 and 1, respectively.

Table 6: WHOQOL-Bref in Relation to the Age Variable

DOMAINS	VALUE	SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL
Domain 1- Physical	51,024 ^a	,249
Domain 2 – Psychological	41,820 ^a	,817
Domain 3 – Social Relations	52,926 ^a	,015
Domain 4 – Environment	69,944 ^a	,547

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Regarding the age variable, observed in Table 6, only in Domain 3 – Social Relations there was a statistical significance association, being the age group of 18 to 20 years old the one in feature. However, the other domains did not present significant associations.

IV. DISCUSSION

4.1 Quality of Life of Young People Regarding the four Domains from the WHOQOL-Bref Instrument

To discuss the results obtained in this research, scientific articles in which the authors applied the WHOQOL-Bref instrument to a public with the age group between 18 and 29 years old were searched. However, few studies with participants with this age group were found, being the majority articles verified the quality of life, especially in elderly people. Besides, the few articles found were addressed to the QoL of the young in relation to some pathology or that was found in some risk group.

As observed in Table 3, the mean score of the total domains of the WHOQOL-Bref was 52.37 points. Being the Domain 3 – Social Relations with the highest score of 74.23 points, followed by the Domain 2 – Psychological with 64.83, Domain 1 – Physical with 57.19, and the Domain 4 – Environment with the lowest score of 56.52 points. These results were similar in relation to the positioning of the domains from the highest to the lowest score, compared to the results of the research accomplished by Wilke *et al.* (2013), with patients from the Centro de Referência do RS, diagnosed with Gaucher Disease (GD) with the age group of 18 to 23 years old. The mentioned authors affirm that differently from what they expected in the results, the domain with the lowest

score was not the psychological, but the Domain 4 – Environment, which refers to safety, quality of health, social opportunities, transportation, among others. They also state that in other studies verified with young people in Brazil, this domain also had the lowest mean score, regardless of the risk group or pathological problems.

In a study also accomplished at the Centro de Referência do RS, according to Fleck *et al.* (2000), the samples were composed of 300 participants, 250 patients from this hospital and 50 volunteers (control). The result of the lowest score was the same as from the authors abovementioned, the Domain 4 – Environment was identified as the least satisfactory in the control group as well as in the patients group. With these results, it is possible to observe that the mentioned domain presents the lowest satisfaction level not only by patients with diseases but also by the control group of volunteers.

These same results, about the Domain 4 – Environment having the lowest score, is confirmed in the study conducted by Manzatto *et al.* (2011), with young students of Physical Education that aimed to relate the consumption of alcohol with the impact on the QoL level. The authors assume that this domain had the lowest score due to most of the survey participants need public transportation and are dissatisfied with this service, as well as in the public safety issue, once a few of them were assaulted and when seeking for assistance in the public safety demonstrated dissatisfaction in this sector.

Another study, carried out by Vieira *et al.* (2015), related the QoL of the youth in relation to smoking and had the same results of the abovementioned studies in relation to the Environment domain. As well as in the study by Mello-Silva *et al.* (2012), with the young people with the age range of 18 to 24 years old, surviving victims of gun violence.

When the justifications of all the studies abovementioned were verified, as well as the considerations made by all the authors that accomplished them, its concern about the low score result to the Environment domain was evident. Besides, in all these articles, the authors emphasized the importance of investment in public policies aimed at young people, so that they can obtain a better quality of life.

It as also noticed that regardless of the sample population having some disease or being part of some risk group, all the studies aforementioned demonstrated the Social Relations domain as the highest score. According to Manzatto *et al.* (2011), different environments frequented by young people, such as in the family, at school or at work, they exert more than a sense of obligations, these environments directly influence in the personality of the young people and they seek for social interaction in these spaces.

4.2 Quality of Life in Relation to Sex

According to Table 4, in relation to sex variable, the Domain 2 – Psychological and the Domain 4 – Environment presented significative associations, being in both domains the satisfaction levels better to male participants.

In a study carried out by Eurich and Kluthcovsky (2008), which verified the quality of life of young academics, there were also a relation among the variables highlighted in this study, in which there was significative associations only with the sex variable in relation to physical and psychological domains, with the highest score to male participants. The authors also reiterate that despite the difference in age and family income between the sample participants, there was only a statistically significance association in relation to sex.

In another study with 394 medicine students from the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), according to Chazan Campos and Portugal (2015) this university offers 45% of the vacancies to low-income students, the sample characteristics were 61% female students, and of these, 43% were quote holders, with a mean age of 23 years old. The result of this research in relation to the QoL presented that the female students, in general, were those who demonstrated the lowest scores in all domains, and the quote holders of social class C had the lowest score in Domain 4 – Environment. This study showed that the quality of life of the searched population when compared to the investigated variables, presented lower scores in all domains to the variables of female sex and social class C.

In accordance to Skopinski, Resende and Schneider (2015), in a study accomplished only with women, affirm that their quality of life is directly connected to the satisfaction with the body image and psychological factors. The authors presented associations between the depressive symptoms with the satisfaction of the body image and their QoL. According to the authors, this physical well-being factor regarding the body image is more characteristic of the female sex if compared to male sex, since their self-esteem when low negatively affects the QoL. The results of this study demonstrated that the participants who presented low satisfaction levels to their body image also presented lower index in the perception of QoL and low scores in Domains 1 – Physical, 2 – Psychological and 4 – Environment.

Another relevant result from Skopinski, Resende and Schneider (2015) study and that resembles the results of Chazan, Campos and Portugal (2015) study is in relation to the satisfaction level with the quality of life and the family income, in which presented that the participants who declared to have better financial conditions also have a

better perception of QoL and showed higher scores in Environment and Social Relations domains.

It is possible to observe that in all studies abovementioned, comparing to the domains with sex, women demonstrated the lowest scores in almost all WHOQOL-Bref domains if compared to male participants. These results were even worse regarding the dissatisfaction level of the quality of life in relation to the financial condition.

The results from this study and from those cited before in relation to the perception of QoL being less satisfactory to the female sex, according to Skopinski, Resende and Schneider (2015) can be related to the fact that women are more vulnerable than men in terms of self-esteem. Thus, it is understood that the women perception of body image directly influences in their QoL, presenting the lowest scores in most of the WHOQOL-Bref domains.

4.3 Quality of Life in Relation to Income

Relating the WHOQOL-Bref domains to income, it is possible to observe, in Table 5, that this was the variable that presented the most statistically significant associations among the domains, that is, three of the four domains had these associations and demonstrated the highest degree of significance for the “Psychological” domain, followed by “Social Relations” and “Physical” domains successively.

In the study of Ferreira et al (2009), in which the sample had 110 people with an age range of 18 and 40 years, when compared the QoL to the financial situation, there was a statistical significance in the Social Relations domain, to the participants classified as Class A. The general QoL of this study also presented better results to Class A compared to the participants from Class C.

The importance of the income in relation to the QoL is also noticed in the study of Martins, França and Kimura (1996) that presented in the results that most of the interviewed associates QoL with material well-being, more specifically to items acquired by financial means such as housing, food, clothing, among other products.

The financial situation, according to Lima-Costa *et al.* (2002), has a great influence on the perception of people’s quality of life, regardless of whether they are young, adult or elderly. In a study accomplished by these authors, composed by 178.229 people with an age range of 20 and 60 years old, confirm this influence, because the result demonstrated that the participants with lower income, independent of the age presented a greater dissatisfaction in relation to the perception of health.

Following with the results similar to those already cited and to those observed in this research, regarding the better perception of QoL in relation to a bigger income and to male sex, these are also confirmed in the studies of Santos, Campos and Portugal (2015); Gordia, Quadros and

Campos (2009). All these, despite presenting particularities in the characterization of their samples, such as university and high school students, as well as young people with some pathology or risk group, all of them obtained similar results regarding the QoL satisfaction related to their financial situation, making it clear the importance of the familiar income to a higher score in almost all domains of the WHOQOL-Bref instrument.

The financial situation of the country's young population is a concerning issue, according to Silva and Silva (2011), in Brazil, in the IBGE/PENAD (2007) data it was pointed out that young people are part of almost half of the unemployed population. The authors also affirm that from the unemployed young people 54% works irregularly according to the work laws and receives lower wages than employees with an adult age range.

According to Dimas, Pereira and Canavarro (2013) in their study the participants that declared themselves as unemployed, presented the lowest results in relation to social and family life, as well as negative impact in the family financial situation, and these factors are essential in the subject's QoL satisfaction. Another relevant result of this study was the fact that most of the unemployed participants were women, which possibly may be related to the lower values in the QoL level that women presented in the studies abovementioned.

Thus, even presenting the statically significant associations in different domains in relation to variables, in all these studies here cited, the results regarding the highest scores had relations to the participants that declared a higher per capita family income.

4.4 Quality of Life in Relation to Age

The participants of this study presented statistically significant associations in relation to age, according to Table 6, only in the Domain 3 – Social Relations, with the highest score for the first group, with an age range of 18 and 20 years old.

The study by Branco *et al.* (2010) presented similar results to those observed in this study regarding the higher score, when it demonstrated statistically significance associations in relation to age, the younger participants presented higher averages.

According to Pierone (2016), the results presented in her study, with 201 subjects attending a park, the Social Relations domain demonstrated the higher score to the younger participants group, in this case under the age of 19. This study also shows that the main motive to younger people attend this leisure space is the pleasure of being in this place, thus, considered by them as a place that allows social meetings. Differentiating from the adult and elderly group, which declared as the main motive the prevention of diseases.

In another study accomplished by Barrientos and Suazo (2007), in which the quality of life among the young and adult age was compared, the younger participants group presented a lower result regarding their QoL. In this case, the Physical Domain was the only one that presented a statistically significance association to the age variable, presenting the lowest score to the youngest participants. Possibly, according to the authors, these results for the younger group is related to the number of tasks. Usually, in this youth period, women already have children and are looking for stability in a loving relationship, professional and financial, resulting in a greater physical fatigue when comparing to older individuals, once they usually present better stability and tranquility in the factors in which the younger are still in the process of conquest.

In accordance to the latest two abovementioned studies, according to the study by Silva and Heleno (2012), they presented the same results in relation to Social Relations Domain being the best evaluated by young individuals and Physical Domain being the least evaluated. The latest one is probably associated with the low quality of sleep, the great number of tasks and transitory changes in age regarding new responsibilities in this period after majority.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the data obtained, it is concluded that the quality of life of young participants of this sample was lower in the satisfaction level in comparison to other studies, presenting the domains mean score of 52.37 points.

The QoL, in relation to "Sex" variable, presented statistically significant associations to the "Psychological" and "Environment" domains with better results to male young people. This result, in relation to the QoL satisfaction being better for men, is similar to other studies, in which, even though presenting significant associations to different domains, they had better scores for the female sex.

In relation to "Age", this variable presented the least statistically significant association among the domains, being only the "Social Relations" domain to the younger group, 18 to 20 years old. Thus, this variable is not very determinant to the QoL levels between the young public, since difference among the biggest age range, that is, young and elderly, was observed in studies. However, in most cases, the youngest ones presented association to the same domain of this study, "Social Relations".

On the other hand, the "Income" variable demonstrated to have an influence on the QoL evaluation, once the ones who declared to have 1 to 2 minimum wages were those that presented satisfaction in most WHOQOL-Bref domains. Being this variable, confirmed by all studies

cited, determinant to the QoL level.

The results presented in this study are similar to other studies cited in this study, in concern of the QoL satisfaction level, even those with young population sample with different characteristics, risk groups or pathologies, it was noticed that this situation affects, in general, the young public. With this and in relation to the few and scarce social programs directed to this population, the importance of public policies focused on the needs and rights of the youth, in order to promote an improvement in their QoL, stands out.

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