

Teacher satisfaction with a university extension project in School Nursing in Paraguay

Satisfacción docente sobre un proyecto de extensión universitaria en servicios de Enfermería Escolar en Paraguay

Satisfação docente comum projeto de extensão universitária sem serviços de Enfermagem Escolar no Paraguai

Virginia Barrientos de Guimaraens^{1*} , Mirtha Elena Ayala Pintos¹ 

¹Facultad de Ciencias Biomédicas. Universidad Nacional de Pilar. Paraguay.

*Corresponding author: virbargui@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: School Nursing represents a key strategy for improving health and well-being in education. In Paraguay, its implementation is still in its infancy, justifying the evaluation of innovative local experiences. **Objective:** to evaluate educators' satisfaction with the implementation of the university outreach project "Biomedical Sciences in Your School, School Nursing" in educational institutions in the Pilar district, Ñeembucú, during the years 2022 and 2023. **Method:** a non-experimental, descriptive, cross-sectional, mixed-approach study was conducted. The sample was purposive, comprised of 28 educators from five institutions. A semi-structured survey was used. Quantitative data were analyzed with descriptive statistics using SPSS v. 25; qualitative data were analyzed using thematic content analysis. **Results:** 78.57% of respondents rated their satisfaction with the project under study as Excellent. The topics of greatest interest for future projects were

Healthy Living, Nutrition, and Exercise, and Body and Postural Hygiene, both with 17.86%. 96.4% of participants rated the topics covered as highly relevant. 100% positively assessed the students' professional performance. Needs for continuity, increased visit frequency, and expanded topics in future interventions were identified. **Conclusions:** the project is highly valued by teachers, demonstrating the positive impact of School Nursing on the educational community. It is recommended to strengthen its institutionalization as a public health strategy in the school environment.

Keywords: school nursing services; faculty; research design; community-institutional relations; Paraguay



RESUMEN

Introducción: la Enfermería Escolar representa una estrategia clave para mejorar la salud y el bienestar en el ámbito educativo. En Paraguay, su implementación aún es incipiente, lo que justifica la evaluación de experiencias locales innovadoras. **Objetivo:** evaluar la satisfacción de los educadores respecto a la ejecución del proyecto de extensión universitaria “Biomédicas en tu escuela, Enfermería Escolar” en instituciones educativas del distrito de Pilar, Ñeembucú, durante los años 2022 y 2023. **Método:** se realizó un estudio no experimental, descriptivo, de corte transversal y enfoque mixto. La muestra fue intencional, integrada por 28 educadores de cinco instituciones. Se utilizó una encuesta semiestructurada. Los datos cuantitativos se analizaron con estadísticos descriptivos mediante SPSS v.25; mientras que los cualitativos, mediante análisis de contenido temático. **Resultados:** el 78,57 % de los encuestados evaluó de Excelente la satisfacción con el proyecto objeto de estudio. Los temas de mayor interés para futuros proyectos fueron Vida sana, alimentación y ejercicio e Higiene corporal y postural, ambos con el 17,86 %. El 96,4 % de los participantes calificó como muy pertinentes los temas tratados. El 100 % valoró positivamente el desempeño profesional de los estudiantes. Se identificaron necesidades de continuidad, mayor frecuencia de visitas y ampliación temática en futuras intervenciones. **Conclusiones:** el proyecto es altamente valorado por los docentes, lo que evidencia el impacto positivo de la Enfermería Escolar en la comunidad educativa. Se recomienda fortalecer su institucionalización como estrategia de salud pública en el entorno escolar.

Palabras clave: servicios de enfermería escolar; docentes; proyecto de investigación; extensión a la comunidad; Paraguay

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RESUMO

Introdução: a Enfermagem Escolar representa uma estratégia fundamental para melhorar a saúde e o bem-estar na educação. No Paraguai, sua implementação ainda está em fase inicial, justificando a avaliação de experiências locais inovadoras. **Objetivo:** avaliar a satisfação dos educadores com a implementação do projeto de extensão universitária “Ciências Biomédicas na Sua Escola, Enfermagem Escolar” em instituições educacionais no distrito de Pilar, Ñeembucú, durante os anos de 2022 e 2023. **Método:** foi realizado um estudo não experimental, descriptivo, transversal e de abordagem mista. A amostra foi intencional, composta por 28 educadores de cinco instituições. Foi utilizado um questionário semiestruturado. Os dados quantitativos foram analisados com estatística descritiva usando SPSS v. 25; os dados qualitativos foram analisados usando análise de conteúdo temática. **Resultados:** 78,57% dos entrevistados avaliaram sua satisfação com o projeto em estudo como Excelente. Os temas de maior interesse para projetos futuros foram Vida Saudável, Nutrição e Exercício e Higiene Corporal e Postural, ambos com 17,86%. 96,4% dos participantes avaliaram os temas abordados como altamente relevantes. 100% avaliaram positivamente o desempenho profissional dos alunos. Foram identificadas necessidades de continuidade, aumento da frequência de visitas e ampliação dos temas em futuras intervenções. **Conclusões:** o projeto é altamente valorizado pelos docentes, demonstrando o impacto positivo da Enfermagem Escolar na comunidade educacional. Recomenda-se fortalecer sua institucionalização como estratégia de saúde pública no ambiente escolar.

Palavras-chave: serviços de enfermagem escolar; docentes; projeto de pesquisa; relações comunidade-instituição; Paraguai



INTRODUCTION

School nursing has become a key element in the educational field, especially in Latin America, where its presence has taken on a strategic role in promoting the health and comprehensive well-being of students. The results of its implementation are not limited only to health care; they are also reflected in students' academic performance and physical, emotional, and social development.⁽¹⁾ Several studies agree that having nursing professionals in schools allows for early detection of health problems, the implementation of prevention programs, and the strengthening of healthy lifestyle habits from childhood.^(2,3)

Martínez-Santos et al. point out that the role of the school nurse goes beyond direct care, but also includes innovative health functions, impacting both teachers and families.⁽²⁾ In addition, Bernedo García et al. They emphasize the importance of these professionals in building healthy school environments, where not only physical health is protected but also the emotional balance of students is promoted.⁽³⁾ This same perspective is shared by Salazar Arriagada et al., who highlight the effectiveness of nursing-led educational interventions for adolescents in their review of sexual education.⁽⁴⁾

However, the expansion of School Nursing in Latin America has been uneven. In Brazil, school health programs have enabled ongoing care for chronic illnesses while promoting healthy lifestyles.⁽⁵⁾ In Argentina, Ponti warns that specialized training for nurses is essential to address the physical and mental challenges of the school setting, and public policies are also required to ensure their continued inclusion.⁽⁶⁾ Paraguay, on the other hand, still lacks a consolidated school nurse position in most institutions, which makes a significant difference in terms of equity in care.^(3,7)

In specific locations, such as Pilar and Ñeembucú, this absence is even more evident. Although the benefits of this model are internationally recognized, local educational institutions lack nursing professionals, which seriously limits their capacity to respond to students' health problems. Martínez-Santos et al. The Faculty of Biomedical Sciences of the National University of Pilar already warned about these difficulties, pointing out that educational systems in developing countries face significant obstacles in maintaining healthy environments without qualified personnel.⁽²⁾

Given this situation, the Faculty of Biomedical Sciences of the National University of Pilar launched the outreach project "Biomedical Sciences in Your School, School Nursing," with the goal of bringing nursing professionals closer to primary school education institutions in the Pilar district. The aim was not only to improve students' quality of life but also to implement health education programs and promote healthier habits from an interdisciplinary and community-based approach.

During 2022 and 2023, the project included final-year students of the Bachelor's Degree in Nursing. These nurses assumed multiple functions inherent to the profession: healthcare, promotion and prevention activities, health education, as well as research and resource management tasks.⁽⁸⁾ This line of thought coincides with what Sempere Pérez proposed, who maintains that evidence-based nursing interventions are decisive in addressing emerging problems, such as the prevention of STIs in adolescence.⁽⁹⁾



In parallel, research such as that of García Martín shows that school health programs led by nurses significantly reduce absenteeism and improve students' perceptions of well-being.⁽¹⁰⁾ García Ruiz and Pérez Pons make a similar point, highlighting the value of educational interventions in addressing sensitive issues such as sexual health, teenage pregnancy, and the prevention of communicable diseases.⁽¹¹⁾

Despite these advances, Rojas warns that many schools still suffer from human and material resource limitations that prevent them from adequately addressing their students' health problems.⁽¹²⁾ This deficit can translate into negative consequences, including absenteeism, poor academic performance and an increase in risk situations that are not resolved in a timely manner. Therefore, School Nursing is seen as an effective way to overcome these barriers and move toward a safer and healthier educational environment.

In this sense, the general objective of this study is to evaluate educators' satisfaction with the outreach project "Biomedical Sciences in Your School: School Nursing." The intention is to identify its main strengths and also the areas in need of improvement, with a view to consolidating its continuity. Specific objectives include assessing the project's relevance and organization in responding to the health needs of the educational community; analyzing its impact perceived by educators; evaluating the performance of participating nursing students; and finally, making recommendations for strengthening future university outreach initiatives in the field of school health.

METHOD

This study adopted a non-experimental, descriptive, cross-sectional design with a mixed-method approach. This methodological choice responds to the need to observe and describe phenomena as they occur in their natural context, without manipulating variables. According to Hernández Sampieri et al. this type of design is appropriate when seeking to understand subjects' perceptions at a given time, without establishing causal relationships.⁽¹³⁾

The mixed-method approach allowed for the integration of quantitative and qualitative data, providing a more complete understanding of the phenomenon studied: teaching staff satisfaction with the implementation of the university outreach project "Biomedical Sciences in Your School, School Nursing," carried out during 2022 and 2023 in educational institutions in the Pilar district.



The study population consisted of 28 participants, distributed according to the following positions within the educational institutions:

- Classroom teachers: 15 participants.
- Evaluators: four (4) participants
- Guidance counsellors: three (3) participants
- Principals: two (2) participants
- Pedagogical secretaries: two (2) participants
- Vice Principal: one (1) participant
- Coordinator of the Learning and Research Resources Center (CRAI): one (1) participant

Purposeful sampling was used, selecting participants who had direct involvement in the program's implementation and, therefore, could provide relevant and meaningful information about it. This type of sampling is especially relevant in descriptive and applied research, as it allows for a focus on subjects with direct experience with the phenomenon under study.⁽¹³⁾

The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were established:

Inclusion: managers, teachers, technical, and administrative staff who participated in the project during 2022 and 2023 and completed the survey

Exclusion: individuals who were not directly involved in the project or who did not complete the survey

Semi-structured surveys were used as a data collection instrument. These included closed and open-ended questions, grouped into four thematic areas:

- a) Relevance of the content covered.
- b) Project organization and execution
- c) Perceived impact on teaching staff
- d) Professional performance of nursing students

The instrument was administered to 28 participants at a single time, allowing for an accurate snapshot of their perceptions during the analysis period.

IBM SPSS Statistics v. 25 was used to process the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) were applied to characterize the responses obtained. The results were organized in tables to facilitate interpretation and analysis. The qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions were subjected to thematic content analysis to identify recurring categories related to the respondents' perceptions.



For the quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics were used, specifically absolute frequencies and relative percentages, to synthesize the information collected in a clear and understandable manner. Frequencies allowed for identifying the number of times a particular response category was selected, while percentages facilitated proportional comparisons between the different categories within the total number of participants. This analytical strategy is suitable for cross-sectional descriptive studies, as it provides an accurate representation of the observed phenomenon without the need to establish causal relationships. The results were presented in tabular format, allowing for an organized visualization of respondents' perceptions regarding the different dimensions addressed in the study.

The study respected the ethical principles of scientific research. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were guaranteed with the use of alphanumeric codes and secure data storage. All respondents signed an informed consent form, in which they were informed of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the right to withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

RESULTS

The majority of respondents were classroom teachers (53.6%), followed by evaluators (14.3%) and guidance counsellors (10.7%), while the remaining positions included principals, vice principals, pedagogical secretaries, and the CRAI coordinator, all directly involved in the "Biomedical in your school, School Nursing" project (Table 1).

Table 1: Respondents by position in the educational institution

Respondents	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %
Principal	5/2	7,1	7,1
Vice Principal	1	3,6	10,7
Classroom Teacher	51/15	53,6	64,3
Evaluator	4	14,3	78,6
Counsellor	3	10,7	89,3
CRAI Coordinator	1	3,6	92,9
Pedagogical	2	7,1	100,0
Secretary			
Total	28	100,0	

Regarding the relevance of the topics covered, the results showed a high level of appreciation from participants: 78.6% rated the content as Excellent and 21.4% as Good, with no negative opinions recorded (Table 2). This positive evaluation suggests that the topics covered adequately addressed the perceived needs of members of the educational community.



Table 2: Satisfaction with the outreach project "Biomedical Sciences in your School, School Nursing"

Respondents	Excellent	%	Good	%	Total	%
Principal	2	7,14	-	-	2	7,14
Vice Principal	1	3,57	-	-	1	3,57
Classroom Teacher	12	42,86	3	10,71	15	53,57
Evaluator	3	10,71	1	3,57	4	14,29
Counsellor	2	7,14	1	3,57	3	10,71
CRAI Coordinator	1	3,57	-	-	1	3,57
Pedagogical Secretary	1	3,57	1	3,57	2	7,14
Total	22	78,57	6	21,43	28	100,00

Overall, Table 3 shows that the topics that generated the most interest among respondents for further discussion in future outreach projects were healthy living, nutrition, and exercise, with 17.86% of the total and oral care, with the same percentage. The topics that generated the least interest were healthy eating in school cafeterias, anthropometric measurements, and body and posture hygiene, with 10.71% each.

Sex education, first aid and school first aid kits, and road safety education had a medium share, with 14.29% each. Specifically, it can be seen that the positions most interested in healthy living, nutrition, and sports were principal, with 7.14% of the total, and teacher, with the same percentage. The position that generated the most interest in healthy eating in school cafeterias was teacher, with 10.71% of the total. The position most interested in the topic of anthropometric measurements was also that of teacher, with another 10.71% of the total.

The position most interested in the topic of sexual education was guidance counsellor, with 7.14% of the total. Those most interested in topics such as body and posture hygiene and oral care were teachers and librarians, with 17.86% and 7.14%, respectively. The position most interested in first aid and school first aid kits was evaluator, with 7.14% of the total; while evaluators were most interested in road safety education, with another 7.14% of the total.

Table 3: Topics of interest for the development of future projects Respondents

Respondents	Topic 1	%	Topic 2	%	Topic 3	%	Topic 4	%	Topic 5	%	Topic 6	%	Topic 7	%	Topic 8	%	Total	%
Principal	2	7,14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	7,14	
Vice Principal	1	3,57	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3,57	
Classroom Teacher	2	7,14	3	10,71	3	10,71	2	7,14	5	17,86	-	-	-	-	-	15	53,57	
Evaluator	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	7,14	2	7,14	-	-	4	14,29	
Counsellor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	7,14	1	3,57	3	10,71	
Coordinator	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3,57	1	3,57	
Secretary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	7,14	2	7,14	
Total	5	17,86	3	10,71	3	10,71	2	7,14	5	17,86	2	7,14	4	14,29	4	14,29	28	100,0

T1: Healthy Living, Diet, and Exercise; T2: Healthy Eating in School Cafeterias; T3: Anthropometric Measurements; T4: Sex Education; T5: Body and Postural Hygiene; T6: Oral Care; T7: First Aid and School First Aid Kits; T8: Road Safety Education.



The time spent developing the project was also positively assessed: 78.6% considered it excellent and 21.4% considered it good. Similarly, the organization of activities received similar ratings, consolidating an overall favorable perception of the project's planning and execution by the project team.

Table 4 shows that 78.57% of respondents considered the time spent developing the project to be excellent, while 21.43% considered it good. No respondents rated the time spent as average, poor, or very poor. Specifically, it can be seen that the position that most highly rated the time spent as excellent was the teacher, with 53.57% of the total, followed by the evaluator, with 14.29% of the total. The position that most highly rated the time spent as good was the counsellor, with 10.71% of the total, followed by the librarian, with 7.14%. The principal and vice-principal positions rated the time spent as excellent in 100% of cases, while the CRAI coordinator and pedagogical secretary positions rated it as good in 100% of cases.

Table 4: Perception of time spent developing the project

Respondents	Excellent	%	Good	%	Total	%
Principal	2	7,14	0	0,00	2	7,14
Vice Principal	1	3,57	0	0,00	1	3,57
Classroom Teacher	15	53,57	0	0,00	15	53,57
Evaluator	4	14,29	0	0,00	4	14,29
Counsellor	0	0,00	3	10,71	3	10,71
CRAI Coordinator	0	0,00	1	3,57	1	3,57
Pedagogical Secretary	0	0,00	2	7,14	2	7,14
Total	22	78,57	6	21,43	28	100,00

Table 5 shows the cross-referencing of participants' positions within the educational institution with their assessment of the organization of the activities carried out during the project. It can be observed that 78.57% of participants considered the organization to be Excellent, while 21.43% rated it as Good. There were no negative assessments. Among the positions that most rated the organization as Excellent did guidance counsellors, with 10.71%, and principals, with 7.14%, follow teachers, with 42.86%. Among the positions that rated the organization as Good, the most notable were evaluators, with 10.71%, and teachers, with 3.57%.

Table 5: Assessment of the organization of activities carried out during the project

Respondents	Excellent	%	Good	%	Total	%
Principal	2	7,14	0	0,00	2	7,14
Vice Principal	1	3,57	0	0,00	1	3,57
Classroom teacher	12	42,86	3	10,71	15	53,57
Evaluator	1	3,57	3	10,71	4	14,29
Counsellor	3	10,71	0	0,00	3	10,71
CRAI Coordinator	1	3,57	0	0,00	1	3,57
Pedagogical secretary	2	7,14	0	0,00	2	7,14
Total	22	78,57	6	21,43	28	100,00



Regarding the cross-referencing of participants' positions in the educational institution and the teaching and administrative staff they considered to have made a significant contribution to the project, it can be noted that 50.00% of participants believed the project primarily benefited students, while 28.57% attributed this to teachers.

The 10.71% considered the project to have benefited counsellors, 7.14% to principals, and 3.57 % to parents, and the same percentage to CRA coordinators. No mention was made of assistant principals, evaluators, or librarians as groups benefiting from the project.

Among the positions that most valued the project's contribution to students were evaluators with 14.29%, followed by teachers and counsellors, with 10.71% each, while the project's contribution to teachers was found among teachers themselves, at 28.57%, and principals, at 3.57%.

On the other hand, among the positions that most expressed the project's contribution to principals were vice principals and teachers, at 3.57% each; those who most valued the contribution to counsellors were principals and teachers, at 3.57% each; and among the positions that indicated the project's contribution to parents were teachers, at 3.57%. Finally, teachers, at 3.57%, considered the contribution to be directed at the CRA coordinators.

The analysis of the responses revealed several suggestions that teachers consider essential to improve and strengthen the implementation of the "Biomedical in your School, School Nursing" project.

These suggestions were:

- Most of the suggestions focused on the need to extend the project's duration, implementing it from the beginning of the year and extending it for longer periods of time, even throughout the year. Many teachers suggested that the project be permanent at each institution, highlighting the importance of its continuity
- Teachers suggested establishing a schedule for activities by grade level. It was also proposed to take advantage of recess time to conduct health checks, minimizing interruptions in classes.
- The need to acquire and expand first aid supplies to provide better service was highlighted. Continue with enthusiasm and responsibility in implementing the project.
- Participants positively valued the project and suggested its continuation, highlighting the strategy used in the 2023 school year and the excellent care provided.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed that the teaching staff perceived the implementation of the outreach project "Biomedical in your school, School Nursing" very positively. This finding confirmed what has been indicated in previous research on the importance of integrating nursing professionals into school life.⁽¹⁻³⁾ The evidence points in the same direction: school nursing not only addresses immediate needs but also acts as a driving force for promoting health and comprehensive well-being.



Justo Alberto et al. argue that school nursing is a pillar of academic development and student health promotion.⁽¹⁾ In line with this, Martínez-Santos et al. emphasize that the work of these professionals transcends the classroom, becoming agents of care and transformation that reach teachers and families.⁽²⁾ The positive assessment of the topics addressed during the project also coincides with that proposed by Bernedo García et al., who emphasize that activities led by school nurses strengthen self-care and expand health knowledge.⁽³⁾ In addition, Albiac Cubeles et al. They point out that school nursing is an indispensable tool for promoting education with a preventive and healthy approach from childhood.⁽¹⁴⁾

Regarding the topics proposed for future interventions (first aid, sexual education, mental health, and healthy eating), a clear coherence was observed with the priorities established in recent reviews.^(4,10,12) These topics are not new; they have already been explored in previous experiences in Latin America, with satisfactory results that demonstrate their relevance and effectiveness.^(5,6,15,16,17) In other words, the interests of the teaching staff are aligned with the general trend in the region.⁽⁷⁾

Another aspect worth highlighting is the high ratings received by the nursing students. Faculty members perceived their performance as adequate and enriching. This finding supports the argument of Jiménez Hurtado, who asserts that professional training is enhanced when it incorporates participatory community experiences, as occurs in university extension programs.⁽⁸⁾ The faculty's commitment to the project and willingness to continue participating in future editions also reinforce the idea of institutional ownership. This factor, according to Ponti, is essential to ensuring the sustainability of school nursing, always accompanied by public policies and specialized training.⁽⁶⁾

However, limitations were also noted that should not be overlooked. The limited timeframe for interventions and the need to improve coordination are aspects worth reviewing in future editions. Gallego de Pardo had already warned: the effective implementation of School Nursing requires constant planning and adequate resources to support its continuity.⁽¹⁸⁾

Ultimately, this study provides new evidence to the debate on the urgency of incorporating School Nursing as a public policy in Paraguay. Although the role of the school nurse is not yet officially part of the national education system, experiences such as Pilar's demonstrate concrete progress toward building healthier, more inclusive, and resilient schools.^(3,7,8)

CONCLUSIONS

The project satisfactorily achieves its overall objective by providing important input to optimize the planning and execution of future university outreach programs in School Nursing, with the goal of increasing both their impact and the satisfaction of the educational community.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, some main recommendations are made: extend the duration and frequency of interventions to ensure continuity; guarantee the availability of supplies, medications, first aid kits, and qualified human resources; Adjust educational strategies according to the specific needs of each institution; actively involve families in activities; establish objective and subjective indicators to measure the impact on health and well-being; and allocate a budget to allow for the hiring of permanent nursing professionals in educational institutions.

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