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Brazilian youths' attitudes towards contemporary social values

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Abstract. This study aims to compare the outcomes from the study conducted by dos Santos et al. (2012) to the results found by researcher on her investigation about the impact of setting a minimum wage policy on young Brazilians' attitudes toward contemporary social values, which the data was collected from quantitative world survey. The research used the following questions to examine Brazilian youths' attitudes towards contemporary social values; Is there a relationship between households' satisfaction with the financial situation and the current Brazilian youths' attitudes toward contemporary social values? Is there a relationship between socio-economic and Brazilian youths' conceptions of achievement and success? Is there a relationship between social class and Brazilian youths' opinion toward parents using physical punishment to discipline their children? The researcher used the following methods to examine the differences between the study variables; descriptive statistical analysis to present key variables in the sample, along with correlation, t-tests and ANOVA to further examine the relationships between variables. The results showed there was no statistically significant relationship between satisfactions with household financial situation and attitudes about doing good in society (social values), there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between attaining/not attaining a university education and attitudes about achievement and success, and there was not a statistically significant difference in means scores among the three social classes in attitudes about physically punishing children. By comparing the outcomes from the study conducted by dos Santos et al. (2012) to the results from my investigation, I found there was similarity of opinions between participants in which education has relationship to having better future and helping youth become more independent; however, there were differences in opinions about the justifiability for parents to use physical punishment to discipline their children..

Keywords. minimum wage, policy, Brazilian, youths, attitude, towards, contemporary, social, values, investigation, discipline, opinions, physical, punishment.

Introduction

Brazil is the largest country in both South America and Latin America, had an estimated population of around 210.746 million people. Of these, 40 million young adults, between ages 18 and 29, represented 21.1 % of the population of the entire **country**. The official language in Brazil is Portuguese, and the political regime is called the Federative Republic of Brazil ("Population of 2017," 2017).

Following in the footsteps of many other developed countries, Brazil enacted a minimum wage policy to protect vulnerable workers from exploitation and to ensure equal pay for equal work; however, the policy has been slow to impact Brazilians' socioeconomic lives (Saltiel, & Urzúa, 2017). Using methodology developed by Rocha in 1997 (as cited in Cacciamali, Chakrabarty, Rodgers, & Tate, 2015) the Brazilian government adopted a poverty line that defined "poverty as income insufficiency on the basis of information on the 'food basket' and the non-household consumption structure across regions" (p. 26). In 2013, the lowest and the highest poverty lines in India were in the North and in São Paulo, respectively. Based on Belser and Rani's methodology (as cited in (Cacciamali, et al., 2015), individuals who earned lower than the minimum wage income had "a 15.6% probability to be on the poverty line, while this probability is only 2.1% of workers who earn at least one minimum wage" (Cacciamali, et al., 2015, p. 27).

According to dos Santos, Yonekura, Soares, and Campos (2012), the number of Brazilian living on minimum wages has had negative effect on living conditions, with 30% of young people, living in households with per capita income less than half the minimum wage. These economic conditions have impacted young people's attitudes toward contemporary social values. Results from a study conducted by dos Santos et al., (2012) showed the primary concerns for youths ages 15-24 "violence, lack of developing social and economic conditions as a result of unstable work conditions, poor access and quality of education, poverty, unequal distribution of income, and social inequalities" (p. 264).

Methods

To build upon dos Santos et al.'s (2012) work, I used data from the 6th wave of the (WVS, 2014) to examine Brazilian youths' opinions about contemporary social values. The WVS dataset is publicly available for download from the WVS website (www.worldvaluessurvey.org).

World Value Survey

The WVS is a global network of social scientists researching changes in social values between countries overtime, to study how far those changes impact on social and political aspects. The international organization's headquarters are located in Vienna, Austria (WVS, 2017).

Since the aim of the WVS is to understand cultural beliefs and social values, their impact on societies, and to help scientists direct policy change, the WVS dataset is an appropriate choice to analyse Brazilian youths' under age 26 attitude about social values. The results from my analysis will be compared to dos Santo et al.'s (2012) findings.

Quantitative Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between youths' satisfaction with their household's financial situation and current Brazilian youths' attitudes toward contemporary social values?
2. Is there a relationship between socio-economic status and Brazilian youths' conceptions of achievement and success?
3. Is there a relationship between social class and Brazilian youths' opinion toward parents using physical punishment to discipline their children?

Quantitative Methodology

The WVS-6 questionnaire included 290 questions designed to measure cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs towards gender, family, and religion, attitudes about and experiences of poverty, education, health, and security, social tolerance and trust, attitudes towards multilateral

institutions, cultural differences, and similarities between regions and societies (WVS, 2017). The sample frame for this study was limited to ages 20- 25, from Brazil (country code = 76).

Design

I used the following methods to examine the differences between the study variables; descriptive statistical analysis to present key variables in the sample, along with correlation, t-tests and ANOVA to further examine the relationships between variables.

Measurement

In this section, I list each research questions and identify the independent and dependent variables.

1. Is there a relationship between households' satisfaction with the financial situation and the current Brazilian youths' attitudes toward contemporary social values?

The independent variable is socioeconomic and dependent variable is current attitude of Brazilian youth toward social values.

2. Is there a relationship between socio-economic and Brazilian youths' conceptions of achievement and success?

The independent variable is socioeconomic status and dependent variable is Brazilian youths' conceptions of achievement and success.

3. Is there a relationship between social class and Brazilian youths' opinion toward parents using physical punishment to discipline their children?

The independent variable is social class and the dependent variable is Brazilian youths' opinion toward parents using physical punishment to discipline their children.

Variables for Analysis

The variables for analysis were derived from the following items in the WVS.

Research question 1. The independent variables were measured using question V59- "How satisfied are you with the financial situation of your household?" the level of measurement for this variable is an interval/ ratio using a 10-point scale with 1= dissatisfied and 10 completely satisfied (WVS, 2014). The dependent variable, attitude toward social values, was measured using question V74, "It is important to this person to do something for the good of society?" The responses choice for this variable were 1= very much like me, 2= like me 3= somewhat like me, 4= A little like me, 5 = not like me, and 6 = not at all like me (WVS, 2014).

Research question 2. The independent variable, socio-economic status, was measured using question V248, "What is the highest educational level that you have attained?" The level of measurement for this variable was nominal. The responses were recoded to create a binary variable with two responses categories: 0 = no university educations, and 1 = at least some university education. Recoding was completed to address the issue of having small numbers in one or two groups, which might affect study's results. There were nine original response choice categories: 1= No formal education, 2= Incomplete primary school, 3= Complete primary education, 4= Incomplete secondary school, 5= Complete secondary school: technical /vocational type, 6= Incomplete secondary school: university-preparatory type, 7= Complete secondary: university preparatory type, 8= Some university-level education, without degree, and 9= University-level education, with degree (WVS, 2010-2012). To create the binary variable, the category "No university education" included response choice 1 through 7 and "At least some university education" included response choice categories 8 and 9.

The dependent variable, attitudes about achievement and success, was measured by using the computed variable, autonomy, which is a sub-index that estimates emancipative values, (i.e., valuing independence of thought and action. The variable is measured by respondents' strength of agreement (WVS, 2012).

Research question 3. The independent variable social class was measured using questions V238, which asked respondents to self-identify their perceived social class. The level of measurement for this variable is nominal variable. The WVS interview used this statement to ask people about their social class: “People sometimes describe themselves as belonging to the working class, the middle class, or the upper or lower class. Would you describe yourself as belonging to the [interviewer presents response choices]?” The response choices were upper class, upper middle class, lower middle class, working class, and lower class. I combined three of the categories into one category, to eliminate categories with small counts. After recoding, the categories were 1 = upper class, 2 = middle class, and 3 = working class (WVS, 20142).

The dependent variable, attitudes about physically punishing children, was measured using question V209, which asked respondent to rate the justifiability of using physical punishment to discipline children. The level of measurement for this variable was interval/ ratio, using a 10-point response scale where 1= never justifiable and 10 = always justifiable (WVS,20142).

Results

Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the study variables, inferential statistics were used to answer the study questions.

Descriptive Statistics.

The following tables are depicted the descriptive statistics of variables. The variables in the first research question, “Is there a relationship between youths’ satisfaction with their household’s financial situation and the current Brazilian youths’ attitudes toward contemporary social values?” are:

- Financial satisfaction is the independent variable at the interval/ratio level of measurement.
- Attitudes toward social values is the dependent variable at the interval/ratio level of measurement.

The variables in the second research question, “Is there a relationship between socio-economic status and Brazilian youths’ conceptions of achievement and success?” are

- Socioeconomic status (highest education attained) is the independent variable at the nominal level of measurement.
- Attitudes about achievement and success (autonomy) is the dependent variable, at the interval/ratio level of measurement.

The variables in the third research question, “Is there a relationship between social class and Brazilian youths’ opinion toward parents using punishment to discipline their children?” are:

- Social class is the independent variable, at the nominal level of measurement.
- Attitudes about physically punishing children is the dependent variable at the, interval/ratio level of measurement.

The first descriptive statistic table (Table 1) summarizes the variables Satisfaction with household financial situation, (interval/ratio), attitudes about social values, attitudes about achievement and success Emancipative (interval/ratio), and attitudes about physically punishing children (interval/ratio).

Table 1 lists the paragraph styles defined in this template.

1.1. Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

statistics

	Satisfaction with household financial situation	Attitudes about social values	Attitudes about achievement and success	Attitudes about achievement and success
N Valid	259	259	259	256
Missing	0	0	0	3
Mean	6.39	2.17	.38867436	3.97
Median	7.00	2.00	.33333300	4.00
Mode	8	2	.333333	1
Std. Deviation	2.634	.957	.317356891	2.936
Range	9	5	1.000000	9
Minimum	1	1	.000000	1
Maximum	10	6	1.000000	10

Table 1 shows the total valid number for each variable.

The first column shows there were 259 responses that measure satisfaction with household the financial situation. The mean score, on a scale of 1 to 10, was 6,39 points (M=6.39, SD=2.634). The median was 7 points, and the mode was 8 points. The second column shows the number of cases for variable that measured attitudes about social values. There were 259 responses for this variable. The mean value was 2.17(M=2.17, SD=.957). The median was 2 points, and the mode was 2 points which represents, “people like me.” The third column shows there were 259 responses for the variable that measured attitudes about achievement and success. The mean score for this variable was (M=39, SD=.32). The median was .33, and the mode was .33. The fourth column shows there were 256 responses for the variable that measured attitudes about physically punishing children (3 missing responses). The mean score for this variable was 3.97 (M=3.97, SD=2.94). The median was 4 and the mode was (1) which represents “never justifiable.”

The second descriptive statistic tables (2,3 and 4) summarize the variables representing socioeconomic status: attained highest education, (nominal), and social class (nominal).

1.2. Table 2. Descriptive statistics for education and social class.

Statistics

	Attained university education	social class level
N Valid	259	257
Missing	0	2
Mode	.00	3.00
Range	1.00	2.00
Minimum	.00	1.00
Maximum	1.00	3.00

1.3. Table 3. Descriptive statistics for university education.

Attained university education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No university education	200	77.2	77.2	77.2
	At least some university education	59	22.8	22.8	100.0
	Total	259	100.0	100.0	

1.4. Table 4. Descriptive statistics for social class.

social class level					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Upper class	9	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Middle class	99	38.2	38.5	42.0
	Working class	149	57.5	58.0	100.0
	Total	257	99.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.8		
Total		259	100.0		

Table 1 summarizes the variable measuring highest education attained and social class. The first column shows the total sample size of those who reported their highest education attained was 259 participants, and the mode was 0, which represents “No university education.” The second column shows the total sample size for the variable social class was 257 participants, with 2 missing participants; the mode was 3 which represent working class.

Table 3 shows there were 9 participants (3.5.0%) who described themselves as being in the upper class, 99 participants (38.5%) who described themselves as being in the middle class, and 149 participants (58.0%) who described themselves as being in the working class.

Inferential statistics. Tables 5 through 8 illustrate the inferential statistics for the relationships evaluated in this study.

To answer the first research question, I used satisfaction with household financial situation, an interval/ratio level variable, as the independent variable, and attitudes about social values, an interval/ratio variable, as the dependent variable.

Since the level of measurement for both variables is interval/ratio, correlation was a suitable test to find out the relationship between Brazilian youths' satisfaction with their household's financial situation and their attitudes toward contemporary social values.

1.5. Table 5. Correlation between household financial satisfaction and social values attitudes.

Correlations			
		Satisfaction with household financial situation	Attitudes about social values
Satisfaction with financial situation of household	Pearson Correlation	1	-.034
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.585
	N	259	
Attitudes about social values	Pearson Correlation	-.034	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.585	
	N	259	259

In this analysis (Table 5), the correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) is -.034.

There were 259 observations used to calculate the correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient is not statistically significant at p .585, the correlation coefficient is not significant at the p<.05 level of a two-tailed test of significance.

There was a moderate negative correlation between satisfaction with household financial situation to attitudes about social values, $r = -.034$, $p = .585$.

To answer the second research question, I used highest education attained, a nominal variable, as the independent variable, and attitudes about achievement and success, an interval/ratio level variable, as the dependent variable. Since the variable highest education attained includes two groups, the t-test is suitable to examine the group differences highest education attained and participants' attitudes about achievement and success.

1.6. Table 6. Independent samples t-test – group statistics.

	Attained university education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attitudes about achievement and success	No university education	200	.37333330	.305468592	.021599891
	At least some university education	59	.44067798	.352553330	.045898534

1.7. Table 7. Independent samples t-test.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Attitudes about achievement and success	Equal variances assumed	5.622	.018	-1.435	257	.152	-.067344688	.046920913	-.159743110	.025053734
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.328	85.315	.188	-.067344688	.050727022	-.168198220	.033508844

I compared the average score for attitudes about achievement and success for those with less than a university-level education ($n = 200$) with the average score for those with some university-level education or higher ($n = 59$), as shown in Table 6. Those with less than a university education had a mean score of .373 ($SD = .305$) for attitudes about achievement and success, while those with at least some university education had mean score of .441 ($SD = .353$), $t(257) = -1.435$, $p = .152$ for attitudes about achievement and success (Table 7).

The results in Table 7 show there was no statistically significant group difference between attained university education and attitudes about achievement and success.

The results showed a difference in the sample's mean scores but not a difference in the population. We can rule out the difference in sample happened by chance.

To answer the third research question, I used social class, a nominal level variable, as the independent variable, and attitudes about physically punishing children, an interval/ratio level variable, as the dependent variable. ANOVA is a suitable statistical test to examine the mean differences between these two variables.

1.8. Table 8. ANOVA descriptive statistics.

Descriptive Attitudes about Physically Punishing Children

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Upper class	9	5.67	3.571	1.190	2.92	8.41	1	10
Middle class	97	4.08	2.853	.290	3.51	4.66	1	10
Working class	149	3.79	2.942	.241	3.31	4.26	1	10
Total	255	3.96	2.941	.184	3.60	4.33	1	10

1.9. Table 9. Results from ANOVA.

ANOVA

Attitudes about Physically Punishing Children

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	32.215	2	16.107	1.875	.155
Within Groups	2164.468	252	8.589		
Total	2196.682	254			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Attitudes about Physically Punishing Children

Scheffe

(I) social class	(J) social class	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Upper class	Middle class	1.584	1.021	.302	-.93	4.10
	Working class	1.881	1.006	.176	-.60	4.36
	Upper class	-1.584	1.021	.302	-4.10	.93
Middle class	Working class	.297	.382	.739	-.64	1.24
	Upper class	-1.881	1.006	.176	-4.36	.60
Working class	Middle class	-.297	.382	.739	-1.24	.64

Table 7 shows there were a few differences in mean scores among those in different social classes. Those who were in the upper-class category had the highest average score for feeling that using physical punishment with children was justifiable (M=5.67, SD=3.571), compared to those who described themselves as working class (M= 3.79, SD=2.942), and those who described themselves as middle class (M=4.08, SD=2.853).

The significance column (sig.) in Table 8, shows there was not a statistically significant relationship between social class and attitudes about physically punishing children, $F(2, 252) = 1.875, p = .155$.

Discussion

I used the 6th wave of the World Values Survey to answer three research questions. The first research question focused on attitudes of Brazilian youth towards contemporary social values, where the descriptive statistics results provided general information about the relationships between variables. The results showed there were differences between groups' mean scores regarding level of satisfaction with household financial situation, with the majority of participants being completely satisfied. Also, the majority of participants reported that "people like me" were those who thought they should do something good for their society. In addition, the results also showed that most participants did not feel it was justifiable for parents to use physical punishment to discipline their children. The results also suggested that most participants felt autonomous. Finally, the results showed that the majority of participants were working class and had not attained a university education.

For the first research question ("Is there a relationship between households' satisfaction with the financial situation and the current Brazilian youths' attitudes toward contemporary social values?"), correlation results showed there was no statistically significant relationship between satisfactions with household financial situation and attitudes about doing good in society (social values).

The results also showed that even though participants were dissatisfied with their financial situations, they still had the desire to do something for the good of society.

It is good to know that the nature of people always wants to do something good to their society. This information could be advantageous to the Brazilian government to increase economic growth and social development.

The second research question ("Is there a relationship between socio-economic and Brazilian youths' conceptions of achievement and success?") was answered using the t-test. The results showed that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between attaining/not attaining a university education and attitudes about achievement and success. The results showed there was a difference in sample but not a difference in population. We can rule out the difference in sample happened by chance.

The third research question ("Is there a relationship between social class and Brazilian youths' opinion toward parents using punishment to discipline their children?") was answered using analysis of variance. The ANOVA test results showed there was not a statistically significant difference in means scores among the three social classes in attitudes about physically punishing children. From these results, we can infer that the largest category of participants was from working class. For the full sample, most people said that it was never justifiable for parents to use physical punishment to discipline children.

By comparing the outcomes from the study conducted by dos Santos et al. (2012) to the results from my investigation, I found there was similarity of opinions between participants in which education has relationship to having better future and helping youth become more independent; however, there were differences in opinions about the justifiability for parents to use physical punishment to discipline their children.

Limitations

The dataset that I used has some limitations. First, the WVS provides general information about Brazilian youth' attitudes towards contemporary social values. I think that because of the small sample size for Brazil, the WVS dataset was not ideal for providing reliable information about Brazilian youths. Second, the WVS dataset does not give specific information about the level of social economic conditions and youth attitudes. For example, if you wanted to know the impact of social economic on Brazilian attitudes in different geographic region in Brazil the results could not be generalized to each Brazilian geographic region. The inability to

generalized makes it difficult for a researcher to determine the actual impact social economic conditions on social values in Brazil. Some variables in WVS dataset were not explained enough for any researcher to use in their studies, such as the variable, autonomy; the dataset did not provide details about this variable. Another limitation is that recoding was necessary to remove groups with small counts, which means detail on these small groups was lost.

Implications

Since the results showed there were differences between groups' means in being satisfied with financial situation and having the desire to do something good for society, this information could be used to promote government policy to encourage youth to develop ideas on improving society. For example, from an economic perspective, it would be good to create a government policy to support youth to encourage them to do something good in their communities by being opening to accepting youths' ideas and facilitating new job creation. In doing so, these actions could help youths to work harder and instill in them hope to improve lives and protect their environment. Social work researchers could use the results of this study to encourage Brazilian youths to organize social organizations concerned with youth affairs. For example, youths from various educational backgrounds could meet, to exchange their perspectives about contemporary issues and way they could help their generation by doing social good, these actions, in turn, could help improve Brazil's economy.

Conclusion

In this study, I used the data from the 6th wave (2010-2014) of the WVS, along with the article by dos Santos et al. (2012). Using SPSS, I generated descriptive statistics, and conducted a correlation test to examine the relationship between satisfaction with household financial situation and social values. I also used the t-test to investigate mean differences in highest education attained and attitudes about achievement and success and conducted ANOVA to examine the mean differences in attitudes about using physical punishment to discipline children among three social classes.

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