

Family function

Family



The definition of family is defined in various ways to many different people. Many people may say their family includes the family of orientation, extended family, and family of procreation. It all depends on how the child is raised. Three important factors, out of six, that I consider to be the main functions of family are socialization, economic cooperation, and care, protection, and intimacy.

Some families may very well address these functions, while others may not. And because of that, family may be quite hard to define because it goes above and beyond the surface. According to Swartz and Scott (2009), family is defined as a group of people related to each other by blood, marriage, adoption or being sexually open in a relationship. The definition also extends to couples who are committed to each other and are capable of providing internal and external factors ranging from emotional to economic support. Because of my culture, how I was raised, and where I grew up, I define family in a complicated matter. The definition of family, according to me, is the family of orientation. It does not include my aunts, uncles, or cousins, even though we are somewhat related by blood.

However, I do consider them as a part of my extended family. The family of orientation includes my parents and three younger siblings. I consider this to be family because this is where I was born into, raised, and grew up with. Of course, the definition of family will change over time for me because I am not yet married. To my belief, I will have a change in families after I get married to my husband with kids, which is also known as the family of procreation. This is when my new journey and definition of family begins. I do not believe a family is complete without children or pets, or anything or

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anyone that my husband and I, as a couple, could look forward to and love to keep the relationship lasting.

To be considered as my family, the person does not have to be blood related. What matters is the fair amount of love and care that is provided. The emotional support is what I lean more towards when it comes to family. I believe there is a way to everything when it comes to economic factors, such as dealing with our finance, having shelter, clothing, and food. Emotional support is needed when hard times come, and if the person or people are willing to go through with the bad, they are definitely considered family. Nobody would want to live through the hardship, so that is why I value love and care most in a family. No matter what I go through, I know that person or people will still be there.

There are three families of functions that I can relate to. They are socialization, economic cooperation, and care, protection, and intimacy. Socialization is defined as a lifetime process “ of social interaction through which people learn those elements of culture that are essential for effective participate in social life” (Swartz & Scott, 2009, p. 6). Socializing is a way of learning what society expects such as norms and values and develops the behavior of how one thinks, feels, and acts (Swartz & Scott, 2009). Children socialize to be able to better communicate through their own language, culture, and the mass media such as the television and radio. Ever since I was young, from infancy to child age, my parents communicated with me in our language, Vietnamese.

We practiced our traditions and cultures through foods and celebrating holidays. I have learned what the Vietnamese community expects when it comes to holidays, elders, and food. Once I was enrolled into pre-school, I started to learn English, which counts as another form of socializing. Communicating was hard for me because I did not speak a word of it. However, my parents started to teach me what they could in the language. They taught me basics such as singing the alphabet, counting, and naming certain animals. Simple terms like stating my name, learning my address, and asking to use the restroom were a start to a new way of socializing and a start of a new culture.

Enrolling into school helped me shape the way to act, think, and feel. I was on my best behavior. And there was no such thing as always being happy like I was when I am at home with my parents. I learned what it was like to be picked on, be mad, angry, happy, and develop friendships. I think my family addressed this function well, because I have matured to be able to communicate and socialize with all those around me, which includes how to act and feel. Economic cooperation involves a family's responsibility to provide for everyone's physical and economic well being (Swartz & Scott, 2009). In history, families work in the field, as agriculturists and farmers to provide food.

They also sold products that were farmed to provide money, shelter, and clothes. However, it is different nowadays. Now, both or either men and or women go to work to receive an income to help provide for their families. When I was younger, my mom stayed home and worked at home and earned little income, while my dad worked at a factory and earned most of the

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income. But as our family grew, and the children got older, there were certain necessities needed such as bigger clothes, shoes, more food, and a bigger home. Therefore, my mom had to find a different job with a higher pay. Both of my parents did work and still work to provide most of the income for our family.

When I got older and turned the legal age to work full time, I helped provide my parents the income in the family to help pay for small bills such as electricity, phone, and gas. I also helped pay for my two years of tuition at a small community college with my parents' help. Not only did they provide for me through my college years, but also for my other younger siblings. My younger siblings are now twenty, eighteen, and seventeen. I believe my parents have successfully played a role in the family function, economic cooperation. My and my siblings' ages are very close to each other, which produces a lot of issues. At a certain point in time, all of us were teens, where our needs need to be met.

An example of what I am talking about would be providing cars, car insurance, and overall health insurance. The third family function is care, protection, and intimacy. Everyone in a family needs emotional support, and care provided since infancy to adulthood. For many people, families are where we turn to when we are in trouble, to find comfort and emotional support throughout our lives (Swartz & Scott, 2009). In my family, emotional support is rarely provided. My parents provide emotional support for each other and the kids bond to provide emotional support for each other. Some of us seek emotional support from our close girlfriends and guy friends.

My parents show a different kind of care when it comes to emotions. Not much emotion is shown from my father, but more from my mother. My dad would never over react to certain situations, while my mom would. High school was a great challenge for me. It was the place where I learned the most, academically and socially wise. I needed the most emotional support and felt the need to feel the emotional support and care. It was hard to maintain and stabilize my emotions in high school and was constantly down.

I could not seek emotional support from many people in my life since they had their own problems. I always felt high school counselors were not a big help. They always told me, “ it’s okay,” and ended up telling my parents. However, I was never depressed. Most of my care and emotional support came from the peers on my high school tennis team and the sport itself. Exercising and playing the sport helped me relieve all the pressure I had built inside. I do not believe my parents have played a very big role in this area of the family function.

However, they were there whenever I was in trouble with the school, with other parents, or the law. Because they were so busy working and trying to provide for the family, less time was spent with the kids. My younger siblings were able to come to me for emotional support and I helped them provide the care they need to feel. My parents were not very expressive in this family function due a completed socialization process and a great amount of time put into the economic cooperation. Family is a group of people who will always be there in your life, at least mine. The word family is different to very many groups of people. Some people do not consider their real parents to be a part of their family and some do.

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It all depends on how their life was lived, and most importantly, the relationships that were developed between the people they were living with. The family of functions are sub-categories of what a family is and I believe they are what fully describe what a family should be.