

BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS AND PROSOCIAL RESOURCES IN THE EVALUATION OF MOTHER AND TEACHERS

Nilson Rogério Silva ¹; Alessandra Turini Bolsoni-Silva ²; Sonia Regina Loureiro ³

ABSTRACT

Children's behavior problems can be internalizing or externalizing, with the latter being most commonly mentioned by parents and teachers as a nuisance factor. The aim is to compare assessments on indicators of behavior problems and prosocial resources in schoolchildren, based on the report of mothers and teachers, considering sex and level of school education as variables. In the present study, 100 teachers, 200 students and 200 mothers participated. For data collection, a characterization questionnaire and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire - (SDQ) were used. Mothers and teachers found significant statistical differences in the assessment of prosocial resources and behavior problems in all scales and in the total SDQ score. Mothers surpassed teachers in the identification of problems for boys, of more prosocial resources for girls, and of more emotional symptoms in the early years of schooling. The simultaneous assessment of prosocial resources and problems leads to preventive practices.

Keywords: Child Psychology; family; school.

Problemas de comportamiento y recurso prosocial en la evaluación de madres y profesoras

RESUMEN

Los problemas de comportamiento de los niños pueden ser *internalizantes* o *externalizantes*, los últimos, más comúnmente mencionados por los padres y profesores como factor de incómodo. Se tiene como objetivo comparar la evaluación de indicadores de problemas de comportamiento y de recurso prosocial de escolares, a partir de relato de madres y profesoras, considerando como variables el sexo y la escolaridad. Participaron del estudio 100 profesoras, 200 alumnos y 200 madres. Para la recolecta de datos se utilizó un cuestionario de caracterización y el Cuestionario de Capacidades y Dificultades - (SDQ). Se evidenció diferencias estadísticas significativas en la evaluación de los recursos adaptativos y problemas de comportamiento, por madres y profesoras, en todas las escalas y score total del SDQ. Las madres identificaron más problemas que las profesoras, para los niños, más recursos de socialización para niñas, y más síntomas emocionales en los cursos iniciales de escolarización. La evaluación simultánea de recursos adaptativos y problemas favorece prácticas preventivas.

Palabras clave: Psicología infantil; familia; escuela.

Problemas de comportamento e recurso pró-social na avaliação de mães e professoras

RESUMO

Os problemas de comportamento das crianças podem ser *internalizantes* ou *externalizantes*, sendo os últimos mais comumente mencionados pelos pais e professores como fator de incômodo. Tem-se como objetivo comparar a avaliação de indicadores de problemas de comportamento e de recurso pró-social de escolares, a partir do relato de mães e professoras, considerando como variáveis o sexo e a escolaridade. Participaram do estudo 100 professoras, 200 alunos e 200 mães. Para a coleta de dados utilizou-se um questionário de caracterização e o Questionário de Capacidades e Dificultades - (SDQ). Verificaram-se diferenças estatísticas significativas na avaliação dos recursos adaptativos e problemas de comportamento, por mães e professoras, em todas as escalas e score total do SDQ. As mães identificaram mais problemas que as professoras, para os meninos, mais recursos de socialização para meninas, e mais sintomas emocionais nos anos iniciais de escolarização. A avaliação simultânea de recursos adaptativos e problemas favorece práticas preventivas.

Palavras-chave: Psicologia da criança; família; escola.

¹ Universidade Estadual Paulista – Marília – SP – Brasil; nilson.silva@unesp.br

² Universidade Estadual Paulista – Bauru – SP – Brasil; bolsoni.silva@unesp.br

³ Universidade de São Paulo – Ribeirão Preto – SP – Brasil; srlourei@fmrp.usp.br



INTRODUCTION

The relationship between difficulties and competence in the development of tasks for schoolchildren is widely recognized and involves the socialization process and academic performance, which establish themselves as relevant indicators of competence for the accomplishment of tasks in adolescence and adulthood. Adaptation problems are common in childhood and adolescence and, in general, contribute to less quality of life, stress and suffering for individuals and their families as well as other negative consequences in their development. Such consequences include academic failure, involvement in risk situations, suicide, and so on (Valdez, Lambert, & Jalongo, 2011).

Concerning school activities, several studies have employed indicators of the problems of adaptation for children. One of these indicators is the presence of behavior problems that represent the most frequent difficulties schoolchildren must face, according to Achenbach et al. (2008).

Family and school are important environments for the development of skills and behaviors by children (Bolsoni-Silva, Marturano, Pereira, & Manfrinato, 2006). Thus, parents establish themselves as influential interlocutors and observers of the behavior of their children. Likewise, teachers might be considered natural surveyors of student behavior in the classroom context and that condition is due to the close proximity of teachers and students (Pas & Bradshaw, 2014).

The demand for new skills at school leads children to the necessity to develop a set of required competences for adaptation such as academic knowledge and behavioral competence (Linhares, Chimello, Bordin, Carvalho, & Martinez, 2005). In this scenario, the family plays a fundamental role by providing students with support in order to benefit their social and academic development and avoid behavior problems and complaints at school (D'Avila-Bacarji, Marturano, & Elias, 2005).

For the positive development of children, parental practices are of fundamental importance (Flett & Hewitt, 2013), with special recommendation for positive practices that combine affection and the establishment of limits for the teaching of behaviors, which might function as protection factors against behavior problems (Patias, Siqueira, & Dias, 2013). One example of educational strategy to be used is the availability of a stimulating family environment that contains elements that foster cognitive development (games, books), suitable physical spaces for studying as well as dedication and educational support for children (Ferreira & Barreira, 2010). On the other hand, negative practices are risk factors that lead to the emergence and/or maintenance of problems (Flett &

Hewitt, 2013). Likewise, other studies have referred to interactions established between professor and student as a source of problems (Berg-Nielsen, Solheim, Belsky, & Wichstrom, 2012). Consequently, the school and family environments represented by those occupying the positions of teachers and parents play a vital role, especially for schoolchildren, in the development of prosocial and academic behaviors and also in the stimulation of better adaptation to the presence and/or maintenance of behavior problems.

Behavior problems, according to the literature review realized by Bolsoni-Silva and Del Prette (2003), can be defined as deficits or behavioral excesses that undermine children's interaction with the environments in which they are inserted. The most mentioned of these environments are school and family. It is, therefore, a definition with a functional, biological and integrative vision, which is in accordance with the definition presented by the manuals of instruments for the assessment of behavior problems. One example of these instruments is the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire – Parents and Teachers Version – SDQ, which identifies cutoff points while indicating the frequency and the seriousness of behaviors that might cause interaction problems. However, it is necessary to understand the context variables that increase the chances for the appearance and maintenance of these difficulties. Interventions in order to prevent and/or treat behavior problems are fundamental.

It is possible to classify behavior problems as internalizing or externalizing. Internalizing problems are, for example, shyness, anxiety, and depression. Externalizing problems are expressed by means of disobedience, aggressiveness and opposition. Externalizing problems are the most commonly mentioned by parents and teachers as discomfort factors. Consequently, these problems underlie most of the complaints related to children's behavior. A great number of research works on determining variables and interventions is based on these behaviors (Pacheco & Hutz, 2009). Merrel and Harlacher (2008) described that the internalizing problems related to depression, anxiety, shyness and somatizations very often go unnoticed by people who are close to the children, especially because these problems are characterized by self-regulation and exaggeration in children's self-control.

Concerning the prevalence of diverse behavior problems, studies have pointed out that, when compared to girls, boys present more externalizing behavior problems (Landale, Lanza, Hillemeier, & Oropesa, 2013; Cosentino-Rocha & Linhares, 2013) whereas girls present more internalizing problems (Merrell & Harlacher, 2008; Cosentino-Rocha & Linhares, 2013) and higher scores in prosocial behaviors (Leman

& Bjornberg, 2010), although there is not a consensus regarding such data.

Studies realized with samples from the community have identified high rates of behavior problems in children with a higher frequency of externalizing problems such as aggressive, rebellious and antagonistic behaviors and internalizing problems such as attention deficit and emotional disconnection (Bolsoni-Silva, Levatti, Guidugli, & Marim, 2015). In a literature review realized by D'Abreu and Marturano (2011) in order to investigate the connection between externalizing behaviors and learning difficulties, at the *PsycInfo*, *Medline*, *Lilacs*, *Scielo* and *Web of Science* bases, from 1990 to 2006, the authors identified the combined occurrence of poor school performance and externalizing problems, influenced by unfavorable conditions at home and low socioeconomic levels. Such association hints at a negative prognosis and greater probability for comorbidities with psychiatric disturbances of antisocial behavior with subsequent evidence of psychosocial risk.

Otherwise, we emphasize the importance of studies that consider the combination of variables (Korsch & Petermann, 2014) as well as of informants (Korsch & Petermann, 2014; Kersten et al., 2016) for a better comprehension of the behavior of schoolchildren.

Depending on context and other people, children behave in different ways and their behavior might be interpreted as appropriate or inadequate (Korsch & Petermann, 2014). Thus, the school context in elementary school is rather complex due to the combination of diverse variables that interfere in the actions by the different actors such as teachers, students, parents and the institutional demands and expectations concerning the education and the socialization of children.

We have investigated relevant studies that employ assessments on the behavior of children by more than one examiner. In a review study on the psychometric properties of the SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire), Saur and Loureiro (2012) identified 51 articles, out of which only nine (17,6%) referred to the comparison of different surveyors including parents and teachers. The assessment of children's behavior by multiple surveyors, such as parents and teachers, has produced diverging results. Studies having parents and teachers as surveyors identified differences in the realized assessments. There were assessments in which the teachers were the ones who detected a greater frequency of behavior problems in children (Rudasill et al., 2014). In other assessments, the parents were the ones who identified a greater frequency of behavior problems (Rescorla et al., 2014; Stivanin, Scheuer, & Assumpção Junior, 2008; Boman et al., 2016).

Korsch and Petermann (2014) investigated the degree of agreement between parents and teachers in an assessment on the behavior of 160 children at kindergarten age in Germany (80 children with clinical degree for externalization and 80 from a control group, in both groups 54 boys and 26 girls), using the SDQ and the DISYPS-II (*Diagnostik-System für psychische Störungen nach ICD-10 und DSM-IV für Kinder und Jugendliche – II*) as instruments for the assessment of ADHD. The authors identified low levels of agreement between parents and teachers for the classification of the two groups of children; there were more correlations in the non-clinical group, without a significant difference in the assessment of the general score of the SDQ. Parents, when compared to teachers, reported more often problems concerning the behavior of children with externalizing problems. De Los Reyes et al. (2015), based on a meta-analysis study (341 studies published between 1989 and 2014), identified low and moderate correlation between the assessments of parents and teachers regarding externalizing and internalizing problems. However, most agreements related to externalizing problems.

According to the mentioned studies, it is possible to conclude that there is no consensus on the agreement of parents and teachers in the assessment on the presence of behavior problems in schoolchildren. Studies that simultaneously assess children's behaviors by means of both surveyors, parents and teachers, considering the gender and the level of school education of the children, are also scarce in literature (Stivanin et al., 2008; Ercan, Bilac, Ozaslan, & Rohde, 2015). The present study is in this category.

In this sense, the present study aimed to approach the reports on behavior problems and prosocial resources in schoolchildren. The sources of information were teachers and mothers, the two most important providers of development contexts in this period of the children's lives. Our general objective is to compare the assessments on indicators of behavior problems and of prosocial resources in students at elementary school, based on the reports of mothers and teachers while taking into consideration the gender and the school education level of the children.

METHOD

We propose a study of cross-sectional design and of comparisons between teachers and mothers as surveyors.

Ethical aspects

The study was reviewed and approved by the University's Research Ethics Committee according to decision CAAE 43187115.6.000.5398, number 1.021.194 of April 9th 2015. The schools, the teachers and the

mothers were acquainted with the research objectives and were also informed that the data obtained in the research was confidential and their participation was free from harm or loss. An informed consent form was presented to mothers verbally, in a written document and by group reading. A written consent was required for the participation of mothers and their children. Mothers were provided individual feedback on demand and health care was requested when necessary.

Characteristics of the study location and participants

The study was realized in municipalities of the central region of the state of São Paulo. The source of data was the Public Education System, especially Elementary Schools. We contacted 25 schools and 13 joined the research. 100 teachers, 200 students and 200 mothers participated in the study. The teachers constituted a sample of convenience of teachers from public elementary schools from the second to the fifth year. In order to be included in the sample, participants were supposed to be female and have at least two years of experience as teachers. The research excluded teachers who had been teaching at the school for less than six months, who had less than one year before retirement and who had taken sick leave in the previous year for a period of over 30 days.

The sample was constituted by teachers whose average age was 41.95 years (DP = 9.91). 80% were married, 12% had post-graduation degrees and, concerning the teaching profession, 81% had more than 6 years of experience. The average number of students per class was 25 in 79% of the classes. 39% of the teachers worked in more than one school at the same time with the predominance of 30 working hours per week (61%). Approximately 60% considered the working conditions (room temperature, ventilation, lights, physical space and availability of material resources) satisfactory or, sometimes, partially satisfactory.

Concerning the mothers, the average age was 34.5 years (dp=6,63). Most of them were married (64%), had over eight years of school education (78.5%), worked outside the home (60,5%) and had a family income of up to three minimum wages (66,5%).

The children were, on average, 8.2 years old (dp=1,31). 102 (51%) were girls and 98 (49%) were boys. Most of the children (63%) were in the second and third year. The other children (37%) were in the fourth and fifth year. Most of the children were not going through any sort of psychological or psychiatric treatment (83%) and were not continually taking any medication (92%).

Instruments

Sample characterization

General questionnaire – Teachers: it is an instrument for the gathering of aspects related to the organizational conditions of the study. It approaches personal data,

occupational data (profession, formation, activities realized at school, amount of practice time at the school and function), working conditions (workplace, working hours, classroom time, class-preparation time, available material and equipment, pedagogical resources, health problems, medications, work leave).

General questionnaire – Mothers: it is an instrument for the socio-demographic characterization of families. It approaches the following aspects: personal information (age, marital status, school education and address), family information (family composition, household characteristics, income and pensions), children information (age, school situation).

Assessment on children's behavior

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire – SDQ. It is an instrument developed by Goodman (1997) with validation for the Brazilian population by Fleitlich, Cortázar and Goodman (2000) with the objective to assess the behavior of children. The instrument can be used for free (website: www.sdqinfo.com) and has different versions for parents, teachers and young people who are at least 11 years old. In the present study, the parents and teacher's version was used. The questionnaire is made up of 25 items. 10 items concern capacities and 15 items are related to the children's difficulties. The instrument as a whole is subdivided into 5 scales (scales of prosocial resources, scales of emotional symptoms, scales of behavior problems, scales of hyperactivity and scales of relationship problems with classmates) containing five items each. The options for answers related to the items are: true, more or less true and false. The score happens by means of a Likert scale with variations between zero, one and two. Each one of these scales allows scorings from zero to 10 points. The total score, including categories such as borderline and abnormal, over 14 was considered to be an indicator of difficulties in the questionnaire by mothers. For teachers it was over 12. That criterion was adopted by most studies using the SDQ such as Ercan *et al.* (2015).

Procedures for collecting data

Initially, the researchers contacted the municipal bureaus of education in order to present the research project and request authorization to realize the studies in municipal elementary schools. Authorization was granted and the researchers proceeded by contacting school principals, by means of telephone calls, in order to set up meetings for the presentation of the study to pedagogical directors/coordinators and for the invitation of teachers to participate in the research.

After this agreement with school principals, students were selected by means of a raffle, their names randomly picked from the attendance lists of each class. Mothers were contacted by phone calls or

written messages taken home by the students in order to provide them with an explanation of the objectives of the research and invite them to take part in the research. The parents' authorization was made formal with the signing of a free informed consent term and the assessment questionnaires were applied.

Based on the teachers' participation in the study 200 students, regularly attending the referred schools, were included. The distribution was two children per classroom/teacher. The gathering of data from teachers happened at the schools by means of a schedule and the data from mothers was gathered at school or at their homes. In order to participate in the research, teachers were required to answer the questionnaires (General questionnaire – Teachers and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire – Teachers Version) orally and face-to-face for approximately ten minutes. Mothers who were willing to participate answered the General Questionnaire – Mothers and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire – Parents Version orally and face-to-face. The application, though, lasted ten minutes.

Data analysis and treatment

The first step was codification of the instruments according to technical regulations and the subsequent insertion of data into SPSS worksheets. There were group comparisons (test t for paired samples) considering the reports by mothers and teachers. In each one of the groups of mothers and teachers, the total score

and the SDQ subscales were compared considering the children's gender and school education (Test t for independent samples). The adopted significance criterion was $p \leq 0,05$.

RESULTS

In this section, we present data related to the frequency of difficulties in the reports by mothers and teachers, considering the distribution of the children by gender and school education level (Table 1). The comparison between the mothers' and the teachers' reports is in Table 2. Tables 3 and 4, for mothers and teachers, describe the results obtained in the comparisons by gender and school education level, respectively.

There is a high frequency of occurrences (Table 1) in the reports by mothers (70%) and by teachers (54%) concerning the total score and the specific scales. Mothers reported problems with similar frequency for both genders. However, there was an even higher frequency for the early years (2nd and 3rd year). Teachers reported more problems for boys in the early years of school education.

According to table 2, there are significant differences in the assessments of mothers and teachers for all scales and for the total SDQ score. Only relationship problems obtained higher averages according to the teachers. The other scales and the total score presented higher averages in the mothers' reports when compared to

Table 1. Frequency of difficulties concerning the Total Score and the SDQ categories, according to gender and school education level, according to the assessment of mothers and teachers (n = 200).

Difficulties SDQ	Boys	Girls	2nd year/3rd year	4th year/5th year	Total
Mothers					
Total score	69 / 4,5%	71 / 35,5%	91 / 45,5%	49 / 24,5%	140 / 70%
Emotional Symptoms	36 / 18%	46 / 23%	60 / 30%	22 / 11%	82 / 41%
Behavior problem	43 / 21,5%	32 / 16%	47 / 23,5%	28 / 14%	75 / 37,5%
Hiperactivity	30 / 15%	20 / 10%	31 / 15,5%	19 / 9,5%	50 / 25%
Relationship problems with classmates	43 / 21,5%	41 / 20,5%	54 / 27%	30 / 15%	84 / 42%
Prosocial resources	26 / 13%	9 / 4,5%	21 / 10,5%	14 / 7%	35 / 17,5%
Teacher					
Total Score	68 / 34%	40 / 20%	68 / 34%	40 / 20%	108 / 54%
Emotional Symptoms	22 / 11%	9 / 4,5%	21 / 10,5%	10 / 5%	31 / 15,5%
Behavior problem	25 / 12,5%	14 / 7%	26 / 13%	13 / 6,5%	39 / 19,5%
Hiperactivity	33 / 16,5%	11 / 5,5%	31 / 15,5%	13 / 6,5%	44 / 22%
Relationship problems with classmates	21 / 10,5%	18 / 9%	26 / 13%	13 / 6,5%	39 / 19,5%
Prosocial resources	36 / 18%	23 / 11,5%	33 / 16,5%	26 / 13%	59 / 29,5%

the teachers' reports.

According to Table 3, mothers and teachers reported with equal intensity behavior problems and hyperactivity more often for boys and the prosocial resources for girls. Also, for teachers the total score of difficulties was higher for boys. The other scales did not show any differences in the assessments (emotional symptoms and relationship problems).

Table 4 demonstrates that the children presented difficulties with similar frequency in the first and last years assessed by mothers and by teachers as well. Only the emotional symptoms were statistically different among the groups and they were more often reported

by mothers of children in the early years.

DISCUSSION

Different behavior patterns in the students can be observed by means of the characteristics of the experienced contexts with a highlight on the school and family environments since their rules can be rather distinct (Marturano et al., 2009; Ferreira & Barreira, 2010). Likewise, the interpretation of behaviors as adequate or indicative of problems can receive distinct assessments due to the standards established by the surveyors (Korsch & Petermann, 2014). Thus, there is a necessity to use different pieces of information in the assessment of the behavior of school children

Table 2. Comparisons in the reports by mothers and teachers on the children's behavior.

SDQ Categories	Mothers (n = 200) Average (DP)	teachers (n = 200) Average (DP)	t	p
Total score	19,98 (7,55)	16,43 (5,57)	-6,523	0,000
Emotional symptoms	3,30 (2,43)	2,50 (2,17)	-3,683	0,000
Behavior problems	2,48 (2,32)	1,66 (1,98)	-4,692	0,000
Hiperactivity	3,79 (2,79)	3,39 (2,41)	-2,020	0,045
Relationship problems with classmates	1,75 (1,78)	2,35 (1,97)	-3,972	0,000
Prosocial resources	8,06 (2,27)	7,14 (2,59)	-4,086	0,000

Table 3. Comparisons between the reports of mothers and of teachers on the children's behavior regarding the gender variable in the children.

SDQ Categories	Boys (n =98)	Girls (n = 102)	t	p
Mothers				
	Average (DP)	Average (DP)		
Total score	20,46 (7,75)	19,51 (7,37)	0,887	0,376
Emotional symptoms	3,13 (2,48)	3,46 (2,38)	-0,954	0,341
Behavior problems	2,81 (2,35)	2,16 (2,26)	1,989	0,048
Hiperactivity	4,34 (2,82)	3,26 (2,67)	2,758	0,006
Relationship problems with classmates	2,46 (1,87)	2,25 (2,06)	0,769	0,443
Prosocial resources	7,72 (2,57)	8,38 (1,91)	-2,062	0,041
SDQ Categories	Boys (n =98)	Girls (n = 102)	t	p
Teachers				
	Average (DP)	Average (DP)		
Total score	17,72 (5,72)	15,18 (5,15)	3,313	0,001
Emotional symptoms	2,80 (2,19)	2,22 (2,13)	1,901	0,059
Behavior problems	2,11 (2,26)	1,22 (1,57)	3,272	0,001
Hiperactivity	4,07 (2,55)	2,73 (2,07)	4,107	0,000
Relationship problems with classmates	1,83 (1,78)	1,68 (1,80)	0,594	0,553
Prosocial Resources	6,67 (2,69)	7,58 (2,42)	-2,501	0,013

Table 4. Comparisons in the reports by mothers and teachers on the behavior of teachers concerning the school education variable in the children.

SDQ categories	2nd year/3rd year (n = 126) Average (DP)	4th year/5th year (n = 74) Average (DP)	t	p
Mothers				
Total score	20,40 (7,54)	19,26 (7,56)	1,030	0,305
Emotional symptoms	3,56 (2,49)	2,86 (2,28)	2,001	0,047
Behavior problems	2,53 (2,53)	2,38 (1,94)	0,450	0,653
Hiperactivity	3,87 (2,84)	3,65 (2,71)	0,555	0,580
Relationship problems	2,29 (1,93)	2,46 (2,04)	0,594	0,554
Prosocial Resources	8,15 (2,16)	7,91 (2,47)	0,711	0,478
SDQ categories	2nd year/3rd year (n = 126)	4º ano /5º ano (n = 74)	t	p
Teachers				
	Média (DP)	Média (DP)		
Total score	16,61 (6,04)	16,11 (4,68)	0,615	0,539
Emotional symptoms	2,48 (2,37)	2,53 (1,81)	-0,135	0,893
Behavior problems	1,69 (2,06)	1,59 (1,86)	0,338	0,736
Hiperactivity	3,44 (2,43)	3,28 (2,38)	0,457	0,648
Relationship problems with classmates	1,79 (1,92)	1,68 (1,54)	0,476	0,634
Prosocial resources	7,24 (2,62)	6,96 (2,55)	0,740	0,460

while parents and teachers are considered potential surveyors in several studies (Stivanin et al., 2008; Saur & Loureiro, 2012, Korsch & Petermann, 2014; Kersten et al., 2016; Boman et al., 2016). The present study intended to compare the assessment of indicators of behavior problems and of prosocial resources in elementary school students based on the perception of parents and teachers.

Briefly, the discoveries of the present research allow us to affirm that there are statistical differences in the assessment of behavior by mothers and teachers in all scales and total score of the SDQ, in which the identified values were respectively 70% and 54%. The mothers produced the highest averages in the SDQ general score and in the scales of emotional symptoms (internalizing), behavior problems, hyperactivity (externalizing) and prosocial behavior. The teachers produced the highest averages in the scale for relationship problems with classmates. It is possible to observe a high frequency of problems reported by mothers and teachers according to the discoveries by Bolsoni-Silva et al. (2015) and the agreement presented by the reports of high frequency of hyperactivity and behavioral disorders (De Los Reyes et al., 2015) more often for boys (Bolsoni-Silva et al., 2015) and higher frequency of prosocial resources among girls (Leman & Bjornberg, 2010). In the early

years of elementary school, comparatively, the children experience more difficulties, a fact which has already been identified by Bolsoni-Silva et al. (2015), possibly because it is a moment of transition from kindergarten to a higher level, which demands from children interpersonal and academic skills that they have not developed yet.

In this sense, the education practices of parents (Flett & Hewitt, 2013) and teachers (Berg-Nielsen, Solheim, Belsky, & Wichstrom, 2012) could prevent the occurrence of such difficulties and facilitate social and academic development. However, teachers and parents do not always know how to deal with these issues. It is, therefore, up to school psychologists and other professionals to provide support to the learning process in order to avoid labels on the children and produce conditions that will guarantee the children's development. Boys might have more behavior problems when compared to girls but it is important to consider our culturally greater tolerance for the occurrence of aggressive, challenging behaviors in boys than in girls and the differences in the way boys and girls are raised (Vianna & Finco, 2009).

The figures for the frequency of problems were elevated in the present study, considering the composition of the sample randomly collected.

However, other studies also obtained high prevalence. The high occurrence is also a reflection of the methodological choice to consider borderline scores as difficulties, which was also observed in other studies. For example, the research conducted by Borsa, Souza and Bandeira (2011), with 140 parents of students from the third and fifth year of elementary school, on public and private schools in the city of Porto Alegre, using the CBCL, considered the clinical and borderline scores and identified 41.4% of the children with problems for internalizing behaviors and 32,9% externalizing behaviors, with a predominance for the internalizing ones and there were no statistical differences regarding the gender of the children and the scales of problems. D'Abreu and Marturano (2011), in a study with 103 children from six to twelve years old who were referred to a psychology service in the university, using the SDQ and the *Development and Well-Being Assessment* (DAWBA), identified a high occurrence of mental health problems. In the SDQ, 70% obtained clinical score and 12% obtained borderline score, which represented a total sum of 82% of risk factor. Concerning the DAWBA, 90% presented problems in some of the assessed areas.

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that, in the present study, the refusal of some mothers to participate in the research led to necessity to draw other names from the list and that was conducive to the inclusion of children who were already considered to have more indicators of behavior problems, which led their parents to be more willing to take part in the study. Bolsoni-Silva et al. (2015) identified a high occurrence of problems considering the clinical and borderline scores, which is also justified by means of the criterion adopted concerning the composition of the sample by recommendations of the teachers of the children, who had behavior problems or not.

In a research conducted by Stivanin et al. (2008) in Brazil and Boman et al. (2016), in Sweden, the authors identified that the parents mentioned with greater frequency problems in the SDQ scales. The study by Korsch and Petermann (2014), in Germany, while assessing the levels of agreement between parents and teachers, did not identify a significant difference in the assessment of the SDQ general score. Rescorla et al. (2014), based on the TRF and the CBCL, observed that parents were more assertive than teachers in the reporting of behavior problems.

Thus, the present investigation agrees with part of the reviewed studies, especially the ones that revealed the fact that families identified more behavior problems in children that in the assessment realized by the school (Boman et al., 2016; Rescorla et al., 2014; Stivanin et al., 2008). In this sense, the mentioned studies revealed that assessments on the behavior of children can be in agreement or in disagreement. Sometimes more

problems are identified by the parents and sometimes by the teachers. Diverse factors can contribute to such disagreements. Some examples of these factors can be the particularities of the studied samples, the country and its cultural aspects, the use of different instruments (detecting and diagnosis instruments), or even differences in the assessment standards of parents and teachers due to the demands of the school and family environments, which can be rather distinct.

Concerning gender, girls scored higher for prosocial resources in the opinion of mothers and teachers as well, which confirms results from previous studies (Leman & Bjornberg, 2010). Behavior problems were reported by mothers and teachers with higher frequency for boys, especially problems related to hyperactivity, which are considered externalizing behaviors. Previous studies have presented data that pointed at the same direction (Bolsoni-Silva et al., 2015; Boman et al., 2016; Landale et al., 2013).

In the study by Boman et al. (2016), in which only the ones that obtained abnormal scores in the SDQ were taken into consideration, most of the students who fit into the criterion for behavior problems were boys 73,2% presenting borderline and clinical scores. Ercan et al. (2015) produced similar results with boys (71,4%), and Bolsoni-Silva et al. (2015) identified 56.86% of the boys as clinical for behavior problems.

Stivanin et al. (2008) identified that parents and teachers pointed at boys as the ones who most commonly presented behavior problems such as hyperactivity and relationship issues with classmates. Emotional problems were more common among girls, especially in teachers' assessments, which was not confirmed in the present research. In a study realized by Cosentino-Rocha and Linhares (2013) there is a higher occurrence of externalizing behavior problems for boys and internalizing behaviors for girls, which was confirmed by the present investigation regarding externalizing behaviors. Bolsoni-Silva, Silveira, Cunha, Silva and Orti (2016) used the TRF clinical and borderline scores as clinical and also identified a higher frequency of behavior problems and greater difficulties in the adaptation functions of boys when compared to girls. Thus, the mentioned studies are consistent in pointing at boys as the ones who presented higher frequency of behavior problems, especially externalizing ones.

Concerning the levels of school education, mothers and teachers were in agreement by not identifying differences among the stages of school education, except for emotional problems that were more frequent for initial years from the mothers' point of view. Boman et al. (2016) also observed that 62.5% of the students with behavior problems were 8 years old, which corresponds to the average age of students in the second year. In this sense, the studies indicated a

predominance of behavior problems among students of the early years with a tendency to present fewer problems in the following years, which hints at a gradual adaptation to the school environment, something that was not identified in the present study.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study compared the assessment on socialization resources and behavior problems in elementary school children by mothers and teachers in accordance with their relevance for the children at this stage in the family and school environments. It was observed in all scales and in the total score, with statistical significance, that mothers identified more problems than teachers did, especially for boys. They also identified more socializing resources among girls. Only the mothers identified emotional problems in the initial years of school education.

The use of detecting instruments with schoolchildren in order to identify possible indicators of behavior problems leads to an early identification of difficulties, which benefits referrals and preventive interventions.

Although the school and family environments nurture distinct behaviors and skills, since they present different patterns of behavior and personal interactions, both contexts demand adaptation responses, of which the children's repertoire is still being developed. That fact might end up producing behavior problems in different areas and that, when detected, indicate points to be observed. Literature has emphasized that externalized behaviors tend to receive more attention by parents or teachers, especially concerning boys. That leads us to a reflection on the different ways of education and behavioral control regarding gender. In this sense, cultural patterns might amplify our comprehension of the adequacy of a behavior or the lack of it when it comes to the differences between boys and girls, which can be the object of future investigations.

The present study has used a convenience sample but it was a rather robust one. It involved the assessments of 100 teachers and 200 mothers, all systematically chosen. The study also included an equivalent number of boys and girls. That provides data with a certain relevance but it does not give them the generalizable status. The research has limited itself to the reports by mothers and teachers. No other sources of information such as the observation of behaviors were employed. That could be a suggestion for future studies that shall include other sources of information such as the children themselves and their fathers (male parents). Also, there were no assessments on the interactions between parents and children and between teachers and students, or on the academic performance of students. Such aspects can be approached in future researches.

We consider that the most important contribution of

the present research was the simultaneous assessment of prosocial resources and indicators of behavior problems by mothers and teachers. This theme lacks further investigation and the discoveries of literature are inconclusive.

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