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Parents' optimism and values for the future of their children

Otimismo dos pais e valores que escolhem para o futuro dos filhos

Luciana Karine de Souza¹ , Sophia Beylouni Santos Martínez² , Nathália Pereira da Silva² , Sofia Silva¹ , Letícia Backes Schreiner¹ , Gustavo Gauer³ 

¹ Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Instituto de Psicologia, Departamento de Psicologia do Desenvolvimento e da Personalidade. Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil. Correspondence to: L. K. SOUZA. E-mail: <Luciana.karine@ufrgs.br>.

² Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Instituto de Psicologia, Grupo de Pesquisa CNPq Et Alia. Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil.

³ Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Instituto de Psicologia, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Psicologia. Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil.

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Abstract

Objective

We explored the relationship between optimism and values parents expect for their children's future. Understanding which values associates with optimism is relevant to research on child rearing practices.

Method

Brazilian mothers and fathers ($n = 127$) of children from zero to 12 years old participated in the study. Participants filled out the LOT-R for dispositional optimism and the Values for the Future of Children. We used thematic analysis to treat the chosen values, and the justifications provided.

Results

Parents preferred faith, honesty, and fairness to other groups of values. Group comparisons were carried out. Optimism did not differ significantly between parents that chose faith, fairness, and honesty, but differed between faith and compassion, and faith and autonomy and determination.

Conclusion

Results indicate faith has been receiving more attention from parents and is considered an important value for their children's future. We compare the results with similar studies and indicate future paths for research.

Keywords: Optimism; Parents; Values.

Resumo

Objetivo

Foi explorada a relação entre otimismo e valores que pais preferem para o futuro dos filhos. Compreender valores associados ao otimismo é relevante para pesquisas em práticas educativas parentais.

Método

Mães e pais brasileiros (n = 127) de crianças com idade até 12 anos participaram do estudo. Os participantes preencheram o instrumento LOT-R para otimismo disposicional e Valores para o Futuro dos Filhos. Utilizou-se análise temática para tratar valores escolhidos e justificativas fornecidas.

Resultados

Os pais preferiram fé, honestidade e justiça a outros grupos de valores. Comparações de grupos foram conduzidas. O otimismo não diferiu significativamente entre pais que escolheram fé, justiça e honestidade, mas sim entre fé e compaixão e fé e autonomia e determinação.

Conclusão

Os resultados indicam que fé tem recebido maior atenção dos pais e é considerada um valor importante para o futuro dos filhos. Os resultados são comparados com estudos semelhantes e indicados caminhos para pesquisa.

Palavras-chave: *Otimismo; Pais; Valores.*

When it comes to raising and educating children, one must consider the state of the world before the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic that shook the planet in 2020. In many societies, schools closed, and parents found themselves locked down at home with their children without instrumental support from babysitters, relatives, friends, or neighbors. Many parents started to work from home, balancing it all with other dimensions of life (leisure, romantic relationship, etc.). More clearly, for some people, the vital task of raising children became heavier and more evident than ever before. Alongside daily difficulties during the pandemic, some parents might have changed their perception of how positive or negative the future may be. In light of this, post-pandemic research on parents' level of optimism and their child-rearing beliefs and practices may show interesting data on the matter following such a catastrophic event.

The present study offers a pre-pandemic scenario on parents' optimism and values for their children's future. Given that data collection took place before the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic started, we understand that the present results may provide means for future comparisons with pandemic and post-pandemic investigations on the topic.

Different lines of research investigate child-rearing values and what parents believe is best for their children's future. Some theoretical models postulate over-arching values fit for analyzing cultural nuances within- and inter-societies. For example, there are different values orientation models: the individualism-collectivism model, interdependence-independence model, and agency-interpersonal distance model (Albanese et al., 2015; Martins et al., 2015; Minkov et al., 2018; Soares et al., 2020; Suizzo, 2007). Other models investigate specific values parents believe their children should hold as adults (Sarriera et al., 2012; Siqueira et al., 2017; Valdez-Medina et al., 2011). Our study also tries to contribute to this latter body of research.

Suizzo (2007) concisely states that "parents have goals for their children that include the types of values and qualities of life they hope their children will have as adults" (p. 506). Even though parents have values they would like children to adopt, children spend less time under adult supervision (Narvaez, 2009).

Virtue development and education are research lines dedicated to studying and promoting values and virtues. Different theoretical models approach virtue and values with families and schools. Narvaez (2009) posited a four-component model for virtue development through ethical behavior. The components ethical sensitivity, ethical judgment, ethical motivation, and ethical action are associated with a comprehensive list of 42 different virtues (e.g., respect, justice, compassion,

generosity, politeness, tolerance). The list offers a vast array of options for investigating, in detail, which values parents choose for their children's future.

Valdez-Medina et al. (2011) investigated the educational advice or guidance Mexican parents have been offering their children about necessary behaviors for achieving a good life in the future. The authors also asked adolescents about the advice or guidance they receive from parents on being a person and how to behave towards a good life. Results showed a preference for responsibility, honesty, respect, honor, justice, tolerance, obedience, loyalty, sincerity, discretion, patience, generosity, solidarity, politeness, humility, simplicity, fidelity, and pride. Considering that Mexico and Brazil share some cultural aspects, results from Valdez-Medina (2011) suggest that the values of humility, simplicity, fidelity, and pride are of interest to Latin American parents. In contrast, the list presented in Narvaez (2009) for use with North-American participants does not have these four values.

Three Brazilian studies contribute to the topic. Sarriera et al. (2012) presented a list of 21 aspired values to 543 Brazilian parents and their adolescent children. The authors found that parents gave more importance to optimism, tolerance, and a sense of humor than their children. In a second study, Siqueira et al. (2017) showed a list of 27 values to 22 parents and grandparents. Participants preferred the values of honesty, justice, and determination over the others. Cacciaccaro and Macedo (2018) interviewed four couples about values they want to pass on to their children. The most important values were family, respect, friendship, love, loyalty, honesty, companionship, responsibility, trust, humility, integrity, and faith. Narvaez's (2009) list does not cover some of the values cited in the studies, such as optimism, humility, love, family, integrity, gratitude, and independence. Therefore, the three studies (Cacciaccaro & Macedo, 2018; Sarriera et al., 2012; Siqueira et al., 2017) add to upcoming investigations on values that Brazilian parents choose for the future of their children.

How people perceive the future may influence their decisions and choices among many courses of action. This may be crucial, for example, in the context of child-rearing practices and values. According to Scheier et al. (1994), a pessimist tends to expect negative outcomes for the future, whereas an optimist generally expects positive ones.

The theoretical model of dispositional optimism states that "dispositional optimism is a personality trait that reflects the generalized expectancy that positive, as opposed to negative, outcomes will occur in the future across a variety of domains" (Renaud et al., 2019). There is evidence that dispositional optimism helps reduce stress and promotes physical and psychological well-being (Puig-Pérez et al., 2021). Kealy et al. (2020) found, in 120 adults, that emotional support from parents during childhood connects to optimism and a greater sense of meaning in life. In addition, Castro-Schilo et al. (2013), using the same model, found that parents' optimism leads to positive parenting, which relates to children's peer competence.

Optimistic, or pessimistic, parents might visualize children's future differently and, consequently, highlight different values for their future in the process of raising and educating them. Given that parents' optimism during childhood influences children's social competence and, when adults, their meaning in life, which specific values will optimistic parents choose for their children's future?

The main goal of the present study was to investigate the relationship between optimism and preferences of values parents expect for the future of their children. We hope to understand which values are associated with an optimistic disposition and explore how to apply this relationship to research on parenting.

Method

This study is cross-sectional with qualitative and quantitative data and data analyses. We combined qualitative and quantitative methods to understand phenomena to contribute to the previous research literature on parents' values for their children's future and its relationship with dispositional optimism.

Sample

The sample is constituted of 127 Brazilian parents (73.0 women), aged from 22 to 61 years old ($M = 40.2$; $SD = 7.2$), 76% married or involved in a stable union, 68.0% living in the capital of the state they reside, and 79.0 located in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (RS). Seventy-seven percent have a university degree, 54.0% have a monthly (individual) income of more than five thousand Brazilian reais. Two participants did not provide information on their religion; 47.0% declared Catholic, 18.0% Spiritist, 16.5% without religion, 16.5% indicated other religion; 52.0% admitted to practicing their religion. The number of children ranged from one to six, 53.0% had one child, and 36.0% had two children. Inclusion criteria were a minimum age of 18 years, Brazilian citizenship, and having at least one child.

Instruments

Participants filled out three instruments. The sociodemographic questionnaire asked for basic information such as sex, age, nationality, marital status, religion, religious practice (yes/no), city and state of residence, monthly (personal) income, higher education degree (yes/no), the number of children, and age and sex of the child chosen to refer to when filling out the questionnaires.

The Values for the Future of Children is a list of 46 values, from which 39 came from Narvaez (2009): altruism, citizenship, civility, commitment, compassion, cooperation, courage, courtesy, duty, fairness, faith, foresight, forgiveness, friendship, generosity, hard work, helpfulness, honesty, honor, hope, sociability, justice, kindness, lawfulness, loyalty, obedience, obligation, patience, patriotism, persistence, personal responsibility, politeness, respect, reverence, self-control, self-sacrifice, social responsibility, tolerance, and trustworthiness. Seven came from studies with Mexican and Brazilian parents: humility, simplicity, fidelity, pride, optimism, gratitude, and independence (Cacciaccaro & Macedo, 2018; Sarriera et al., 2012; Siqueira et al., 2017; Valdez-Medina et al., 2011). The list also provided a space for the parent to suggest a value. Below the list were instructions asking the parent to 1) choose the most important values for the child's future, 2) select three from the previously chosen, 3) choose one out of the three, and 4) justify the choice.

The third instrument was the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) to assess dispositional optimism. "Optimists are people who tend to hold positive expectancies for their future" (Scheier et al., 1994, p. 1063). LOT-R is a scale with ten statements (three for optimism, three for pessimism, and four filter items) about whether the person expects future events will be, in general. Bastianello and Pacico (2014) provide the Brazilian-Portuguese version chosen for the study.

Procedures

Data collection. We used a free online research platform for data collection and generated a link to invitations sent via email to personal and academic contacts. We also wrote to the most read newspapers of RS to publish the invitation. One very popular and largely distributed newspaper

published it in the health section of a Sunday edition. The invitations stated that the conditions to participate were having at least 18 years old and being a parent. The link address directed the person to the consent form, which ended with options to participate in the study. The refusal option led to a short message thanking the person for their attention; the acceptance option directed the participant to the research instruments, followed by a brief statement expressing gratitude for the participation. The link was available for participation from September 2018 to August 2019.

Data treatment and analyses. Data treatment started with the transfer of participants' answers from an online survey software to a spreadsheet, showing a total of 141 replies: 138 people accepted to participate and filled out the instruments, and three declined. A visual inspection of the 138 consented submitted surveys showed 11 cases in which participants did not follow the instructions for the two core questions of the research: 1) choose the most important value from the three values previously chosen, and 2) justify the choice. After the exclusions, we kept the remaining 127 valid participants for analyses.

We used reflexive Thematic Analysis (TA) for qualitative analyses following the principles and specifications proposed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (Clarke et al., 2019). The method comprises six phases, from familiarization with data until the written report of each theme's name, definition, example(s), and how they function as a meaning system representing data and, therefore, replying to the research question. The phases are: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) coding, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) writing-up (Clarke et al., 2019).

The first author conducted a TA on the reasons for choosing the most important value. The goal aimed at grasping whether the respondent understood the selected value as more important than the others. With phase 1 we were able to identify who presented justifications and who did not. On phase 2, we coded the material looking for parts where the participant indicated reasons, justifications, arguments that give grounds to the choice (phase 2). Some examples: "Honesty is the basis of morality"; "It is the basis for a dignified life". We coded the parts "basis of morality" and "basis for a dignified life". Phase 3 allowed the gathering of the coded excerpts in similar groups in meaning. Phase 4 led us to establish, for example, groups that shared the idea of a deeper connection to everything and the idea of linked values. Phase 5 sets the final name of each theme, and phase 6 is the clear and concise description of each theme, along with examples, as shown in the results section.

The second TA had the purpose of reducing the list of chosen values to make group comparisons according to the score on optimism. Previous empirical studies with Brazilian data provided adequate grouping criteria for the values (Souza & Freitas, 2019; Souza & McCarthy, 2010). Phases 1 and 2 were rushed because of the particulars of the data (names of values, instead of whole phrases). Phase 3 had the support of the literature just mentioned, and phase 4 provided the revisions needed to reduce, with cohesion, the groups of values. Souza (2019) presents thematic analysis in Brazilian-Portuguese, with the authorization and contributions from the original authors, and offers a schematic solution to phase 4 that highlights how the revision process works. Phases 5 and 6 were undertaken as previously described.

The first author conducted the analyses based on her research, teaching, supervising, and consulting experiences with reflexive TA (Clarke et al., 2019). Two other authors revised, independently, both TA's in the search for internal consistency of each theme, the interconnection between themes, and whether both analyses answered the research questions. Thanks to this procedure, we identified discrepancies that required the return to phase 4 and the participants'

answers in both analyses. Flexibility, ongoing dialogue with the data set, and commitment to the research question improved themes. For quantitative analysis, we used the software IBM®SPSS® 23 to obtain descriptive statistics, carry out a comparison of means, Cohen's *d*, analysis of variance, chi-square tests, and analysis of standardized adjusted residuals. The minimum significance level established was 0.05. The university's Research Ethics Committee allowed the study under approval nº 2.680.909.

Results

Participants chose 27 as the most important value from the 46 values provided. In addition, they suggested two: being happy (*ser feliz*) and loving and being loved (*amar e ser amado*). Table 1 shows the frequency of choice for each most important value, except for seven values chosen once: forgiving, loyal, persistent, tolerant, hopeful, hard-working, and happy.

Table 1
Frequency of Choice for Most Important Value (n = 127)

Chosen Value	<i>f</i>
Honest	25
(Having) Faith	17
Fair	9
Grateful	6
Independent	6
Respectful	6
Kind	5
Responsible for oneself	5
(Having) Self-control	5
Courageous	4
(Active) Citizen	3
Altruist	3
Committed	3
Generous	3
Honorable	3
Humble	3
Benevolent	3
Compassionate	3
(Good) Friend	2
Trustful	2
Optimistic	2
Loving and being loved	2

Note: The table shows only frequencies above 1.

According to Table 1, the most frequent choices were being honest, (having) faith, and being fair. No one chose the following values as the most important: lawful, dutiful, following obligations, sacrifice for others, helpful, responsible for others, cooperative, cordial, careful, trusty (*fiel*, in Brazilian-Portuguese), obedient, proud, patient, patriot, polite, prudent, reverent, simple, and sociable.

Why is the chosen value the most important?

The first TA looked at whether the chosen value is more important than the others. In other words, the analysis aimed at grasping whether the value was highest in hierarchy after going

through the previous selections demanded by the questionnaire: all that is important, three most important, and then the most important.

After finishing phase one of the TA method, we noticed three participants defined the value instead of justifying the choice. Hence, to pursue the first research question, we excluded three cases.

The data analysis of 124 participants yielded five themes: connects to other values, connects to everything, self- and life improvements, interpersonal connection, and parents' perspective. Some answers also had contents that defined or characterized the value, but they were not the goal of the first research question pursued. The themes are described and illustrated as follows:

Connects to other values: The value includes, implies, requires, facilitates, generates, assembles, or guides different values (sometimes all of them). For example: "it is the first step toward other qualities", "it is the foundation of many values that I consider important", "it is the basis for all the other values".

Connects to everything: It is the foundation of life, human beings, everything, a whole or dignified life. Examples: "without (value) we are nothing", "it is a necessary skill to deal with the world", "everything revolves around it", "without (the value) we do not advance into the future", "the world needs more of it".

Self- and life improvements: It entails (good) character or qualities, being morally good or dignified, having a fulfilling life, better dealing with the course of life, its challenges and situations. It also guarantees a lighter, more accessible future or life, meeting goals, and being happy with one's choices, positive results, self-knowledge, strength, avoiding negative outcomes, and internal and interpersonal conflicts. Examples: "it is a sign of good character", "(value) is man's fulfillment", "it contributes to one's personal development", "(value) helps being a better person every day", "with (value) everything goes easier", "(value) makes us stronger and happier", "helps facing life's challenges and unexpected situations", "with (value) it is possible to assess the situations in life better", "life is short, we have to look for what's good in it and be happy whenever possible", "so that my son does not depend on other people to be happy and meet his goals, besides making his own choices", "because it is crucial to be the author of own's history".

Interpersonal connection: It is essential to social life, interconnectedness, to being a part of society, to a life with others, stressing the ability to recognize other's perspectives, notwithstanding disagreements and differences. Examples: "(value) is the pillar of social life", "because in society we depend on each other and (value) is essential in this context", "having (value), we take other people into account", "minimizes the chance of conflict with others".

Parents' perspective: The value belongs to the moral system of the parent, the parent teaches the value, or the parent/child lacks the value. Examples: "because of the values I teach him", "because it is the value he needs to develop most", "because it is what I lack in many situations in life".

The five themes are interconnected because each has a core (represented by the theme's name). The core demonstrates that the chosen value occupies the highest rank compared to the other possible choices. In conclusion, the TA provided evidence that 124 of the 127 participants presented a justification that showed a clear understanding of the higher rank of the chosen value.

Similarities Among Values

The second TA searched for similar aspects between the elected values. The objective was to create larger groups for comparisons with the score on optimism. The choices of the three

participants without justification were selected by the other 124 participants and therefore remained for this second analysis.

Table 2 shows the generated themes, the values that formed them, and the frequency of participants per theme. We decided to keep the values of honesty and faith as independent themes because of their large frequency of choice.

Table 2
Themes for Most Important Value and Frequency of Choice (n = 127)

Theme	Values	f
Honesty	honest	25
Autonomy and determination	committed, courageous, hard-working, independent, persistent, responsible for oneself, (having) self-control	25
Compassion	altruistic, benevolent, compassionate, forgiving, (good) friend, generous, kind, loving and being loved, tolerant	23
Fairness and respect	(active) citizen, fair, loyal, respectful, trustful	21
Faith	(having) faith	17
Other Values	grateful, happy, honorable, hopeful, humble, optimistic	16

According to Table 2, the second TA resulted in six themes: (a) honesty, (b) autonomy and determination, (c) compassion, (d) fairness and respect, (e) faith, and (f) other values. The heterogeneity of the theme other values prevents its comparison to *other themes* according to the optimism score. Hence, we will not further analyze other values.

The theme *compassion* covers the idea of care, altruism, goodness, and kindness. These ideas sustain the connection among the values presented in Table 2 (kind, altruistic, generous, etc.). The theme of fairness and respect comprehend values associated with a social bond by following interpersonal norms and contracts that connect people as a pair, group, community, or society. The theme *autonomy and determination* encompass values directed abilities to reach one's goals, take care of oneself (control oneself, respect oneself), and be independent of others. Parents' optimism and values for the future of their children. Table 3 shows mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum scores on optimism, per theme.

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations on Optimism per Theme

Theme	M	SD	Min	Max	n
Faith	27.64	2.76	21	30	17
Honesty	24.76	4.35	17	30	25
Fairness and respect	24.57	4.09	14	29	21
Autonomy and determination	23.91	3.93	16	30	25
Compassion	23.04	3.90	15	29	23
Total	24.62	4.09	14	30	111

The analysis of variance indicated significant differences among themes: $F(4,106) = 3,698$ ($p = 0.007$). The Bonferroni post hoc test helped to identify the following significant differences: faith > autonomy and determination ($p = 0.030$; $d = 1.09$), and faith > compassion ($p = 0.004$; $d = 1.36$).

Therefore, the parents who chose faith as the most important value for the child's future were the most optimistic about their future. In addition, this *faith group* scored significantly higher

on optimism when compared to parents that chose *autonomy and determination* and the group that chose *compassion*. These results raised interest in the sociodemographic characteristics of the *faith group*. The *faith group* is composed of 15 women and two men, mean age 37.94 years ($SD = 7.15$), mostly married (88.0%), 47.0% catholic, 65.0% with a higher education degree, 88.0% practice a religion, evenly distributed according to monthly (individual) income, 65.0% live in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (RS), 71.0% do not live in the capital of their state.

Given that having faith is a value commonly associated with religion, we noted that 88.0% of the participants of the *faith group* practice the religion they indicated in the questionnaire. To further understand the group's high score on optimism, we investigated the association between religious practice and theme.

The percentage of religious practice was distributed as follows: faith = 88.0%, honesty = 64.0%, fairness and respect = 62.0%, compassion = 43.5%, other values = 37.5%, and autonomy and determination = 24.0%. Pearson's chi-square test and the analysis of standardized adjusted residuals signalized a significant association between theme and religious practice, where $\chi^2(4, n = 109) = 19.83$, $p = 0.001$. Table 4 shows the counts for each cell, expected counts, and the adjusted residuals.

Table 4

Frequency, Expected Count, and Standardized Adjusted Residuals for the Association between Theme and the Practice of Religion (n = 109)

Theme	Index	Yes	No
Honesty	<i>f</i>	16	8
	<i>e</i>	13.2	10.8
	SAR	1.3	-1.3
Faith	<i>f</i>	15	< 5
	<i>e</i>	9.4	7.6
	SAR	3.0	$N < 5$
Autonomy and determination	<i>f</i>	6	19
	<i>e</i>	13.8	11.2
	SAR	-3.6	3.6
Compassion	<i>f</i>	10	12
	<i>e</i>	12.1	9.9
	SAR	-1.0	1.0
Fairness and respect	<i>f</i>	13	8
	<i>e</i>	11.6	9.4
	SAR	0.7	-0.7

Note: *e*: Expected count; *f*: frequency; SAR: Standardized Adjusted Residuals.

Following the minimum value of 1.96 for adjusted residuals in each cell, more participants in the faith group practice religion than would be expected by chance. Table 4 also presents more participants in the *autonomy and determination* group who do not practice religion than expected by chance. This latter group also scored significantly lower in optimism when compared to the *faith group*. We will explore these findings in the discussion section.

Discussion

The three most chosen values for their children's future were honesty, faith, and fairness. Previous Brazilian studies of Siqueira et al. (2017) and Cacciaccaro and Macedo (2018) also indicated parents choose these values. Qualitative analyses guaranteed that the choices were adequately

justified and thematically analyzed into coherent and manageable five groups, three of which were the most frequent choices. In the present study, there were no significant differences in dispositional optimism among parents who chose either the value of honesty, faith, and fairness (groups *faith*, *honesty*, and *fairness and respect*). In other words, those were the most optimistic groups.

We identified, however, a significant difference in optimism between *faith group* and *compassion group*, and between *faith group* and *autonomy and determination group*. This result led us to further look into the sociodemographic of the participants who preferred faith. It got to our attention that religious practice also was highest in the *faith group*, and lowest in the *autonomy and determination group*.

While scarce, studies show significant associations between dispositional optimism and faith. This literature, diverse in sampling, helps understand the associations found in the present study.

Mattis et al. (2004) found, in a sample of 307 African American adults, that dispositional optimism was predicted by subjective spirituality as well as by a positive relationship with God. They also reported a positive association between dispositional optimism and subjective religiosity ($p < 0.01$), subjective spirituality ($p < 0.001$), positive relationship with God ($p < 0.001$), and church attendance ($p < 0.05$). This latter result relates to our finding of the *faith group's* higher score on optimism and religious practice than the other four groups.

Sohl et al. (2011, p. 3) investigated 113 US college students and found a positive correlation ($p < 0.01$) between optimism and participants' justification for being optimistic: "faith in a higher power". They also detected a positive correlation between the low pessimism subscale ($p < 0.01$) and the justification *belief in the role of one's ability*. In addition, similarities with the present study rely on the proximity between *faith* and *faith in a higher power* and between *autonomy and determination* and *belief in the role of one's ability*. According to our qualitative analysis, autonomy and determination comprise values that focus on the individual's ability to succeed through their efforts and self-improvement (committed, courageous, hard-working, independent, persistent, responsible for oneself, and self-control). Even though Sohl et al. (2011) found a significant relationship in a younger sample, they showed that optimistic people tend to count on faith to cope.

In a more recent study conducted in Portugal – a country that shares common cultural roots and practices with Brazil, Monico and Alferes (2019) investigated the relationship between religiosity, optimism, and life satisfaction in 737 adults. Different scales measured religiosity: religiosity level, belief in God, types of religious beliefs, approach to God in moments of happiness/easiness and of difficulty/uncertainty, and attitudes and religious practices. The authors found a positive correlation between optimism and religiosity ($p < 0.001$). They also found, in Catholics, that life satisfaction mediates the relationship between religiosity and optimism. In other words, religiosity predicts a higher level of optimism when Catholic participants are satisfied with their lives.

In Latin America, a study with 284 Uruguayan adults found associations between dispositional optimism and religious beliefs (Catholic, agnostic, atheist, Christian, other, and God's importance in the respondent's life) and practices (frequency of practice). After controlling for religious beliefs, results showed a significant positive relationship between practicing spirituality weekly and dispositional optimism. This relationship was significant because of the high socioeconomic vulnerability associated with Lascano, where respondents lived. The study suggests that practicing a religion improves optimism, which is vital under difficult life conditions (Cid et al., 2021). In the case of parents who practice a religion, it is relevant for them to know this and choose to involve their children.

Korkmaz (2021) inquired into the relationship between optimism, happiness, and religious coping. The research consisted of an online survey of 323 Turkish Muslims (aged between 17 and 59 years). The results indicated a significant positive correlation between optimism and positive religious coping, and optimism partially mediated the relationship between positive religious coping and happiness. Optimism seems to play an essential role in the path to happiness, provided that religion is present in the person's life.

It is interesting to note that although the studies investigated either religious practice and attitudes toward religion, God, higher power, etc., but all showed a relationship between optimism and the practice of faith. We demonstrated associations between optimism, faith, and religious practice and found literature that shows similarities with our findings. We are aware of the different constructs used in the literature (subjective spirituality, faith in a higher power, relationship with God, church attendance, religiosity, frequency of prayer/meditation). Nevertheless, dispositional optimism and the value of faith were constants that united their results and ours (Cid et al., 2021; Korkmaz, 2021; Mattis et al., 2004; Monico & Alferes, 2019; Sohl et al., 2011). Our results, therefore, add to this existing literature, corroborating the trend between faith and optimism. However, our sample of parents and the focus on their children's future are unique to the present investigation.

Our research design presents limitations. We chose to approach the values through an instrument (the list of values) not previously used in research. Impending studies might use a reduced number of choices according to the reported results.

Along with previous Brazilian studies, we identified honesty, faith, and fairness as highly important values chosen by parents for their children's future. In Siqueira et al. (2017), parents preferred honesty, justice, and determination. In a more qualitative approach, Cacciaccaro and Macedo (2018) had found that, for parents, the most important values included respect, friendship, love, loyalty, honesty, responsibility, trust, humility, integrity, and faith. Taken together, results as those, along with ours, suggest that Brazilian parents are prone to values more directed to justice/fairness and to self-directed values (determination, integrity, faith). What this picture might lack are values more oriented toward care, such as compassion, benevolence, kindness, altruism, generosity. Thus, there are grounds for further investigations to try to understand what parents think about these values and whether they consider them as pertaining to an optimistic framework for the future of their children.

The optimistic parents of this study have a special connection with religion and the value of faith, which they want for their children's future. However, the results are from before the harsh reality of a pandemic. It will be interesting to research whether parents would still choose the same values and, indeed, whether dispositional optimism still leads to the choices for faith, honesty, and fairness.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Brazil lived under a very turbulent political context. With the 2020 pandemic, the picture grew in controversy and the clash of many values, including religion and faith. Elected in 2018 with 55% of the votes, the 2019-2022 Brazilian president managed to keep the country divided and in constant discord – the mixture of politics and religion has been one of the numerous issues.

It would be interesting to conduct a second investigation on values parents wish for their children's future and how optimistic parents remain after the COVID-19 pandemic and the change of government. Another path of research would be a survey with teachers to compare their views on wanted values for the future of their pupils. A combination of parents' and teachers' perspectives would provide the means to create context-based activities and projects directed to discuss values and how they may help the children's present by acting for a better future. It would also make parents more aware of their plans for children and how they work toward those expectations.

It is also noteworthy that, albeit somewhat counterintuitive, parents chose faith ($n = 17$) as a wanted value for their children, but not optimism (selected by two parents). Although we mentioned the expression *values for the future of children* in different parts of the informed consent and the instrument's instructions with the list of values, it might be the case that our sample does not link faith and optimism. Future studies could look into that by directly asking parents the difference between these values and how they justify weighing one more than the other.

Moral or virtue education at home occurs mainly through parenting, either with parents' acknowledging their values or not. Unbeknownst to most parents, values are everywhere in social life, demanding a certain amount of dedication to successively achieving goals for the future. Being aware of the values that matter most to children's future is the first step. Additionally, psychologists and educators can work together with parents and children to find ways of discussing and practicing values that may help children succeed in different interpersonal contexts of adult life (work opportunities, romantic relationships, friendships, business transactions, etc.). Honesty, fairness, and faith are a good start but should not be the sole values of such interactions.

Likewise, it would be scientifically pertinent to assess whether parents reconfigured their values for the children's future after the COVID-19 pandemic. It is relevant to witness how honesty, fairness, faith, autonomy, and compassion have been perceived and lived after such turbulent times.

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Contributors

Conceptualization: L. K. SOUZA and G. GAUER. Data curation: L. K. SOUZA. Formal analysis: L. K. SOUZA, S. MARTÍNEZ, N. SILVA, S. SILVA, L. SCHREINER, and G. GAUER. Investigation: L. K. SOUZA and S. MARTÍNEZ. Methodology: L. K. SOUZA, S. MARTÍNEZ, and N. SILVA. Project administration: L. K. SOUZA. Resources: L. K. SOUZA and G. GAUER. Supervision: L. K. SOUZA. Writing – original draft: L. K. SOUZA, S. MARTÍNEZ, S. SILVA, L. SCHREINER, and G. GAUER. Writing – review and editing: L. K. SOUZA, S. MARTÍNEZ, S. SILVA, L. SCHREINER, and G. GAUER.