Marriage & Family Review
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wmfr20

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Published online: 22 Jul 2013.

To cite this article: Ramon B. Zabriskie & Peter J. Ward (2013) Satisfaction With Family Life Scale, Marriage & Family Review, 49:5, 446-463, DOI: 10.1080/01494929.2013.768321

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2013.768321

Marriage & Family Review, 49:446–463, 2013

ISSN: 0149-4929 print/1540-9635 online
DOI: 10.1080/01494929.2013.768321

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Satisfaction With Family Life Scale

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We wanted to present validity and reliability data for the Satisfaction With Family Life (SWFL) scale. This instrument has been successfully used in a variety of family samples and offers a brief, widely applicable tool to measure satisfaction with family life. The SWFL scale, modeled after the Satisfaction With Life scale, was designed to assess an individual's global judgment of family satisfaction, which is theoretically predicted to depend on a comparison of family life circumstances with one's own standards and expectations. The scale consists of five items on a Likert-type scale. Data were collected from parents and adolescents in 15 different family samples that vary across time, place, and culture. Across all samples a consistent unidimensional factor structure was maintained, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .94 to .79. Evidence of usability, criterion, and construct validity were also established. The SWFL scale consistently distinguishes differences in family satisfaction among samples that would theoretically be predicted to have different levels of family satisfaction. The SWFL scale provides a brief, psychometrically sound, and widely applicable option for measuring satisfaction with family life.

KEYWORDS family satisfaction, measurement, satisfaction with family life

INTRODUCTION

In an effort to identify and understand characteristics and behaviors associated with quality family life, scholars have focused on variables related to the broad construct of satisfaction with family life. Satisfaction with family life

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has been directly related to a variety of other family wellness variables, including higher family cohesion, adaptability, communication, and overall family functioning (Poff, Zabriskie, & Townsend, 2010a). The effective and consistent measurement of such a family outcome variable is essential for providing the necessary framework to identify related individual and family behavioral factors that can buffer or mediate negative influences on today's families and ultimately promote quality family life.

The measurement of family satisfaction has a relatively short history, and most agree it began in the 1970s (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976) with the Family Life Questionnaire as one of the first instruments to obtain "a measure of harmony and satisfaction with family life" (Guerney, 1977, p. 344). The 1980s brought a variety of new approaches to the measurement of family satisfaction, with one of the most common being theoretically based in Olson's (1979) Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems. One approach consisted of completing the well-known Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES) II scale twice, first reflecting current perceptions of family functioning and then representing what would be ideal and computing the difference to represent the level of family satisfaction. This method did not receive consistent empirical support (Daley, Sowers Hoag, & Thyer, 1990; Sigafoos, Reiss, Rich, & Douglas, 1985). An additional option, however, was the 14-item Family Satisfaction Scale (Olson & Wilson, 1982), also based on Olson's model, which became one of the most acceptable and widely used measures of family satisfaction. Today's version has been reduced to 10 items and assesses satisfaction with aspects of family functioning, including family cohesion, flexibility, and communication, and reports consistent evidence of validity and reliability (Olson, 2004).

Another well-known scale from the 1980s is the Kansas Family Life Satisfaction Questionnaire (McCollum, Schumm, & Russell, 1988; Schumm, McCollum, Bugaighis, Jurich, & Bollman, 1986) which measures family satisfaction based on a differential approach. It asks how satisfied or dissatisfied the respondent is with specific relationships (i.e., marital relationship, relationship between parents and children, relationship among children) and a global satisfaction with family relationship question. It is therefore composed of four items that ultimately measure satisfaction with family relationships. Although there is limited reported evidence of validity and reliability, perhaps the biggest limitation is that it "is only applicable to families with four or more members" (Schumm et al., 1986, p. 979), which must include a married couple and at least two children.

Carver and Jones' (1992) Family Satisfaction Scale was intended to provide a more global satisfaction measure with a Likert-type scale that looked specifically at a respondent's family of origin. Authors reported considerable evidence of validity and reliability that met acceptable standards and

supported the utility of the scale. Although this instrument may be somewhat limited by its length (20 items) and most psychometric evidence comes from university student samples only, the most considerable limitation is that it only measures satisfaction with one's family of origin. In other words, an adolescent child would respond in reference to a current family environment, a young adult would respond in reference to the family in which they were primarily raised, but an adult or current parent would also have to respond in reference to the family in which they were raised (of origin) versus their current family.

More recently, Barraca, Yarto, and Olea (2000) developed the Family Satisfaction by Adjectives Scale in an effort to measure family satisfaction primarily from an affective domain versus the more common cognitive analysis. Although it has 27 items, its simple adjective format lends to its utility and response speed, and authors have reported sound evidence of reliability (internal and temporal consistency) and validity (one-dimensional, construct, and convergent validity). Although the data support the theoretical framework of the scale, it is also recognized that data came primarily from university students, and other applications may be limited particularly for younger respondents as the reading level appears to be more advanced and uses words such as disconsolate, discontented, inhibited, tranquil, stimulated, and repressed. Overall, the Family Satisfaction by Adjectives Scale offers another sound instrument particularly for those interested in measuring the affective component of family satisfaction.

Certainly other instruments have been used to measure family satisfaction that are typically designed for specific populations, limited to certain age groups, are embedded in large comprehensive assessments that measure other constructs, or do so in some other tangential manner (Antonovsky & Sourani, 1988; Caldwell, 1988; Henry, Ostrander, & Lovelace, 1992; Underhill, LoBello, & Fine, 2004; Wasser, Pasquale, Matchett, Bryan, & Pasquale, 2001). The scales listed above, however, represent the most consistent and recognized efforts to measure the specific construct of family satisfaction. Each of these scales offers different approaches, has different strengths and weaknesses, and provides researchers and clinicians useful options when measuring family satisfaction. It is quite clear the construct of family satisfaction is one of significant interest and will continue to be as long as scholars are interested in examining family variables and clinicians are interested in influencing and measuring family outcomes. Increasing interest in family research and related family measures among many cultures across the globe also begs for further validation of usable scales. The purpose of this article is to present validity and reliability data for another instrument that has been developed and successfully used in a variety of family samples and appears to offer a brief, widely applicable scale that measures satisfaction with family life.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCALE

Background

The Satisfaction With Family Life (SWFL) scale (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003) is a modified version of the Satisfaction With Life scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) in which the words *family life* replaced the word *life* in each of the original items. Therefore, the conceptual framework is based significantly on the work of the original authors. Many approaches to life satisfaction originate from Shin and Johnson's (1978) early explanation that defined the construct as a judgmental process in which individuals evaluate the quality of their lives based on their own set of criteria. Pavot and Diener (1993) elaborated, suggesting that a comparison is made between one's perceived life circumstances and a self-imposed set of standards. They argued that although there may be some general agreement to the components of a high quality of life, individuals are not only likely to have their own unique criteria but are likely to assign different weights to each component or use different standards for success as well. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate an individuals' global judgment rather than satisfaction with a compilation of a predetermined list of specific domains. Although there are criticisms to the global approach in the life satisfaction literature (Schwarz & Strack, 1999), it remains well established and is used by clinicians and scholars alike and is possibly even more appropriate in a family context.

In terms of family life, the number of components that could be considered when measuring family satisfaction increases dramatically and is likely to include a myriad of different combinations, relationships, and interrelationships all being weighted and judged differently based on the perspective of each member of the family. It is therefore even more essential to asses a global judgment of one's family life versus satisfaction with predetermined domains. The global perspective affords individuals to weigh different domains in their family life with respect to their own value structure and arrive at a more accurate measure of family satisfaction than a specific domain would offer. Individuals may be collectively balancing personal feelings, aspirations, disappointments, environmental factors, and achieved goals and desires when determining their level of family satisfaction (Ward, Lundberg, Zabriskie, & Barrett, 2009).

Therefore, similar to life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener, 2003), family satisfaction can be defined as a conscious cognitive judgment of one's family life in which the criteria for the judgment are up to the individual. Although affective components are likely included to different degrees, from this perspective family satisfaction reflects a cognitive process of subjective evaluation in regards to one's overall family life. The items of the SWFL scale were consequently developed to be more global rather than specific in nature, allowing individual respondents to weigh domains of their family lives in terms of their own values and experiences when

arriving at a global judgment of family satisfaction. Therefore, the SWFL scale was ultimately designed to assess an individual's global judgment of family satisfaction, which is theoretically predicted to depend on a comparison of family life circumstances with one's own standards and expectations (Pavot & Diener, 2003).

Description

The SWFL scale is composed of five items that require respondents to agree or disagree with global statements about family life on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree (Table 1). Scores are calculated by summing all items and producing a satisfaction with family life score with a possible range of 5 to 35. Descriptive data for the SWFL scale were collected from a variety of family populations and from multiple perspectives, including a parent and young adolescent child (11 to 15 years old) within each family (Table 2).

All data for this article were collected in conjunction with a series of 15 related studies conducted in the last decade by the principal author and his colleagues. Although the primary purposes of each study varied, the theoretical framework, instrumentation, and methodology remained consistent. Data were collected via either paper-and-pencil or online self-report questionnaires from both a parent and child within each family. Samples include broad general families with large national samples from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand as well as samples of families with different structures including dual-parent families, single-parent families, biracial adoptive families, Mexican-American families,

TABLE 1 Satisfaction With Family Life Scale

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1–7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by circling the appropriate number on the line following that item. Please be open and honest in responding.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Slightly disagree	4 Neither agree nor disagree	5 Slightly agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree

Item								
1.	In most ways my family life is close to ideal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	The conditions of my family life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I am satisfied with my family life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	So far I have gotten the important things I want in my family life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	If I could live my family life over, I would change almost nothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

TABLE 2 Descriptive Data for SWFL Scale

Sample Characteristics	Parent *n*	Parent mean (SD)	α*	Youth *n*	Youth mean (SD)	α*	Family range
National sample general families (Agate et al., 2009)	898	24.47 (7.22)	.93	898	24.95 (7.14)	.93	5–35
National sample general families (Hornberger, 2007)	380	25.38 (6.86)	.91	343	24.96 (7.05)	.94	5–35
General families (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003)	179	24.85 (6.60)	.89	178	24.84 (6.65)	.88	7–35
Canadian sample general families (Zabriskie, 2008)	1175	23.42 (7.55)	.93	1155	24.45 (7.10)	.94	5–35
U.K. sample general families (Zabriskie, 2008)	891	23.17 (6.99)	.93	870	24.44 (6.71)	.94	5–35
Australian sample general families (Poff et al., 2010)	999	23.09 (7.31)	.93	983	24.59 (6.80)	.94	5–35
NZ sample general families (Poff et al., 2009)	451	24.43 (6.97)	.92	451	24.73 (7.00)	.93	5–35
National sample intact families (parents currently married) (Hornberger et al., 2010)	495	26.37 (6.34)	.92	477	25.95 (6.59)	.94	5–35
Families with a child with disability (Dodd et al., 2009)	154	22.75 (8.27)	.94	62	22.98 (7.88)	.92	5–35
National sample single-parent families (Hornberger et al., 2010)	384	22.46 (7.53)	.92	367	24.01 (7.44)	.93	5–35
Mexican-American families (Spanish) (Christenson et al., 2006)	74	25.14 (6.27)	.82	74	26.31 (5.37)	.79	9–35
National sample general families from father perspective (Buswell, 2010)	647	25.67 (6.97)	.93	647	26.62 (6.72)	.95	5–35
Biracial adoptive families (Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004)	193	27.92 (6.15)	.91	55	26.67 (5.82)	.80	5–35
Families with a female adolescent in mental health treatment (Zabriskie, 2004)	54	15.89 (7.09)	.88	137	15.07 (7.23)	.88	5–35
Families with an adolescent in mental health treatment (Townsend & Zabriskie, 2010)	76	13.93 (6.60)	.90	104	18.62 (8.17)	.89	5–35

*Cronbach's alpha.

families with a child with a developmental disability, and families with an adolescent child in mental health treatment (Agate, Zabriskie, Agate, & Poff, 2009; Aslan & Zabriskie, 2009; Buswell, 2010; Christenson, Zabriskie, Eggett, & Freeman, 2006; Dodd, Zabriskie, Widmer, & Eggett, 2009; Fotu, Freeman, Zabriskie, & Eggett, 2008; Hornberger, 2007; Hornberger, Zabriskie, & Freeman, 2010; Poff, Zabriskie, & Townsend, 2010b; Townsend & Zabriskie, 2010; Zabriskie, 2000; Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). Sample mean scores ranged from 13.9 for a sample of parents with an adolescent in mental health treatment to approximately 28 for a sample of parents from intact biracial adoptive families and therefore span a majority of the possible range of the scale.

Mean scores from parent respondents in broad general samples of families both in the United States and in other English-speaking countries fell between 23 and 25 (standard deviation [SD] = 6.6–7.5). The mean score from young adolescent respondents across the same broad samples of families were approximately 24 (SD = 6.6–7.1). These scores fall above the neutral score of 20 for the scale and suggest a norm of being generally satisfied with family life. These findings are consistent with the negative skew commonly reported among Western countries for scales measuring global constructs of satisfaction and well-being (Collard, 2006; Olson, 2004; Pavot & Deiner, 1993; Ward et al., 2009).

Factor Structure

Principal components factor analyses with a Varimax rotation were conducted using data from four separate samples to determine the SWFL scale's factor structure. Samples included a large general sample of U.S. families ($n_p = 898$, $n_y = 898$; Table 3A) with at least one child (11–15 years old), a sample of U.S. families with a female adolescent in mental health treatment ($n_p = 54$, $n_y = 137$), a large general sample of U.K. families ($n_p = 891$, $n_y = 870$) with at least one child (11–15 years old), and a sample of single-parent U.S. families ($n_p = 384$, $n_y = 367$) with at least one child (11–15 years old). These four samples were selected in an effort to represent a variety of different family samples. Data were collected from both a parent and an early adolescent child in each sample. A single-factor solution was replicated for each of the eight data sets. The consistent factor pattern across samples was maintained regardless of the fact samples included families with different makeup and cultures or were assessing family satisfaction from parent or child perspectives across a 10-year time span. The SWFL scale therefore appears to measure a single dimension. The consistency of the SWFL factor analyses suggests the scale is accurately capturing family satisfaction across time, place, and culture, which support its possible use as a universal instrument in measuring family satisfaction. The item-total correlations and factor loadings (Table 3B) suggest item number 5 is the weakest in terms of

TABLE 3A Baseline Sample Item Means and SDs

	Item number				
Sample	1	2	3	4	5
Mean (SD)$_{parent}$	4.81 (1.57)	4.79 (1.65)	5.16 (1.57)	5.23 (1.58)	4.46 (1.85)
Mean (SD)$_{youth}$	4.92 (1.64)	4.91 (1.63)	5.25 (1.52)	5.18 (1.54)	4.68 (1.75)

National sample ($n = 898$).

TABLE 3B Item Factor Loadings and Item-Total Correlations for the Five Items of the SWFL Scale

	National sample		Female youth in treatment		U.K. families		Single parent families	
Item	Parent	Youth	Parent	Youth	Parent	Youth	Parent	Youth
				factor loadings				
1. In most ways my family life is close to ideal.	.88	.89	.88	.84	.88	.90	.87	.87
2. The conditions of my family life are excellent.	.92	.93	.77	.89	.91	.93	.90	.91
3. I am satisfied with my family life.	.92	.92	.88	.85	.92	.93	.92	.93
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in my family life.	.87	.87	.82	.83	.88	.90	.89	.89
5. If I could live my family life over, I would change almost nothing.	.81	.83	.78	.70	.81	.86	.79	.82
Percent of variance accounted for	78.28	79.13	68.44	68.34	77.54	81.77	76.38	78.25
				item-total correlations				
1. In most ways my family life is close to ideal.	.81	.83	.79	.73	.81	.84	.78	.79
2. The conditions of my family life are excellent.	.87	.88	.65	.81	.85	.89	.83	.84
3. I am satisfied with my family life.	.87	.86	.79	.75	.87	.89	.86	.88
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in my family life.	.81	.80	.72	.72	.80	.83	.81	.82
5. If I could live my family life over, I would change almost nothing.	.73	.74	.66	.57	.72	.79	.69	.73

convergence with other items. This may be because this item refers primarily to the past, whereas the other four items refer to the present (Pavot & Diener, 1993). To determine if this is true, further empirical testing is required.

Evidence of Reliability

Evidence of internal consistency is strong, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from $\alpha = .91$ to .94 when using the SWFL scale among broad U.S. samples of families and ranging from $\alpha = .92$ to .94 among broad samples of families from Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand from both parent and youth samples (Table 2). Strong evidence of internal consistency is also reported among samples of intact families, single-parent families, and families with a child with disabilities ranging from $\alpha = .92$ to .94. Cronbach's alpha scores are slightly lower among samples of families with children in treatment ($\alpha = .88$ to .90) and among samples in which the scale was administered in a different language ($\alpha = .79$ to .82) but still clearly within acceptable ranges.

Evidence of test–retest reliability was established by examining an undergraduate student sample ($n = 123$) who based their responses on family patterns the year or so before they came to college if they were traditional students and on their family patterns for the current year or so if they were nontraditional students. A 5-week interval was considered to be a sufficient amount of time to prevent memory effect. Findings provided evidence of strong temporal stability with a test–retest correlation of .87 (Table 4).

Although true evidence of inter-rater reliability is theoretically impossible with this scale because satisfaction with family life is measured and defined because individuals' subjective evaluation of their family life based on their own standards and expectations, it is still likely different members within the same family would report similar levels of family satisfaction. Therefore, a comparison between parent and young adolescent child responses within the same family can still provide further evidence of

TABLE 4 Summary of Test–Retest Pearson Correlations for SWFL Scale

SWFL item	Correlation T1 × T2	*n*
1	.77	123
2	.79	123
3	.75	122
4	.70	123
5	.73	123
Total scale	.87	121

All correlations above are significant at $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

reliability akin to inter-rater reliability. When the absolute mean difference satisfaction with family life score was calculated between parent and youth responses across all samples (Table 2), excluding the treatment families, the difference was less than a single point (.885). When including the two samples of families with adolescents currently in mental health treatment, the absolute difference only increases to 1.15. Such consistency across members within the same family clearly provides further evidence of reliability for the use of the SWFL scale.

Evidence of Validity

Usability

The scale's utility or usability is high. It is a small unobtrusive measure that uses basic language, simple instructions, and a clear Likert-type scale to elicit responses about family satisfaction. A Flesh-Kincaid grade level reading analysis indicates a reading level of 5.5, which suggests an average 10-year-old can read and understand the scale. This reading level ensures the scale's usability with a wide variety of different populations and offers researchers, therapists, and practitioners the option of assessing perceptions of family satisfaction among children, adolescents, and adults. The brief five-item format of the SWFL scale also lends to its utility, allowing it to be incorporated into a battery of assessments with minimal cost and time.

Criterion

Considerable criterion-related evidence of validity can be established if scores from the SWFL scale are sensitive and accurate enough to differentiate between family satisfaction among broad general samples of families and samples of families that possess specific known characteristics or criteria that would theoretically result in reduced family satisfaction and do so in a predictable direction (DeVellis, 2003). For example, parent responses from a national sample of general families ($n = 898$) have a mean SWFL score of 24.47, whereas parents from a sample of families that have an adolescent in mental health treatment report a much lower SWFL score of 13.93, as would be predicted (Table 2). Further analysis with an independent samples *t*-test indicate parent scores from the general families sample are significantly higher ($t = 12.28$, $p < .01$) than those in the treatment sample. Furthermore, differences between the youth responses from the general family sample (mean = 24.95, SD = 7.1) and the same treatment family sample (mean = 18.62, SD = 8.2) are also statistically significant ($t = 8.40$, $p < .01$), as are differences between the general family sample and parents from another sample with an adolescent daughter in mental health treatment (mean = 15.89, SD = 7.1, $t = 8.47$, $p < .01$) and difference in family satisfaction between the general family sample and the daughters in treatment (mean = 15.07, SD = 7.2,

$t = 15.03$, $p < .01$). Such findings clearly establish the scale's ability to distinguish between treatment and nontreatment samples of families from both parent and adolescent responses.

Comparisons between the general family sample and other samples of families on more obscure criteria, such as family structure, add further evidence of validity and sensitivity. For example, it is well established that intact adoptive families report higher levels of family functioning than general normative family samples (Groze, 1996; Hoopes, Alexander, Silver, Ober, & Kirby, 1997; Rosenthal & Groze, 1990; Zabriskie & Freeman; 2004) and therefore are likely to report higher levels of family satisfaction. Comparisons indicated SWFL scores for parents (mean = 27.92, SD = 6.) and youth (mean = 26.67, SD = 5.8) from a sample of intact biracial adoptive families were significantly higher than the general family sample (parents: mean = 24.47, SD = 7.2, $t = -6.26$, $p < .01$; youth: mean = 24.95, SD = 7.1, $t = -1.75$, $p < .05$). Such results again provide strong criterion-related evidence of validity and demonstrate the scale's ability to empirically predict differences between samples from multiple perspectives.

Another example uses a sample of families that include a child with a developmental disability. Although scholars acknowledge these families face greater challenges and stress, literature indicates virtually no differences in levels of family functioning when compared with families without children with disabilities (Dodd et al., 2009; Dyson, 1996; Ferguson, 2002). When examining overall satisfaction with family life, however, it is still likely, particularly when considering the added work, stress, and effort involved in continually negotiating a variety of constraints, these families would report slight differences. Comparisons with the general sample of families indicated that SWFL scores for parents (mean = 22.75, SD = 8.3) and youth (mean = 22.98, SD = 7.9) from a sample of families with a child with a disability were statistically lower than the general family sample (parents: mean = 24.47, SD = 7.2, $t = 2.66$, $p < .01$; youth: mean = 24.95, SD = 7.1, $t = 2.07$, $p < .01$). Further comparisons with a sample of single-parent families had similar results and found the SWFL scores to be lower for parents (mean = 22.46, SD = 7.5, $t = 4.51$, $p < .01$) but virtually the same for their adolescent children (mean = 24.01, SD = 7.5, $t = 2.11$, $p = .05$), suggesting logical slight differences in parent and child perceptions of family satisfaction. Overall, data from these known-group comparisons provide clear evidence that scores from the SWFL scale are not only able to determine differences between normative samples and treatment samples of families but that the scale is sensitive enough to distinguish slight differences when considering more obscure criteria.

Construct

Construct evidence of validity can be established for the use of the SWFL scale by examining the relationships between family satisfaction scores and

measures of other theoretically related constructs (DeVellis, 2003). For example, families who report higher levels of family functioning should, theoretically, also report higher levels of family satisfaction and therefore exhibit a positive correlation between the two constructs. Examination of general samples of families indicated significant relationships ($p < .001$) between family functioning and family satisfaction that ranged from $r = .48$ to $r = .71$ and was consistent regardless of country or parent/youth perspective (Table 5). When examining other samples of families, including those with a child with a disability, single-parent families, and adoptive families, significant relationships ($p < .001$) between family functioning and family satisfaction ranged from $r = .54$ to $r = .68$. Furthermore, the same relationship for samples of families with an adolescent in mental health treatment ranged from $r = .42$ to $r = .68$. The sample of families with the weakest relationship ($r = .37$, $r = .44$) between these two constructs, although still significant ($p < .001$), was Mexican-American families. This may have been related to language barriers and the translation of all instruments into Spanish. Such findings provide substantial evidence of construct validity for scores measured by the SWFL scale.

Another construct that should be theoretically related to satisfaction with family life is family communication. Examination of general samples of families indicated significant relationships ($p < .001$) between family communication and family satisfaction ranging from $r = .38$ to $r = .72$ and was consistent regardless of country or parent/youth perspective (Table 5). It should be noted that data for family communication were not collected in all studies represented in Table 5, and therefore correlations were only reported for studies that measured the construct. When examining other samples of families, including single-parent families, intact families, and fathers' perspectives of families, significant relationships ($p < .001$) between family communication and family satisfaction ranged from $r = .56$ to $r = .78$. Furthermore, the same relationship for a sample of families with an adolescent in mental health treatment ranged from $r = .53$ to $r = .69$. These findings also provide strong evidence of construct validity.

Another item examined was family leisure involvement. Although this is an objective measure (behavioral inventory) of actual participation in family leisure activities together and not actually a subjective construct, a positive relationship with other constructs such as family functioning has consistently been reported. Therefore, to some degree a positive relationship with satisfaction with family life should theoretically still exist, providing further evidence of construct validity. Examination of general samples of families indicated significant positive relationships ($p < .01$) between family leisure involvement and family satisfaction that ranged from $r = .14$ to $r = .32$, with one youth sample significant at the .05 level ($r = .17$; Table 5). When examining other samples of families, including families with a child with a disability, intact families, single-parent families, Mexican-American families, adoptive families, fathers' perspectives of families, and families with a child

TABLE 5 Summary of Correlations Between SWFL Scores and Related Constructs: Family Functioning, Family Communication, Family Leisure Involvement, and Satisfaction With Family Leisure Involvement

	Pearson R correlations for SWFL scores and			
Samples	Family functioning	Family communication	Family leisure involvement	Satisfaction with family leisure involvement
National sample general families (2009)	(p) .64 (y) .68	(p) .61 (y) .69	(p) .27 (y) .32	(p) .61 (y) .53
National sample general families (2007)	(p) .59 (y) .71	(p) .56 (y) .72	(p) .25 (y) .25	(p) .59 (y) .57
General families (2003)	(p) .55 (y) .63		(p) .29 (y) .17*	(p) .69 (y) .69
Canadian sample general families (2008)	(p) .55 (y) .64	(p) .45 (y) .60	(p) .23 (y) .27	(p) .53 (y) .44
U.K. sample general families (2008)	(p) .52 (y) .60	(p) .42 (y) .54	(p) .14 (y) .22	(p) .43 (y) .48
Australian sample general families (2010)	(p) .48 (y) .62	(p) .38 (y) .59	(p) .22 (y) .21	(p) .50 (y) .44
NZ sample general families (2009)	(p) .58 (y) .62	(p) .52 (y) .65	(p) .28 (y) .30	(p) .57 (y) .44
National sample intact families (2010)	(p) .60 (y) .67	(p) .59 (y) .66	(p) .19 (y) .23	(p) .52 (y) .54
Families with a child with disability (2009)	(p) .66 (y) .60		(p) .37 (y) .15ns	(p) .62 (y) .42
National sample single-parent families (2010)	(p) .60 (y) .64	(p) .56 (y) .72	(p) .34 (y) .28	(p) .58 (y) .57
Mexican-American families (Spanish) (2006)	(p) .37 (y) .44		(p) .11ns (y) .32	(p) .35 (y) .27*
National sample general families from father perspective (2010)	(p) .62 (y) .68	(p) .75 (y) .78	(p) .32 (y) .34	(p) .68 (y) .65
Biracial adoptive families (2004)	(p) .54 (y) .61		(p) .03ns (y) .29*	(p) .44 (y) .56
Families with a female adolescent in mental health treatment (2004)	(p) .42 (y) .65		(p) .17ns (y) .30	(p) .53 (y) .32
Families with an adolescent in mental health treatment (2010)	(p) .59 (y) .68	(p) .53 (y) .69	(p) .41 (y) .35	(p) .64 (y) .34

All correlations above are significant at $p < .01$ (two-tailed) unless specified: * = $p < .05$; ns = not significant. (p), parent; (y), youth.

in mental health treatment, most had significant positive relationships ($p < .01$) between family leisure and family satisfaction ranging from $r = .19$ to $r = .41$, whereas a few were not significant (Table 5).

A final construct that should be theoretically related to satisfaction with family life is satisfaction with family leisure involvement. Examination of general samples of families indicated significant relationships ($p < .001$) between satisfaction with family leisure involvement and family satisfaction that ranged from $r = .44$ to $r = .69$ and was consistent regardless of country or parent or youth perspective (Table 5). When examining other samples of families, significant positive relationships ($p < .001$) between family leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life ranged from $r = .32$ to $r = .68$, with one youth sample significant at the .05 level ($r = .27$; Table 5). Overall, when examining data from 15 different studies, 30 different data sets, across several different countries, cultures, and perspectives within families, the construct-related evidence of validity is clearly established and overwhelmingly strong.

DISCUSSION

The SWFL scale clearly provides another sound option for researchers, therapists, and other practitioners interested in measuring family satisfaction. The brief five-item format, simple instructions, and reading level ensures the scale's usability in assessing perceptions of family satisfaction among children, adolescents, adults, and older adults. It also lends to the utility of the scale and allows its use in a variety of settings, in paper-and-pencil or online formats, and can be easily included in other broader assessments with minimal cost and time restraints. Furthermore, the scale's design and theoretical framework does not require it to be used with a particular type of family structure or impose temporal constraints limiting its use based on a specific life stage. Thus, the scale can easily be used with a wide variety of family definitions.

Another strength of the SWFL scale is its unidimensionality. Multiple factor analyses indicated it successfully measures the singular construct of satisfaction with family life. It was designed specifically to acknowledge the vast number of components that could be considered when measuring family satisfaction and account for the countless different combinations, relationships, and interrelationships between those factors, all of which are likely to be weighted and judged differently based on the perspective of each member of the family. By focusing on an individual's global judgment of family satisfaction, however, the scale allows respondents to make an assessment with some specificity based on the comparisons of family life circumstances with one's own standards and expectations, producing a measure of a single global construct. On the other hand, this approach does leave open the possibility for an individual to grossly overweigh a particular domain or factor, which may introduce error related to the measure of the family

satisfaction construct. A further limitation related to the unidimensionality of the global approach is the inability of this type of scale to identify and evaluate the different facets that contribute to satisfaction with family life. Therefore, those interested in a more specific analysis of the family satisfaction construct itself should consider other measurement approaches.

Perhaps one of the most compelling arguments for the use of the SWFL scale is related to the strong evidence of its psychometric properties. Data used in establishing the empirical evidence of reliability and validity were compiled from 15 different studies, using 30 different data sets, from several different countries and cultures, included perspectives from parents and children, and spanned nearly a decade. Data were collected from broad general samples of families as well as from samples of families with a child with developmental disabilities, single-parent families, Mexican-American families, biracial adoptive families, families from a father's perspective, and families with a child in mental health treatment. Strong evidence of reliability was consistently reported across all samples, yet scores were able to determine differences between families with known characteristics such as treatment and nontreatment samples and did so from both parent and adolescent perspectives. Additionally, scores from the scale proved sensitive enough to distinguish slight differences when considering more obscure criteria such as those found in samples of biracial adoptive families, families including children with disabilities, and single-parent families. Finally, strong construct-related evidence of validity was also reported, supporting theoretically predicted relationships between SWFL scores and four separate related family constructs across samples, countries, and perspectives. Such consistent evidence of its psychometric properties speaks volumes toward establishing the case for the SWFL scale as a reliable and valid measure of satisfaction with family life.

Some limitations to the current study merit mention. First, the test–retest assessment of reliability was conducted only with a university student sample and not with any of the other family samples. Further test–retest analysis is recommended for future study. Second, only 1 of 15 major samples was conducted in a non-English language (Spanish), which required translation. Although all the accepted translation procedures were followed (i.e., native Mexican-American Spanish speakers fluent in English completed the translation, translation and back-translation procedures, etc.), there is still a possibility of slight differences in meaning. Additionally, although current studies include family samples from other Spanish-speaking countries, as well as from countries requiring translation into Turkish, Samoan, and Russian, the data are not yet available for analysis. Such data are desperately needed, and psychometric analysis is strongly recommended as the demand for cross-cultural validation of family measures continues to increase in countries around the globe.

The construct of family satisfaction has demanded considerable interest over the years and will continue to do so as family scholars and clinicians

explore the myriad of evolving forces influencing what remains the fundamental unit of society. Therefore, the accurate and efficient measurement of family satisfaction will continue to be necessary. Several sound measures of family satisfaction have been developed and successfully used since the 1970s, when we began to measure the construct (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Barraca et al., 2000; Campbell et al., 1976; Carver & Jones, 1992; Olson & Wilson, 1982; McCollum et al., 1988). Each instrument presents acceptable psychometric properties, specific strengths and weaknesses, and provides scholars and clinicians with a viable option for successful measurement. The SWFL scale provides an additional brief, psychometrically sound, and widely applicable option for measuring satisfaction with family life.

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