


Maternal Socialization Goals and Children's Requested Behaviors

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Abstract: This study examined possible associations between variables related to maternal socialization goals and the manifestation of requested behaviors among children living in a Brazilian rural community, in order to answer the following question: Is there any correlation between maternal goals and the manifestation of requested behaviors in their children? A total of 39 mother-child dyads participated in the study and the children were aged between 18 and 30 months old. We applied a questionnaire on socialization goals/educational objectives and a form to record the obedience prosocial behavior task. The results indicated that the more mothers emphasize “learning to support others” and “learning to understand others’ feelings”, the more their children follow the maternal requests. A significant correlation is suggested between a child’s response in performing the task and the mothers’ socialization goals, highlighting the importance of parents and educators establishing a conducive environment for the exercise of prosociality in childhood.

Keywords: socialization, prosocial behavior, obedience

Metas de Socialização Materna e Comportamento Solicitado da Criança

Resumo: Este estudo investigou possíveis associações entre variáveis referentes às metas de socialização maternas e a manifestação do comportamento solicitado entre crianças residentes em uma comunidade rural brasileira, com intuito de responder ao problema: há correlação entre as metas maternas e a manifestação do comportamento solicitado em seus filhos? Participaram do estudo 39 díades, mãe-filho, sendo crianças com idades entre 18 e 30 meses. Foram utilizados o Questionário de Metas de Socialização-Objetivos Educativos e a Ficha de Registros da Tarefa de Comportamento Prosocial de Obediência. Os resultados indicaram: quanto mais as mães enfatizam “aprender a dar suporte aos outros” e “aprender a entender o sentimento dos outros”, seus filhos seguem os pedidos maternos. Sugere-se uma correlação significativa entre a resposta da criança na realização da tarefa e as metas de socialização das mães, ressaltando-se a importância de pais e educadores estabelecerem um campo propício para o exercício da prossociabilidade na infância.

Palavras-chave: socialização, comportamento pró-social, obediência

Metas Maternas de Socialización y Comportamiento Solicitado en los Niños

Resumen: Este estudio investigó posibles asociaciones entre variables relacionadas con metas maternas de socialización y manifestaciones de comportamientos solicitados en niños de comunidad rural de Brasil, para responder la siguiente pregunta: ¿Existe alguna correlación entre metas maternas y manifestaciones de conductas solicitadas en los hijos? Participaron 39 parejas (madre-hijo); los niños tenían 18-30 meses de edad. Se utilizaron los siguientes instrumentos: Cuestionario de Metas de Socialización-Objetivos Educativos y Formulario de Registros de Tareas de Comportamiento Prosocial de Obediencia. Los resultados indicaron que cuanto más las madres enfatizan “aprender a brindar apoyo a los demás” y “aprender a entender los sentimientos de los demás”, sus hijos siguen sus instrucciones. Se sugiere una correlación significativa entre la respuesta de los niños en realizar una tarea y las metas de socialización de las madres, destacando la importancia de que tanto padres como educadores establezcan un entorno propicio ejercer la prosocialidad en la infancia.

Palabras clave: socialización, conducta prosocial, obediencia

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Human development has been perceived as a phenomenon that permeates the course of a person’s life within a context that is physical, social, historical and cultural at the same time (Harkness & Super, 1994). This notion is also present in the research of other contemporary scholars, such as Keller (2022), who views development as a consequence of the interaction between biological inheritance and certain cultural factors, highlighting relationships involving reciprocal influence between the organism and the environment. Based on this

theoretical perspective, this study aimed at addressing the following question: Is there any correlation between maternal goals and the manifestation of requested behaviors in their children in a Brazilian rural context?

Authors such as Kağitçibaşı (2005), Keller (2022) and Ruela and Seidl de Moura (2007) stress that there are currently various studies conducted with the purpose of becoming better acquainted with the sociocultural characteristics of the contexts where children develop from birth. These authors indicate the way in which such contexts can be grasped from the perspective of Psychology and other sciences. This proposal has been presented as an essential condition for the theoretical and methodological progress of human development research, also contributing to the contextual analysis of educational practices in families and other socialization contexts, according to their particularities. For example, both the study by Bozicevic et al. (2021) on mother-newborn interactions and the one by Lavelli et al. (2019) with children aged from 4 to 12 weeks old considered the culturally specific characteristics of the participating families.

Harkness and Super (1994) suggested the concept of Developmental Niche, which highlights a theoretical viewpoint focused on a child's relationship with the environment in which he/she is reared, instructed and protected by his/her parents and/or other caregivers. The suggested model possesses a complex structure comprised by three interrelated and continuously interacting subsystems. The first subsystem involves the physical and social characteristics of the environment inhabited by the child; the second relates to the culturally imposed and regulated child-care and child-rearing practices employed; and the third deals with the child's caregivers' psychological traits, including child-related beliefs and values, socialization goals and strategies, and theories concerning childhood, child development and education (Ruela & Seidl de Moura, 2007).

From this theoretical perspective, parental ethnotheories are part of the third subsystem mentioned above. They are typified by an organized set of beliefs and values about child development that are implicit in the caregivers' daily activities and also in the explicit judgments, choices and decisions they make in relation to the children they look after (Harkness & Super, 1994).

Parental ethnotheories are thus considered domains that are representative of parenting strategies and include socialization goals (Keller, 2022). These goals, a more abstract and culturally constructed domain, refer to those that parents establish for the future of their children and the everyday practices they believe are essential to achieving such goals. It is important to highlight that socialization goals exert a direct influence both on parental behavior (Harkness & Super, 1994; He et al. 2021; Runge & Soellner, 2022) and on child development (Keller, 2022).

In various countries, socialization goals have been systematically researched as part of the contemporary literature concerning parenting beliefs, child-rearing practices and developmental paths (Köster et al., 2016; Ruela & Seidl de Moura, 2007). A study conducted by Lordelo et al. (2012)

sought to compare maternal socialization goals in different contexts. The study investigated 76 Brazilian mothers (from the state of Bahia) and 52 Norwegian ones, each of whom had at least one child aged between zero and six years old. The study revealed that the greatest differences were related to the values of autonomy in Norwegian mothers and to relational values in Brazil, and they were consistent with the ecological differences between both groups, where the Norwegian mothers had higher schooling levels, were older than their Brazilian counterparts and worked mainly outside their home. These results might be associated with the cultural disparities between both societies, but they could also be related to the current socioeconomic conditions.

Cultural considerations have emerged as a focal point in various research settings, including classrooms. For instance, Denham et al. (2021) conducted an observation and evaluation of teachers and preschoolers both in the United States and in Italy. Köster et al. (2016) also explored a cultural perspective on prosocial development by investigating how maternal task assignment relates to toddlers' requested behavior and helping between 18 and 30 months old in three different cultural contexts (rural Brazil, urban Germany and urban Brazil). Additionally, diverse approaches have been employed in different studies. In Brazil, studies have explored socialization goals and action strategies of parents of children with and without Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder – ADHD (Tavernard et al., 2019), affective exchanges and maternal goals (Bieler & Mendes, 2023) and comparisons between mothers and fathers on their children's socialization goals (Mendonça et al., 2021), as well as parents of children with cancer (Sant'Anna & Mendes, 2017). These surveys demonstrated the importance of conducting studies with diverse samples and of focusing on parents' culturally embedded socialization goals, as these goals significantly influence their socialization behaviors.

A number of research studies conducted within the cross-cultural perspective (Coppens et al., 2020; Kağitçibaşı, 2005; Keller, 2022; Liang et al., 2021; Runge & Soellner, 2022) have explored three different cultural self-models in order to investigate their influence on children's socialization and development. The first two models, namely the autonomous and relational ones, are considered more prototypical; in turn, the third model represents a hybrid combination of the first two (autonomous-relational). However, as suggested by Keller (2022), there are numerous potential ways to integrate both prototypical contexts, as they do not merely represent opposing dimensions, but rather signify two distinct yet representative environmental frameworks.

The autonomous cultural model stresses the self as unique and distinct and prioritizes personal goals, focusing on the needs and rights of the very person. In this model, autonomy and separation prevail, which are characteristics of post-industrial urban societies with high schooling levels. In contrast, the relational cultural model views the self as profoundly connected to the members of its group and prioritizes collective objectives, with a strong emphasis on social roles, responsibilities and commitments.

This cultural model type mainly involves heteronomy and interrelationships, which are typical attributes of rural environments structured around a subsistence economy (Mendes et al., 2019). The third model is the autonomous-relational cultural one (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2005), which blends the features of the first two, incorporating both autonomy and relatedness, whereby the self is characterized as autonomous in terms of its actions and as relational in terms of its interpersonal, emotional closeness: values such as obedience or connection to the family can drive personal growth. This model describes middle-class, urban and educated families in traditionally interdependent societies.

Developmental Psychology scholars have presently been engaging in research focused on the differences between these cultural models, aiming at empirically examining the importance of a context for understanding child development. Accordingly, such studies have been conducted in diverse socio-cultural environments (Harkness & Super, 1994; Lordelo et al., 2012). This is important because cultural models constitute independent dimensions with multiple combination possibilities, in addition to being integrated into the cultural dynamics of a group; in other words, they develop and change according to sociodemographic changes over time (Keller, 2022).

Consequently, based on the main assumptions by Kağıtçıbaşı (2005) and Keller (2022), the current article aims at contributing to research in this area, focusing on characteristics that define the relational model, whose main dimensions are heteronomy and interrelations.

As stated by Borges and Salomão (2015), mothers living in rural settings preserve traditions, taking primary responsibility for child rearing, as motherhood entails learning to competently care for infants, affording affection and providing opportunities for development. Besides rearing their children, mothers are also responsible for household chores, while fathers generally work away from the home, securing or supplementing family income (Ruela & Seidl de Moura, 2007). In this context, the aforementioned studies reveal that mothers generally do not tolerate reluctant behaviors on the part of their children. Furthermore, mothers' encouragement (e.g., praise) is essential for their children to internalize interpersonal responsibility (Köster et al., 2016, Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009), which in turn can stimulate prosocial behavior in situations where children are constantly engaged in chores geared toward the well-being of the other household members.

According to Keller et al. (2006), the socialization of prosocial development improves by way of continuous, dynamic interactions between children and their parents, siblings, peers, teachers and the culture to which they belong. Accordingly, it can be stated that, through prosocial behavior, children not only promote well-being, favorable welcoming and help for others but also perform, comprehend and undergo socialization experiences that will develop their abilities and help them understand the impacts of their attitudes on social interaction.

Cross-cultural research studies (Jukes et al., 2021; Köster et al., 2016) highlight the significance of understanding the concept of social responsiveness. Köster et al. (2016) underscore the existence of significant cultural variations in each person's ability to respond and their interpretation of whether someone requires assistance, with some cultures perceiving it as an interpersonal obligation (e.g., Hindu Indians) while others view it as a deliberate choice (e.g., Americans).

In rural environments, it is expected that beliefs, values, and consequently socialization goals, should be closely associated with conformity to norms, social roles and hierarchies. Emphasis is placed on obedience, respect, loyalty towards elderly family members and the cultivation of harmonious relationships. Keller (2022) further asserts that the relational cultural model fosters children's adherence to parental authority. Longitudinal evidence (Bueno et al., 2010) indicates that obedience behaviors are deemed important for a child's future adaptation in other contexts, such as school entry. Furthermore, empirical surveys suggest that engaging in prosocial behavior eases positive relationships with teachers (Coulombe & Yates, 2018), peers (Son & Padilla-Walker, 2019) and others.

Research conducted in rural communities shows how obedience and assuming responsibilities from an early age are behaviors highly valued by parents, for example: caring for younger siblings or helping with housework (Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009) and in routine activities (Nsamenang, 1992). These data corroborate an anthropological research study (Nsamenang, 1992) where it is verified that a child's behavior, such as obedience, is related to the responsibilities attributed to him/her according to their age, gender and cultural elements shared by the group.

In different cultural contexts, Keller et al. (2006) identified an association between obedience and prosocial behavior motivated by empathy at two years of age. In a longitudinal study conducted by Paz et al. (2022) with children aged from 18 to 36 months old, it was also possible to observe differences in the parents' concepts about the meaning of helping.

Based on an analysis of the aforementioned studies, we sought to demonstrate the importance currently given to interpersonal relations, parenting/caregiving roles (beliefs, values, practices) and context, which are considered elements that have been shown to exert an impact on child development. The current study aimed at examining the relation between maternal socialization goals and the requested behaviors of their children living in a Brazilian rural community. This is an intracultural study focusing on the correlation between maternal socialization goals and the requested behaviors of their children, valued in different cultural contexts. In this specific context, a significant correlation is expected between these variables due to the shared maternal goals in this rural area of Pará. Partial results related to this study have been published in Köster et al. (2016). The study protocol and data collection were approved in 2011 by the Research Ethics Committee of the Tropical Medicine Center belonging to Universidade Federal do Pará (Protocol No. 059/2011 CEP/NMT).

Method

Participants

The current study involved a convenience non-probabilistic sample comprised by 39 mother-child dyads consisting of mothers of all schooling levels aged between 17 and 48 years old ($M = 24.28$, $SD = 5.97$). Their children were aged between 18 and 30 months old ($M = 24$, $SD = 3.7$) and most of them were male (53%). It is worth emphasizing that only children that were living with their mothers and were reared by them at the time of data collection were included in this study. The participants that refused to sign the Informed Consent Form or indicated cognitive difficulties or inability to understand the research and its instruments were excluded.

During data collection, most of the mothers (46.2%) reported having only one child. With respect to schooling, it was found that most of the mothers had High School education (66.7%). Furthermore, most of the interviewed mothers (53.8%) were housewives. In such cases, they spent most of their available time on child rearing, as it was observed that 66.7% of the participating mothers devoted up to 12 hours a day on weekdays to such task and 84.6% reported devoting the same amount of time during the weekends. Regarding birthplace, the results indicate that both the children (89.7%) and their mothers (59%) were born (and continue to live) at the same locale, the municipality of Castanhal.

Apeú is a small district located approximately 70 kilometers East of Belém and six kilometers from the seat of the municipality of Castanhal. A word of indigenous origin (Tupi), Apeú means 'path of golden waters' due to the abundant yellow leaves found in the river, which served as a reference for the colonizers. Its predominant socioeconomic characteristics define it as a rural context, featuring low population density (up to 12,000 inhabitants) and large families living close together. The inhabitants' schooling level is low and their main livelihood is farm work (mainly manioc cultivation for flour production), but also derives from trade activities and from manufacturing tasks at factories located adjacent to the nearest urban area (municipality of Castanhal). The village of Apeú, as it is known by the local population, continues to undergo the changes identified during the data collection period, such as population growth and increased access to education for children and adults, albeit gradually.

Instruments

Sociocultural Sociodemographic Characterization Questionnaire - SSCQ (Vieira et al., 2010). This questionnaire consists of 25 questions concerning the sociodemographic information of both the parents/caregivers (age, schooling, occupation, birthplace and the place where they were reared) and the children (age, gender and birthplace). The questionnaire also included the following questions: What is the average number of daily hours of the child's interaction with the father? What is the average number

of daily hours of the child's interaction with the mother? How many people live in the house? How many brothers and sisters does the child have? (When answering the preceding question, please provide details as to the child's position in the birth sequence and their present age and gender).

Socialization Goals Questionnaire - Educational Objectives (adapted from Kärtner et al., 2010). This instrument consists of two scales: (a) the Autonomous Socialization Goals Scale, whose 11 items relate to the child's self-confidence and assertiveness; and (b) the Relational Socialization Goals Scale, which is made up of two subscales, namely: Prosocial behavior (11 items) and Obedience (7 items). Reliability of the instrument (Cronbach's alpha) was verified in the study by Köster et al. (2016), where three locations were compared: Münster (Germany), villages near Belém (Pará State, Brazil) and the city of São Paulo (state of São Paulo, Brazil), where Cronbach's alpha was above .76 for both scales in all three contexts.

With respect to filling out this questionnaire, the mothers were instructed to indicate the importance degree of each socialization goal they mentioned, according to a four-point Likert scale (I strongly disagree, I slightly disagree, I slightly agree and I completely agree).

Spontaneous Obedience Behavior Task - SOBT (Köster et al., 2016). The children's requested behaviors were recorded by way of observing the obedience task, in which each mother was requested to instruct her child to bring her two objects (cup, pen) from a specified location. The task was considered concluded when the child fulfilled the request or when the mother abandoned her efforts. The task recording form consisted of nine items, with the child's behavior and response time [minutes:seconds]. This assessment is made after observing the entire recorded scene of completing or giving up the task.

Procedures

Data collection. Data collection was initiated after due approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Tropical Medicine Center belonging to *Universidade Federal do Pará*, as per ruling No. 059/2011. During data collection, two experimenters conducted the task sessions at the homes of each selected family. The mothers of the participating children were asked to sign informed consent forms containing descriptions of the experiment's objectives and essential procedures. Furthermore, the observation method employed in the experiment involved minimal interference in the environment under study; consequently, the risks to the mothers' and children's physical and emotional integrity were also minimal. Moreover, a familiarization period aimed at establishing a closer researcher-participant relationship was applied, thus contributing to minimizing potential threats to the research participants' well-being.

The participating mothers were informed about the study objectives and about the importance of collecting data concerning their spontaneous interaction with their children in the household environment (implementation method,

storage and purpose). The first experimenter (E1), the research assistant and the child then played with an ordinary toy set for approximately 10-15 minutes. Subsequently, E1 applied the sociodemographic and socialization goals questionnaires and conducted the requested behavior tasks, while the second experimenter (E2) prepared the behavioral assessments and filmed the mother's and child's behaviors during the tasks. The procedures for data analysis and record keeping were the same as those adopted in Köster et al. (2016).

Data analysis. Mean values, standard deviations and percentages were used to describe the sociodemographic variables and socialization goals. Subsequently, for comparison purposes, the socialization goals were subdivided into two groups: autonomous and relational.

The analysis of the data concerning the requested behavior task was initiated with a transcription of the content of videos of the sessions in which the children's were observed performing the instructed tasks. The data collected were then classified according to whether the child performed or quit the task, which was to be interpreted as follows: (a) obeyed immediately (3 points), i.e., the child responded to the mother's request and concentrated on performing the task; (b) obeyed after briefly hesitating (2 points), i.e., the child did not interrupt his/her current activity (e.g., playing with another object) in order to comply with the mother's request; (c) obeyed after prolonged hesitation (1 point), i.e., the child turned away to perform other activities instead of following the mother's instructions; and (d) did not obey (0 points), i.e., the child's concentration on the task was discontinuous. Subsequently, the observational data were quantified and classified according to three age groups: (a) 18-21 months old; (b) 22-25 months old; and (c) 26-30 months old.

Ethical Considerations

The research protocol was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Tropical Medicine Center belonging to Universidade Federal do Pará, Protocolo: N. 059/2011 - CEP/NMT.

Results

In this section, we first present the results concerning the maternal socialization goals and the children's performance

of the obedience task. We then present the correlations between maternal socialization goals and the children's average performance in the obedience task.

Maternal socialization goals

At first, we grouped the goals in the Socialization Goals Questionnaire, made up of a list of phrases that indicate goals that parents will try to achieve in their children's development during the first three years of age, developed by Keller et al. (2006). We then calculated the average of the mothers' mean scores for two dimensions: goals autonomy and interdependence. Our findings revealed prevalence of relational socialization goals ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.46$) over autonomous socialization goals ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 0.58$).

The data also indicated that most of the goals that the mothers reported fully agreeing with were coherent with the relational model of the self, including learning to respect the elderly (74.4%), learning to obey parents (69.2%), learning to obey the elderly (69.2%), learning to do what parents say (56.4%), learning not to contradict parents (56.4%), learning to give some things to others (53.8%) and learning to help others (51.3%). In contrast, these mothers reported that they completely disagree with goals such as learning to occupy oneself on one's own (30.8%), developing independence (28.2%), learning to be independent (28.2%), learning to make decisions (25.6%) and learning to distinguish oneself *in one's group* (20.5%). These mothers spend most of their time taking care of their children; 66.7% of the participants devote 12 hours a day during the week to taking care of their children and 84.6% devote the same amount of time during the weekends.

Obedience behavior task

Table 1 presents the data we obtained based on the descriptive analysis of the obedience-task performance scores in relation to the children's ages. We found that children aged between 18 and 21 months old scored lower than those aged 22-26. Although to a lesser extent, they also scored lower than participating children aged 26-30 months old. We also observed that most of the children (61.4%) performed the task immediately, although 5% of them did not complete the entire task.

Table 1

Children's subjective performance of the obedience task

Age (months old)	n	Immediately		Slightly hesitant		Very hesitant		Task left uncompleted	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
18 – 21	14	5	12.8%	4	10.25%	3	7.69%	2	5.1%
22 – 25	11	9	23%	2	5.1%	0	-	0	-
26 – 30	14	10	25.6%	1	2.5%	3	7.69%	0	-

Maternal socialization goals and children's performance of the obedience task

We initially applied Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) to the "socialization goals" checkmark selected by the mothers when they filled out the questionnaires during data collection. The results shown in Table 1 reveal a significant and strong correlation ($r = 0.74, p < 0.01$) between the strategies that involve learning to help others (mother, siblings), learning to obey the elderly ($r = 0.68, p < 0.01$) and learning to respect the elderly ($r = 0.51, p < 0.01$). This correlation indicates that mothers who believe it is fundamental that their children should learn to help others during the first three years of life also encourage them to obey and respect their elders. Likewise, we found a significant correlation ($r = 0.69, p < 0.01$) between the following maternal goals: respect for parents, no misbehaving, giving some things to others, obeying the elderly and helping others when they are sad or distressed.

The data related to the "maternal goals" variables and the children's requested behavior categories were tested using Pearson's statistical correlation method (r). The results showed that the children's performance of the obedience task was significantly correlated with the maternal goals that involve learning to support others ($r = 0.33, p < 0.05$) and learning to understand others' feelings ($r = 0.37, p < 0.05$).

Discussion

There was a significant correlation between the children's responses to performing the obedience task and the socialization goals check selected by their mothers, namely "learning to support others" and "learning to understand others' feelings". There was a significant correlation between the children's responses to performing the obedience task and the socialization goals indicated by their mothers, namely "learning to support others" and "learning to understand others' feelings", characteristics highly valued and encouraged in environments with predominantly relational cultural trends (Köster et al., 2016; Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009). Along these lines, it can be perceived that constantly assigning such chores to young children is a gradual way of transmitting culture and internalizing values stressed by mothers, thus promoting an early notion of interpersonal responsibility in children and establishing a fertile ground for them to perform prosocial actions in their ecosocial environment (Keller, 2022).

The findings suggest that, as the participants are mothers living in rural settings, they appear to be predominantly tied to their family of origin. In the current study, it was observed that, as the mothers mostly selected socialization goals that are part of the relational cultural model, their child-rearing practices might favor strategies based on respecting norms and hierarchies that contribute to the harmonious functioning of their social unit (Kağitçibaşı, 2005; Keller et al., 2006). The adjacently cited studies also emphasize that, under such circumstances, family traditions tend to perpetuate themselves transgenerationally because mothers living in

the same cultural context, without the influence (or with a minimal influence) of other traditions, tend to favor the transmission of family values. In Apeú, external influences occur gradually as more people gain access to the Internet, mobile devices and the opportunity to study even in adulthood.

With respect to the occupations of the mothers participating in the current survey, approximately 54% reported that their activities focus on their households. This finding is consistent with the literature, which asserts that mothers living in rural settings perform domestic chores and rear their children, who stay with their mothers all day long; this dynamic begins to change when the children are enrolled in school and involve themselves in other family and community environments, while the fathers are responsible for working outside the home as farm laborers, factory workers or employees of businesses. Consequently, such data allows us to assert that, within the context of the current study, the mothers are mainly responsible for taking care of their children and family (Borges & Salomão, 2015), devoting a significant amount of their time to activities deriving from such responsibilities. This evidences the importance of the role mothers play in the psychosocial development of their children in contexts with predominantly rural characteristics, as the more time a mother spends with her child, the greater the likelihood that her beliefs, values and child-rearing practices will influence the child.

We draw the attention to the results of the descriptive statistical analysis of variables such as the mothers' ages, schooling levels and number of children reported during data collection. We observed that the mothers' ages varied from 17 to 48 years old, and most of them reported having Incomplete High School (38.5%) and only one child (46.2%). It can be perceived that such data are inconsistent with what the literature reveals in relation to the inhabitants of typically rural areas, namely: women in such settings tend to establish families of their own at a very early age (in their teens) and have low schooling levels and many children (Keller et al., 2006).

Based on this, the mothers' characterization data indicate that the context under study undergoes a transition process from a relational cultural model to the so-called relational-autonomous model, along the lines described by Keller et al. (2006). In other words, we believe that this context comes to the present time incorporating features of the autonomous model in order to merge them with the pre-existing, typically relational features. With the growing globalization of the economy, which integrates markets and stimulates circulation of people, beliefs and practices, transformations take place in the sense of building a cultural model that emphasizes the importance of an autonomous society; the independent self can be anticipated in all cultural environments.

In this sense, it can be perceived that the results of the current study are consistent with the literature on the subject matter, partly resembling the findings of earlier studies in this area (Keller et al., 2006; Lordelo et al., 2012). In the current study, as well as in others previously conducted by other researchers, the rural environment (which is close

to the prototype of a relational model) is characterized by greater physical closeness between people, whereby one would come to expect results suggesting that the children of mothers who live in such environment more frequently have the ability to get along well with each other, emphasizing helping others and respecting parents and elders.

Another noteworthy variable within the scope of this discussion relates to our observations of the obedience task. Our findings indicate that older children scored higher than their younger counterparts; they are also a little faster, in addition to more mature, which allows us to understand the environmental conditions and respond to the requested behaviors. Kochanska and Aksan (1995) assert that older children are more prone to presenting higher commitment and obedience levels than younger children do, and that this phenomenon could be an indication of the ability older children develop to internalize adults' teachings and incentives. However, the children aged from 1.5 to 2.5 years old in the current study already showed very high compliance levels.

In terms of children's prosocial development, recent studies (Keller et al., 2006; Köster et al., 2016) indicate the importance of involving them in everyday chores. Furthermore, physical stimulation of a newborn's body would also exemplify caregiver-infant interactions because it is associated with the early development of motor skills, which are important to enable children to help in household tasks.

Analyzing the results, we found that the children's performance of the obedience task is significantly correlated with the mothers' socialization goals for them, focused on social roles, duties and obligations favoring their group. Nonetheless, the results associated with the dyads' sociodemographic variables reveal that the context chosen for the study (district of Apeú) has been going through a transformation process involving a significant change in the sociodemographic profile of its population, and that this might entail serious implications in terms of defining the sociocultural model adopted by the families since, although the model is predominantly relational, it has been assimilating characteristics of the autonomous cultural model, a phenomenon that could expand the influence sphere of socialization goals such as learning to develop ideas, independence and self-confidence.

As to the limitations of the current study, we should mention the limited number of studies concerning maternal socialization goals and their implications in relation to day-to-day child-rearing and educational practices, and vice versa, taking as a reference the rural environment alone, within the Brazilian context and in the Amazon. Furthermore, recent studies have proposed comparing two or more contexts, opting for not conducting in-depth research concerning a specific environment alone, which in this case is the rural context. Nevertheless, as this type of research is still in its initial stages in Brazil, such limitation can perhaps be justified because specific studies of a given population or in a given region are still necessary, especially in the face of cultural diversity in Brazil, whether in rural or urban environments. They cannot be understood solely

based on this classification, as there are many ecological, social and cultural influences and differences. Another shortcoming that deserves attention relates to the limited sample size, thus requiring further studies that employ the proposed model and involve a larger number of dyads, also with the participation of mothers and fathers, caregivers and educators; in order to acquire additional data and conduct in-depth analyses concerning the research question within this specific context and even in other Brazilian contexts.

Among the limitations, behavioral tasks may not be sufficient to fully record the dyads' behaviors and interactions since, although designed to replicate everyday situations, they are influenced by the presence of a researcher and the child's own engagement, which can be easily distracted by even the slightest stimulus.

We emphasize that the current study can be considered useful for academic counseling purposes, both theoretical and practical. From the theoretical perspective we adopted, this study can serve to provide material for studies aimed at examining what mothers living in traditional communities think about their children's future and how strongly they are influenced by such prototypical contexts and/or by the transformations that are already culturally modifying such contexts. In practical terms, this type of study contributes to understanding children's socialization process in terms of the child-rearing and educational practices of families living in regions that are far from metropolitan areas. Such families are frequently stuck between being excluded from public child-development policies determined by the demands and objectives of contemporary Brazilian society and being systematically ignored in terms of their own needs and interests, which are in line with the lifestyle that has been lived by generations of the same family.

Thus, it is possible to understand that the constant assignment of daily tasks to young children represents a progressive mechanism of cultural transmission and internalization of values emphasized by mothers, which promotes in children an early sense of responsibility and interpersonal obligation in the researched context (Keller et al., 2006). These are important skills throughout childhood development in various contexts, such as school, highlighting the importance for parents and educators to establish a conducive environment for the exercise of prosocial behavior in childhood, guided by prevention initiatives and mental health promotion policies.

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