



# Well-being and Religious Coping in Brazilian Children

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Community Psychology Research Group (GPPC) - BRAZIL

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# INTRODUCTION

- This research theme has emerged from the interest of the Community Psychology Research Group (GPPC / UFRGS) to investigate the well-being of children from the inclusion of other variables, among which spirituality
- For this matter, it was necessary to define the concept of spirituality in childhood
- In order to comprehend how children understand the concept of spirituality, we conducted a qualitative study with children aged 8-10 years, with the aim of investigating the meanings they attributed to spirituality

(Strelhow, Paradiso, Sebold, Bedin & Sarriera, 2011)

# INTRODUCTION

- Children's responses have highlighted the beliefs, religious practices and the use of religion and faith as a resource to cope with difficult situations
- For example, the children said that "*religion makes us stronger*", and gave examples of their own experiences with difficult situations (such as illness or death of family members), which led us to the interest of studying specifically the use of religious coping strategies and its relation to personal well-being

# INTRODUCTION

## PERSONAL WELL-BEING

- Conceptualized as feeling good or not, along the life cycle overall and not only in occasional moments of life
- Can be understood as a reciprocal relationship between internal aspects (psychological) and its external interactions with other people and the context (psychosocial)

(Casas , 2010; Cummins, Eckersley, Pallant, Van Vugt & Misajon ,2003)

# RELIGIOUS COPING

➤ The use of strategies related to religion in coping with stressful situations (Pargament, 1997)

➤ Coping strategies can be grouped into:

- *Positive strategies*

Related with positive outcomes (health, quality of life)

- *Negative strategies*

Related with negative outcomes (depression, anxiety)

(Benore, Pargament & Pendleton, 2008; Koenig, Pargament & Nielsen, 1998)

➤ Researches have shown consistent correlation between religious coping strategies and well-being (Folkman, 1997; Pargament, Smith et al., 1998)

# RELIGIOUS COPING

➤ The utilization of religious coping and its possible relation with positive psychological aspects are mainly investigated in adult populations

(Faria & Seid, 2006; Panzini & Bandeira, 2007; Pargament et al., 2005; Pargament, Smith et al., 1998)

➤ There are just a few studies that approach this construct in childhood, especially in Brazil

(Benore et al., 2008; Ezop, 2002; Volkenant, 2011)

# OBJECTIVE

- This study aims to evaluate the relation between personal well-being and the use of strategies of religious coping in Brazilian children.



# PARTICIPANTS

**TOTAL OF PARTICIPANTS**  
1117 children aged 9 to 13 years  
( $M = 10.96$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ )

➤ **Five cities in the State of Rio Grande do Sul**

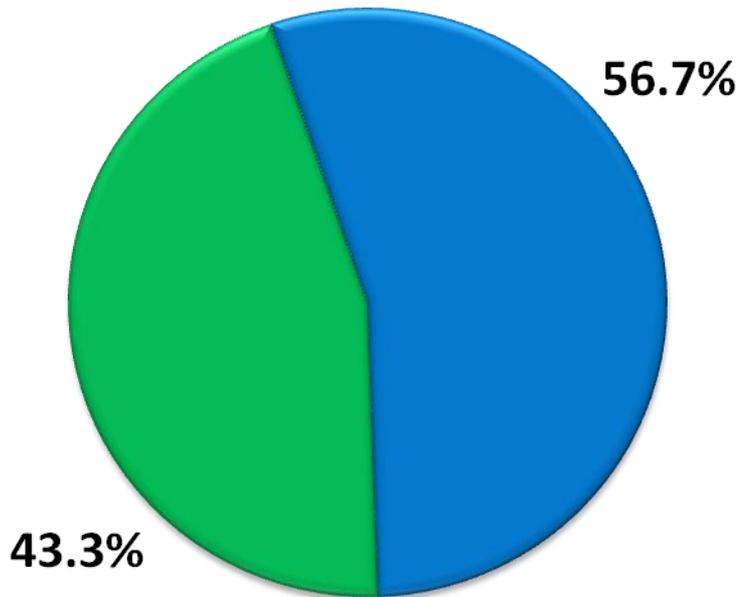
- Porto Alegre
- Passo Fundo
- Rio Grande
- Santa Maria
- Santa Cruz do Sul



# PARTICIPANTS

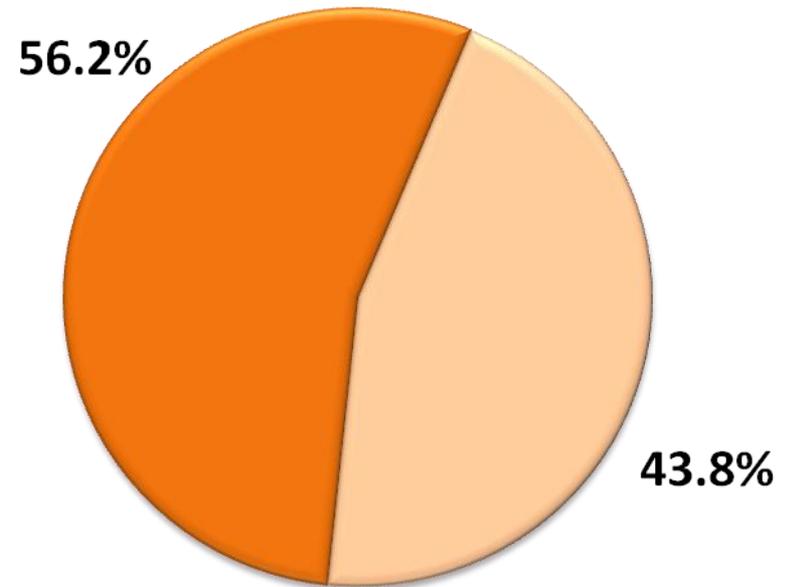
## SEX

■ Boys ■ Girls



## TYPES OF SCHOOLS

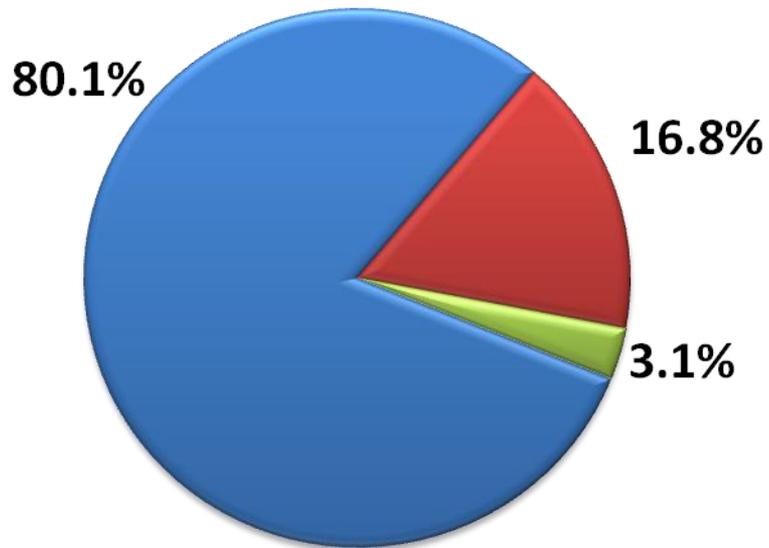
■ Public School ■ Private School



# PARTICIPANTS

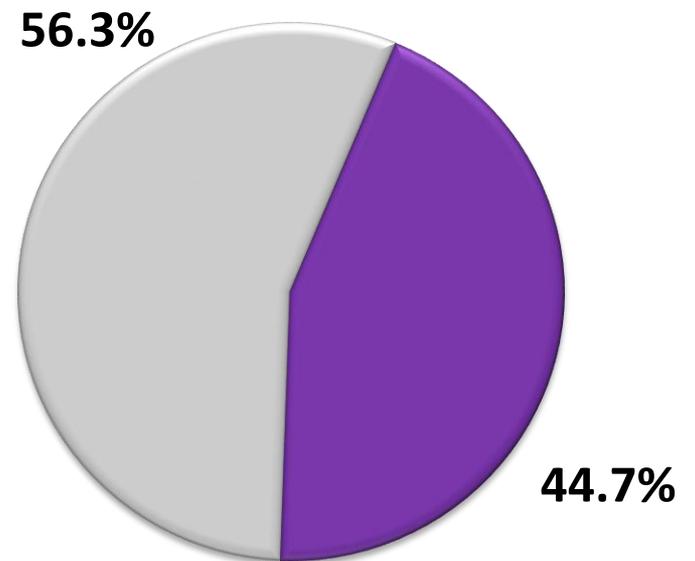
## CHILDREN AND RELIGION

- Identified one religion
- No religion
- Identified more than one religion



## RELIGION

- Catholic
- Others



# INSTRUMENTS

## Personal Well-being Index - School Children (PWI-SC)

(Cummins & Lau, 2005)

- Adapted by International Society for Child Indicators' research team for the international survey of Children's Well-being (ISCWeB)
  - Assessment of children's satisfaction with general aspects of life
  - The PWI-SC consists of seven items: **standard of living, health, achievement, interpersonal relationships, security, feeling part of the community and future security**
  - The PWI's *Cronbach's Alpha* for the Brazilian children was .70

# INSTRUMENTS

## Children's Religious Coping Scale (CRC)

(Dupre, 2008)

- This scale was adapted and validated for Brazil  
(*Cronbach's alpha* = .90)
- It is composed by 31 items that assesses strategies in two dimensions: positive (19) and negative (12) coping

# INSTRUMENTS

## Children's Religious Coping Scale (CRC)

(Dupre, 2008)

➤ Each dimension is constituted by **three factors**:

**Positive Coping** (*Cronbach's alpha* = .92):

1. **Belief in God's Support** (i.e. I think God is always with me; I think God is watching over me)

2. **Search of Religious Institution** (i.e. I go to church/temple/synagogue; I read the holy book of my religion)

3. **Intercession** (i.e. I ask others to pray for me; I think my family and friends are praying for me)

# INSTRUMENTS

## Children's Religious Coping Scale (CRC)

(Dupre, 2008)

**Negative Coping** (*Cronbach's alpha* = .81):

1. **Discontent with God or Others** (i.e. I get angry with God; I think people in the Church/ Temple/ Synagogue blame me for that)
2. **Negative Reappraisal of Meaning** (i.e. I tell myself that God tried to help me, but it didn't work; I wonder if God is angry with me)
3. **Punishing Reappraisal** (i.e. I think God did this because I was a bad person; I think maybe God is punishing me)

# RESULTS

Table 1. Multiple Linear Regression Analyzes between Personal Well-being and Factors of the CRC Scale

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE B</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
Belief in God' s Support	.237	.050	.188	4714	< .001
Punishing Reappraisal	-.140	.036	-.127	-3853	< .001
Intercession	.154	.043	.145	3608	< .001
Discontent with God or Others	-.108	.045	-.081	-2421	.016

R = .328

R<sup>2</sup> = .108

R<sup>2</sup> adj. = .104

Dependent Variable: Personal Well-being Index. Stepwise Method.

# DISCUSSION

- The results point to relations between religious coping and well-being in children
- The results confirmed what has been pointed in other studies
  - PRC correlated positively with well-being
  - NRC correlated negatively with well-being
- It should be noted that the explained variance of coping strategies on well-being is low

- This study advances the research in the field because it identifies among the evaluated strategies those that contribute to the participants' well-being
- The strategies related to the belief in the support and protection of God are predictors of greater well-being. This association has already been reported in previous studies (Mamede-Neves, 2005; Pendleton et al. , 2002)

- Feeling dissatisfied with God and punished by him, although it represents a relationship of conflict with God, also refers to individual experience of religiosity

(Pargament, 1997)

- The strategies that entered in the regression model are related with the relationship with a divine, that characterizes the experience of religiosity. This relationship doesn't depend of a religious institution

- The religiosity of children provides different thoughts and behaviors strategies in which children engage in coping with stressful situations, and this engagement seems to be related to their well-being
- This study highlights the holistic view from Psychology in evaluation of the health and quality of life, including the spiritual dimension, beyond the biological, psychological and social dimensions (Sarriera, 2004)



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**THANK YOU!**

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