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# Factors Favorable for the Learned Optimism in Preadolescence

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**Abstract**: Prior research suggested that the learned optimistic explanatory style is positively associated with greater satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, a more effective approach of life stressors, better physical health and work productivity, less vulnerability to depression and also higher academic and athletic performances. Our research deals with how are learned optimism and learned pessimism predicted by academic, social and emotional self-efficacy, perceived autonomy-based parenting style, perceived control-based parenting style and proactive coping. Participants were 760 students (467 girls) - 12-year-old (20.5%), 13-year-old (31.8%) and 14-year-old (47.6%) – who voluntarily participated. They answered the questionnaires with which the research variables were operationalized. The present study contributes with its large number of participants to an overview of the factors that predict learned optimism and learned pessimism. Results indicated the importance of social self-efficacy, proactive coping and perceived control-based parental support in predicting learned optimism. Also, this paper shows that high learned pessimism coincides with high levels of difficult family situation (e.g. single-parent family) and reduced strength of social self-efficacy and academic self-efficacy, proactive coping and perceived control-based parental support. Important implications of this empirical research should be considered by social emotional learning programs for students, parents and teachers.

**Keywords:** *learned optimism; learned pessimism; self-efficacy; proactive coping; perceived autonomy-based parenting style; perceived controlling parenting style.*

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## 1. Introduction

### *1.1. Learned optimism - conceptual definition*

Learned optimism derives from the theory of learned helplessness (Abramson et al., 1978) and targets the mechanisms that underlie expectations more than expectations directly. Depending on the way in which people explain various causes of the events that have already taken place in their lives, their expectations related to the future are derived (Seligman et al., 1995). A pessimistic explanatory style brings the individual to attributing past unfavorable results to causes that are internal to the person, and are manifested stably and globally (Forgeard & Seligman, 2012). When it comes to determining attributional style, learned optimism theory implicitly emphasizes negative outcomes. Therefore, from the perspective of learned optimism, optimistic goal-directed cognitions aim to distance the person from high-stakes negative outcomes (Lopez et al., 2018).

### *1.2. The antecedents, the benefits and the psychological correlates of learned optimism.*

Numerous variables proven to be strongly interconnected with learned optimism stimulated the research. A wealth of results speaks of the fact that the learned optimistic explanatory style goes hand in hand with high school and sports success, with an increase in work, with satisfactory relationships, better resistance to stress through a more effective approach to stressors, a reduced risk for depressive symptoms (Seligman et al., 1995) and stronger somatic health (Peterson, 2000). As a reverberation of these studies, interventions based on learned optimism have been developed, with cognitive and behavioral techniques, the change proving possible not only in children but also in adults (Reivich et al., 2007).

### *1.3. Self-efficacy*

It is of great importance to the well-being of adolescents that they trust in their ability to cope with the difficulties that life throws at them (Tak et al., 2016). Self-efficacy is the psychological parameter that expresses this confidence, according to Bandura (1997), its definition is "the belief in one's own abilities to perform the actions that are needed to obtain a desired goal". These cognitions can vary across different domains (Tak et al., 2016).

Adolescence brings changes in the life domains that could also affect the levels of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy correlates negatively with depression (Bandura et al., 2003) and positively with self-esteem and optimism

(Schwarzer, 1994). These findings show the importance of research on the association between learned optimism and the academic, social and emotional categories of self-efficacy.

### *1.3.1. Academic self-efficacy*

Academic self-efficacy is defined as the person's confidence in their own relevant academic ability (Suldo & Shaffer, 2007) and involves the ability to create an environment conducive to learning (Bandura et al., 2003). A low level of academic self-efficacy perception can lead to the risk of consuming substances, of developing uncontrollable, offending behavior, of having symptoms of depression or school phobia (Bandura et al., 2003; Muris, 2002). Caprara et al. (2008) demonstrated that at the age of adolescence, most children feel a reduction in perceived self-efficacy regarding tasks specific to the academic environment. The role of gender in observing academic self-efficacy has of course been explored and contradictory results are found. However, some studies show that girls have higher values for this variable (Bacchini & Magliulo, 2003; Saunders et al., 2004) and at the same time higher values for school results (Bandura et al., 2003; Suldo & Shaffer, 2007).

### *1.3.2. Social self-efficacy*

Social self-efficacy is a name for beliefs about the ability to cope with social challenges (Bandura et al., 1999), to create and maintain social relationships (Suldo & Shaffer, 2007), to behave in an assertive manner, to perform adequately in the social environment and to speak to unknown persons (Tak et al., 2016).

When the levels of social self-efficacy were compared according to the gender criterion, different results were obtained. For example, in a study (Coleman, 2023) conducted with the involvement of a group of 10-12 year old children as participants, social self-efficacy was higher in girls, while in another study no significant differences were obtained in function of gender (Bacchini & Magliulo, 2003). It was found that adolescents who have little support from parents and friends and colleagues or who even have conflicts with their parents, have a significantly higher level of depressive symptoms (Jaycox et al., 2009), and social self-efficacy is also a predictor of social phobia and depression (Bandura et al., 1999; Muris, 2002).

The attributional style is a result of social influences, of experiences lived in interactions with the social environment (Lopez et al., 2018), therefore it makes a lot of sense to analyze social self-efficacy in relation to learned optimism.

### *1.3.3. Emotional self-efficacy*

The ability to exercise control over unpleasant emotions and associated thoughts is desirable (Muris, 2001; Tak et al., 2016), and one's confidence in having this ability is called emotional self-efficacy. A good level of this variable is usually measured in people who resist difficulties better. They are people who reduce their stress level, depressive-type symptoms and who manage to make adaptive decisions at important moments (Bandura et al., 2003). From the perspective of gender differences, it seems that boys have higher levels of this parameter called emotional self-efficacy (Bacchini & Magliulo, 2003) which negatively predicts both anxious and depressive symptoms (Muris, 2002; Muris et al. 2016; Suldo & Shaffer, 2007).

### *1.4. Proactive coping*

As for an established definition of coping, that is that of Lazarus and Folkman (1984). They consider that the endeavor to manage requests or difficulties coming either from the body's external environment or from its internal environment, through cognitive or behavioral strategies, is what is understood by the notion of coping (Folkman et al., 1986). Proactive coping is the sum of efforts made to facilitate the achievement of developmental goals (Schwarzer & Luszczynska, 2008). Coping becomes goal management, not risk management (Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002). Taking responsibility for influencing future events is the essence of proactive attitude (Reuter & Schwarzer, 2009). Prior research has shown that proactive attitude and proactive coping correlate positively with optimism, locus of control, life satisfaction, social support, positive affect and self-efficacy (Greenglass, 2002; Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009; Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002). Considering the previous results, it is crucial to verify the connection between proactive coping and types of self-efficacy among students.

### *1.5. Perceived parental style*

Among the environmental factors that contribute to the formation of children's attributional style, parents play an essential role (Forgeard & Seligman, 2012). This leads us to investigate the correlation between learned optimism and perceived parental style. Baumrind (1971) identified three parenting styles: authoritarian, permissive and authoritative, to which Maccoby and Martin (1993) added the disengaged style.

Three bipolar dimensions of parenting style by Baumrind (1971) were detected as predictive of youth outcomes: (1) from the extreme

parental acceptance to the extreme rejection, (2) from the extreme structured mode to the extreme permissiveness of parent, and (3) from the extreme autonomy support to the extreme of controlling parenting style (Barber et al., 2005; Steinberg et al., 1989; Mageau et al., 2015).

According to Soenens and Vansteenkiste (2010), the heuristic framework that could help to better understand these dimensions of parenting style is that of self-determination theory. This theory of Deci and Ryan (2012) investigates the extent to which human behaviors are autonomous or self-determined. Moreover, the self-determination theory indicates the importance of personal and contextual factors that influence intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2012). In this sense, defining the concept of basic psychological needs is of greatest importance, self-determination theory highlights three universal psychological needs - autonomy, competence and connectedness (Deci & Ryan, 2012). It is absolutely excluded that an optimal level of healthy development will be reached if basic needs and their satisfaction have been neglected (Deci & Rain, 2012). Numerous conclusions of the studies indicate that a good level of satisfaction of basic psychological needs is the basis of well-being (Costa et al., 2015; Reis et al., 2000; Sheldon et al., 1996).

The parent who supports the child's autonomy certainly has a parenting style that responds well to their basic needs (Grolnick et al., 1997). Parental autonomy support refers to parents' encouragement of their children when they act on the basis of their own will, not directed or constrained (Soenens et al., 2007). Parents who support autonomy take into account the child's perspective, show respect for his needs and feelings, encourage initiative and personal exploration, offer him rational arguments and the possibility of choice (Costa et al., 2015). Mageau et al. (2015) operationalized parental support for autonomy through these 3 dimensions: providing rational arguments, providing choice and acknowledging feelings. In strong contrast to the autonomy-supportive parenting style there is the controlling parenting style, which, according to the self-determination theory, characterizes parents who pressure their children to adopt certain behaviors and certain behaviors or emotional reactions (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010).

## 2. Problem statement

The research carried out by Mabbe et al. (2018) show that autonomy-supportive parenting style is extremely beneficial for adolescents and their development. In contrast to this, the risk of behavior problems or

even psychological disorders is high when the parents' style in relation to their own children is controlling, inhibiting autonomy (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010).

## 3. Research questions

In this context, the research question is: How are learned optimism and learned pessimism predicted by academic, social and emotional self-efficacy, perceived autonomy-based parenting style, perceived control-based parenting style and proactive coping?

## 4. Purpose of the study

The main aim of the research is to investigate the links between learned optimism, learned pessimism, self-efficacy (academic, social and emotional), perceived autonomy-based parenting style, perceived control-based parenting style and proactive coping in preadolescents.

## 5. Research methods

The dependent variables are learned optimism and learned pessimism and the independent ones are social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, emotional self-efficacy, proactive coping, perceived autonomy-based parenting style and perceived controlling parenting style. Our study has two hypotheses, as follows:

Hypothesis 1. Academic, social and emotional self-efficacy, proactive coping, perceived autonomy-based parenting style and perceived control-based parenting style are positive predictors of learned optimism.

Hypothesis 2. Academic, social and emotional self-efficacy, proactive coping, perceived autonomy-based parenting style and perceived control-based parenting style are negative predictors of learned pessimism.

### *5.1. Instruments*

*Learned optimism* and *learned pessimism* were measured with *the Children's Attributional Style Questionnaire - Revised* (Thompson et al., 1998). The CASQ-R comprises 24 items that describe hypothetical events, each of which can be explained in two ways. 12 items measure the positive attribution style and 12 the negative attribution style of 8-15 year olds. Among the 12 events, 4 items target the internal-external dimension, 4 items assess the stable-unstable dimension and 4 items address the specific-global dimension. Cronbach's alpha coefficients obtained for learned optimism and learned pessimism were < 0.70. In other previous studies the internal consistency of the CASQ

for learned optimism had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.36 (Gherasim et al., 2012), 0.41 (Butnaru et al., 2010) or 0.62 (Thompson et al., 1998), and learned pessimism had a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.36 (Butnaru et al., 2010) or 0.55 (Thompson et al., 1998). Being a scale with dichotomous items, fidelity can be measured using the McDonald's omega coefficients or the Kuder-Richardson method. In this study, McDonald's ω coefficient for learned optimism was 0.41, and for learned pessimism 0.52.

*Self-efficacy (academic, social and emotional)* were measured with *the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children* (Muris, 2001). It contains 24 affirmations about three areas: academic self-efficacy (the perception of the capacity to do well when it comes about academic tasks and exhibit suitable studying practices; for example: "How well can you get teachers to help you when you get stuck on schoolwork?", social self-efficacy (perception of the aptness to create relationships and maintain them in good understanding; for example: "How well can you express your opinions when other classmates disagree with you?") and emotional self-efficacy (the perception of the potential to run unpleasant feelings, for example: "How well do you succeed in cheering yourself up when an unpleasant event has happened?"). Each subscale is composed of 8 items. Participants appraise to what extent the description in each statement is suitable for him, using a scale where 1 means *not at all* and 5 means *very well.* The total score for each subscale is calculated by summing the scores obtained for each item. Internal consistency reported by the authors was 0.88 for overall self-efficacy and between 0.85 and 0.88 for subscales (Muris, 2001). For the present work, the internal consistency of the academic self-efficacy subscale was 0.76, that of the social self-efficacy subscale was 0.71, that of the emotional self-efficacy subscale was 0.76, and the overall consistency was 0.85.

*Proactive coping* was assessed using the *Proactive Coping subscale of the Proactive Coping Inventory* (Greenglass et al., 1999), which measures general coping reactions, thoughts, and behaviors related to goal setting and achievement. The group of items with which this concept is operationalized consists of 14 statements about goal setting autonomously and about goals related to self-regulation. We continue to exemplify with 2 of the affirmations from the list of items from this variable: "I always try to find a way to work around obstacles; nothing really stops me." and "I like challenges and beating the odds." The participants in the research were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with each item, on a 4-point Likert scale, where 1 = not at all true, and 4 = completely true. Respondents' score was the sum of their responses to the 14 items. High scores indicate high levels of proactive coping. There are already many studies that verified

the psychometric qualities of the proactive coping subscale, which proved to have very good fidelity and validity (Greenglass, 2002; Greenglass et al., 1999). The internal consistency in the present study was 0.79, which is very good and similar to what was previously reported, for example values comprised between 0.79 and 0.85 in Greenglass et al. (1999).

*Perceived parental autonomy-based support* and *perceived parental control-based support* were measured using the *Perceived Parental Autonomy Support Scale* (Mageau et al., 2015). With the help of this scale, adolescents' perceptions of parental style are measured, operationalized through parental support of autonomy and parental psychological control. The dimensions of parental support for autonomy were: offering rational arguments, offering the possibility to choose and recognizing feelings, each represented by 4 items (12 items in total). The dimensions of parental psychological control were: guilt-inducing criticism, performance pressure, and threat of punishment, each represented by 4 items (12 items in total). Items from the original version were transposed to the present tense and did not separately measure perceptions of maternal/paternal parenting style. The children involved in the study were asked to think about their own parents and to tick a number from 1 to 7 (strongly disagree; strongly agree), as reactions to each statement of the questionnaire. An example of item is "When my parents asked me to do something, they explained why they wanted me to do it." The 12 items measuring parental psychological control were recoded, with the total result derived from summing the items of the dimensions. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.90 for both dimensions. The internal consistency of the entire scale was 0.92. The instrument demonstrated satisfactory psychometric qualities also in the study by Ratelle et al. (2017).

### *5.2. Participants*

Seven hundred and sixty students- 12-year-old (20.5%), 13-year-old (31.8%) and 14-year-old (47.6%) - voluntarily participated in the study. 467 were girls (61.4%), and 293 were boys (38.6%), 533 students lived in urban areas (70.1%), and 227 in rural areas (29.9%), 639 students came from two-parent families (84.1%), 113 from single-parent families (14.9%), and 8 were raised by people other than their parents (1.1%), 192 were alone with their parents, (25.3% ), 427 more had a brother or sister (56.2%), 95 more had 2 brothers/sisters (12.5%), and 46 more had 3 or more brothers/sisters (6.1%). All were secondary school students: 51 participants (6.7%) were students in the 5th grade, 228 (30%) in the 6th grade, 274 (36.1%) in the 7th grade , and 207 (27.2%) in the 8th grade.

### *5.3. Procedure*

The research data were collected in schools in the North-Eastern part of Romania. Once consent was obtained from the school management, the main objective of the study was presented to the students involved and their consent to participate in the research was asked. They were guaranteed that participation is voluntary, that they can withdraw at any time without any consequences, that the answers are anonymous and confidential, and that the data provided will be analysed only for research interests. Afterwards, they were given a parental consent form to present to their parents. If the parents agreed to participate in the study, the children brought the form filled in and signed by the parents. The assessment tools were administered in a single testing session, via a Google form that respondents filled out at school or at home. At the end of the form, participants provided demographic data (age, gender, place of residence, family type, number of siblings). Completion took about 20 minutes and was done using the respondents' personal phones. Participants received no reward for participating in this study.

## 6. Findings

### *6.1. Preliminary analysis*

The normality of the distribution was tested by reference to the coefficients of Skewness and Kurtosis. These were < 2, so the distributions of the values of the variables were normal (Mishra et al., 2019).

### *6.2. Correlations*

Learned optimism correlated positively with academic, emotional and social self-efficacy, proactive coping, perceived autonomy-based parenting style and perceived control-based parenting style (Tab. 1).

| | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Learned optimism | 7.36 | 2.04 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 2. Learned pesimism | 3.85 | 2.15 | -.39*** | 1 | | | | | | |
| 3. Academic self-efficacy | 28.73 | 5.21 | .28*** | -.35*** | 1 | | | | | |
| 4. Social self-efficacy | 27.48 | 5.38 | .34*** | -.33*** | .39*** | 1 | | | | |
| 5. Emotional self-efficacy | 24.24 | 6.23 | .27*** | -.30*** | .36*** | .58*** | 1 | | | |
| 6. Proactive coping | 40.88 | 6.73 | .37*** | -.39*** | .48*** | .55*** | .50*** | 1 | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. Perceived autonomy-based parenting style | 60.88 | 15.37 | .31*** | -.26*** | .48*** | .35*** | .39*** | .40*** | 1 | |
| 8. Perceived control-based parenting style | 50.01 | 17.74 | .23*** | -.19*** | .22*** | .11** | .13*** | .15*** | .53*** | 1 |

$N = 760$; ***$p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Learned pessimism correlated negatively with academic, social, emotional self-efficacy, perceived autonomy-supportive parenting style, perceived control-based parenting style and proactive coping (Tab. 1).

### *6.3. Differences*

The level of learned optimism does not differ according to gender ($t_{(758)} = -0.60$, $p = .54$, $p > .05$), background ($t_{(758)} = -1.32$, $p = .18$, $p > .05$), family situation ($F_{(2,757)} = 2.76$, $p = .06$, $p > .05$), the number of siblings ($F_{(3,756)} = 0.64$, $p = .58$, $p > .05$.

The level of learned pessimism does not differ according to gender ($t_{(758)} = -0.02$, $p = .98$, $p > .05$) and the number of siblings ($F_{(3,756)} = 2.25$, $p = .08$, $p > .05$), but it differs in depending on **the residence** ($t_{(758)} = 2.56$, $p = .01$, $p < .05$). Thus, the participants from the urban area have a significantly higher level of learned pessimism ($M = 3.98$) compared to the participants from the rural area ($M = 3.55$). In addition, learned pessimism also differs according to **family situation** ($F_{(2,757)} = 5.13$, $p = .006$, $p < .01$). Thus, the average of participants coming from single-parent families ($M = 4.41$) is significantly higher compared to the average of participants coming from two-parent families ($M = 3.74$): M single parents fam. - M biparental fam. = 0.66; $p = .007$, $p < .01$.

### *6.4. Multiple linear regression analysis*

Hypothesis 1 was partially confirmed, the model consisting of academic, social and emotional self-efficacy, proactive coping, perceived parental support based on autonomy and perceived parental support based on control was significant ($F_{(6,753)} = 32.73$, $p < .001$) and predicted 20.70% ($R^2 = .207$) of the variations of the criterion variable: learned optimism. Thus, learned optimism was positively predicted by social self-efficacy ($\beta_1 = .16$), proactive coping ($\beta_2 = .20$), perceived control-based parental support ($\beta_3 = .13$), therefore high scores on social self-efficacy, proactive coping and parental support perceived control coincided with high learned optimism scores.

Hypothesis 2 was partially confirmed, the model consisting of academic, social and emotional self-efficacy, proactive coping, perceived

parental support based on autonomy and perceived parental support based on control was statistically significant ($F_{(8,751)} = 26.65$, $p < 0.001$) and predicted 22.10% ($R^2 = .221$) of the variations in the criterion variable: learned pessimism. This model also included residence and family situation, as preliminary analysis indicated differences in the level of learned pessimism according to these socio-demographic variables. Thus, learned pessimism was positively predicted by family situation ($\beta_1 = .06$) and negatively by academic self-efficacy ($\beta_2 = -.15$), social ($\beta_3 = -.09$) proactive coping ($\beta_4 = -.21$), perceived parental support based on control ($\beta_5 = -.10$), therefore high scores on family situation, and low scores on academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy, proactive coping and perceived control-based parental support coincided with high scores on learned pessimism.

## 7. Conclusions

Academic, social and emotional self-efficacy, proactive coping and perceived controlling and autonomy-based parenting styles were correlated with the criterion variables in this study: learned optimism and learned pessimism. These associations were also found by Bamford and Lagattuta (2012); Bandura et al. (1999); Butnaru et al. (2010); Filippello et al. (2015); Forgeard and Seligman (2012); Muris et al. (2016); Peterson and Steen (2021); Seligman et al. (1995).

Before performing the multiple linear regression analysis, the differences based on socio-demographic variables on learned optimism and also on learned pessimism were verified. No gender differences were found in the investigated variables, and this result was also found by other researchers (Butnaru et al., 2010; Gladstone et al., 1997). These results could be due to the age stage of the participants. Thus, they have not yet faced the challenges of adolescence that would affect their attributional style differently. Students from the urban area had a higher level of learned pessimism, compared to those from the rural environment, this result was not identified by other research and could be explained by the conventional sample used, the results can be generalized only to this sample of students.

In addition, there were differences according to family situation: students who came from single-parent families obtained a higher level of learned pessimism than those who came from two-parent families. This kind of result brings to mind the study of Ivanova and Israel (2005), where it was seen that stability in the family has a protective value and offers the child predictability and coherence regarding his own life.

Multiple linear regression analysis tested the model consisting of self-efficacy (academic, social, and emotional), proactive coping, perceived autonomy-based parenting style and perceived control-based parenting style to predict learned optimism and then learned pessimism. The results of the first regression analysis indicated learned optimism as positively predicted by social self-efficacy, proactive coping and perceived control-based parental support. Thus, high scores on social self-efficacy, proactive coping and perceived control-based parental support coincided with high scores on learned optimism. The second regression analysis showed that the model consisting of academic, social and emotional self-efficacy, proactive coping, perceived autonomy-based parental support and perceived control-based parental support was also statistically significant and predicted learned pessimism. This model also included residence and family situation, as preliminary analysis indicated differences in the level of learned pessimism according to these socio-demographic variables. Thus, learned pessimism was positively predicted by family situation and negatively by academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy, proactive coping, perceived parental support based on control. Therefore, high results for family situation, and low results for academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy, proactive coping and perceived parental support based on control coincided with high student results for learned pessimism. In the present study, perceived autonomy-based parenting style correlated positively with learned optimism and negatively with learned pessimism, but did not predict the two variables. To be able to explain this result, the study by Mabbe et al. (2018) can be analyzed, they showed that parenting practices vary between parents and this could explain children's inaccurate perception. Ratelle et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of assessing parenting behaviors from multiple sources and that both children and both parents should be considered. This approach could be carried out by further studies, being a limitation for the present study.

Filippello et al. (2015) tested whether self-efficacy could be a mediator in the relationship between parental control and learned helplessness, and Icekson et al. (2021) looked at the role of self-efficacy, proactive coping and of hope as mediators in the relationships between the variables studied by them. This study was based on preadolescents' self-reports regarding their perceptions of parenting style or self-efficacy and proactive coping, nuancing the importance of these factors among a group of preadolescents, and the results can only be generalized to the analyzed group. The correlational design of this study does not provide evidence of causal links between the analyzed variables; therefore, the results of this

study only indicate associations between variables, the meaning of the relationships being bidirectional.

The present study contributes with its large number of participants to an overview of the factors that predict learned optimism and learned pessimism. Results indicate the importance of social self-efficacy, proactive coping and perceived control-based parental support in predicting learned optimism. Also, the study shows that high learned pessimism coincides with high levels of difficult family situation (single-parent family) and low levels of academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy, proactive coping and perceived control-based parental support. The results of this study could suggest many implications for students, parents and educators.

Although the number of students who participated is large enough for the statistical analyzes to produce reliable results, these conclusions must be compared in the future with others obtained in different regions of the country or internationally. There is a lack of solid international comparative statistics that would shed light on the links between the optimism or pessimism of students and the most important factors that favour these parameters, depending on the regions addressed. However, our results regarding the importance of parenting style are in agreement with some of the conclusions of the OECD (2017), which highlighted the large differences in PISA results in favour of children whose parents talked with their children and spent time together, with a stable, predictable routine.

Preventive interventions in schools could teach children strategies to identify and then examine the accuracy of their beliefs about academic and social resources in order to raise students' self-efficacy and increase proactive coping. Parents and educators could also help strengthen these students' self-efficacy beliefs and encourage students' proactive attitude.

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