

Relación del género con las actitudes cívicas y ciudadanas en Colombia

Relationship between gender with civic and citizenship attitudes in Colombia

Relação do gênero com atitudes cívicas e cidadãs na Colômbia

- Artículo de investigación -

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Resumen

La Asociación Internacional para la Evaluación del Logro Educativo (IEA) ha desarrollado varios estudios sobre Educación Cívica y Ciudadana (ICCS). Esta investigación analizó los resultados del estudio ICCS de 2016 en Colombia y su relación con el género. Para este fin, se examinaron los datos de 5,609 estudiantes, seleccionados de manera aleatoria por la IEA, quienes respondieron un cuestionario de 3 componentes, 9 categorías y 72 ítems. El alfa de Cronbach del cuestionario estableció que este tiene una alta confiabilidad, y la prueba de Kruskal-Wallis determinó diferencias significativas entre hombres y mujeres en los resultados del cuestionario en 8 de las 9 categorías. Lo anterior permitió concluir que existe una relación entre el género y las actitudes cívicas y ciudadanas en Colombia.

Palabras claves: educación cívica y ciudadana, gobierno, liderazgo, violencia, desobediencia, homosexualidad y diversidad

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Abstract

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) has developed several studies on Civic and Citizenship Education (ICCS). This research analyzed the results of the 2016 ICCS study in Colombia and its relationship with gender. For this purpose, the data of 5,609 students, randomly selected by the IEA, were examined, who answered a questionnaire with 3 components, 9 categories and 72 items. The Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire established that it has high reliability, and the Kruskal-Wallis test determined significant differences between men and women in the results of the questionnaire in 8 of the 9 categories. The above allowed us to conclude that there is a relationship between gender and civic and citizen attitudes in Colombia.

Keywords: civics and citizenship education, governance, leadership, violence, disobedience, homosexuality and diversity

Resumo

A Associação Internacional para a Avaliação do Desempenho Educacional (IEA) tem desenvolvido vários estudos sobre Educação Cívica e para a Cidadania (ICCS). Esta pesquisa analisou os resultados do estudo ICCS de 2016 na Colômbia e sua relação com o gênero. Para tanto, foram examinados os dados de 5.609 estudantes, selecionados aleatoriamente pelo IEA, que responderam a um questionário com 3 componentes, 9 categorias e 72 itens. O alfa de Cronbach do questionário estabeleceu que ele possui alta confiabilidade, e o teste Kruskal-Wallis determinou diferenças significativas entre homens e mulheres nos resultados do questionário em 8 das 9 categorias. O exposto nos permitiu concluir que existe uma relação entre gênero e atitudes cívicas e cidadãs na Colômbia.

Palavras-chave: educação Cívica e Cidadã, governo, liderança, violência, desobediência, homossexualidade e diversidade.

Introduction

Previous studies addressing civic and citizenship education indicate that these topics are part of curricula in various countries, aimed at improving knowledge and attitudes toward democracy and promoting equality among different social groups in school contexts (Blaskó et al., 2019; Mei et al., 2023). Civic and citizenship education has been a significant aspect of educational policy in Colombia. It is used to understand the contexts in which this topic is taught and the competencies that students are developing. Article 41 of the 1991 Constitution establishes that studying the Constitution and civic instruction is mandatory in schools. Therefore, principles and values related to citizen participation should be promoted within the educational environment. This establishes the ground rules for guidelines detailing what students should be taught in subjects related to civics and citizenship (Zuluaga & Chaguendo, 2021).

Similarly, in 2004, the Ministry of National Education (MEN) presented the standards of citizen competencies in Colombia, which guide educational institutions in curriculum planning at all school education levels (MEN, 2004). Colombia has also shown interest in this field of knowledge, reflected in its participation in International Civic and Citizenship Education Studies (ICCS) developed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA; Icfes, 2017).

The first study carried out in 1971 evaluated civic knowledge and gathered information from 10 countries, including students aged 10–14, as well as teachers and administrators (Torney et al., 1975). The second study, conducted in 1999, analyzed civic education learning in school and opportunities for civic participation outside of school. Students aged 14–18 from 28 countries participated (Torney et al., 2001). The third study, implemented in 2009, collected information from 38 countries on teachers and eighth-grade students averaging 14 years of age. The test applied evaluated knowledge and civic understanding (Kerr et al., 2010).

The fourth study, conducted in 2016, aimed to understand the continuous and emerging challenges faced by young people in a world where the contexts of democracy and civic participation continue to change. The study results established how young people are prepared to assume roles as citizens (Schultz et al., 2016). Information was gathered from 24 countries—15 European, 5 Latin American, and 4 Asian. Data were collected from eighth-grade students aged 14–16 years, as well as from teachers, administrators, and experts in civic and citizenship education from the participating countries. The data for 2022 is not yet open access; therefore, this study worked with the 2016 databases.

In 2016, six instruments were applied by the ICCS study in each country. The first was a cognitive test for students that comprised questions on civic knowledge, analytical skills, and reasoning. The second was a questionnaire that inquired about student data. The third was a Likert scale questionnaire for Latin American and European students regarding attitudes toward civic and citizenship education. The fourth was a questionnaire that collected data and perceptions on civic and citizenship education from the teachers participating in the study. The fifth was a questionnaire for principals of certain schools regarding school characteristics and variables at the school level related to civic and citizen participation. Finally, the sixth was a survey for experts that collected information on civic and citizenship education in the national curricula and the structure of the educational systems of the participating countries (Eunjung & Pey, 2022).

This study focused on the results of the 2016 questionnaire for Latin American students and analyzed its relationship with gender in Colombia. The questionnaire examined attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, dispositions, behavioral intentions, and behaviors within the framework of ICCS 2016. The questionnaire evaluated affective-behavioral aspects using a Likert scale that does not establish correct or incorrect answers. As a result, students indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements given in the 72 items divided into 9 categories of analysis and 3 components.

Civic and citizenship education in Colombia

In Colombia, civic and citizenship education has been a fundamental aspect of the education sphere. The guidelines developed since the 1991 Constitution, the General Education Law, the Competency Standards, and the Colombian Citizenship Competency Program have guided the education of young people in the country (Gómez, 2021; González & Santisteban, 2016). Article 41 of the 1991 Constitution establishes that “in all educational institutions, official or private, the study of the Constitution and civic instruction shall be mandatory. In addition, democratic practices for learning the principles and values of citizen participation will be promoted.” This shows the state’s commitment to ensuring the education of citizens in this sense.

The General Education Law (1994), in several sections, mentions the importance of civic and citizenship education. It establishes that training in educational institutions will allow for the promotion of awareness and responsible participation of individuals in social service actions, full development of one’s personality, encouragement of democratic practices to learn the principles and values of citizen participation and organization, and development of attitudes and behaviors of respect for rules.

Similarly, the Ministry of National Education (MEN) presented the basic standards of competencies to the country in 2004. These standards were defined as criteria that allow for establishing the basic levels of education quality that children in all regions of Colombia are entitled to in all knowledge areas. In this sense, “citizen competencies” were defined as the set of knowledge and cognitive, emotional, and communicative skills that, organized together, make it possible for citizens to constructively act in a democratic society (MEN, 2004, p. 8). Therefore, the citizenship competency standards indicate what students should know based on school grade and their level of development to exercise these skills at home, in their school life, and other contexts.

The MEN (2004) in Colombia hopes that the basic standards of citizenship competencies promote the moral development of young people. This means allowing the cognitive and emotional progress of individuals with the goal of guiding autonomous decision-making that reflects actions to support others and the common good. The standards are presented in three groups of citizenship competencies:

- . Coexistence and peace, which is based on considering the person as a human being.
- . Participation and democratic responsibility, where students are guided to make decisions in various contexts, considering respect for individuals, fundamental rights, agreements, regulations, laws, and the Constitution that govern community life.
- . Plurality, identity, and an appreciation of differences, based on recognizing and enjoying human diversity while respecting the rights of others.

Below are the standards corresponding to eighth and ninth grades, since this is the population that took the test in the 2016 ICCS.

The first group of competencies, related to coexistence and peace, expects students to:

- . Be familiar with conflict mediation processes and act as mediators.
- . Identify the different points of view of those involved in a conflict.
- . Understand the consequences of cheating.
- . Reflect on the proper use of power in different scenarios.
- . Understand the importance of sexual and reproductive rights.
- . Promote respect for life and recognize situations that can put it at risk.
- . Recognize that living beings and the environment are unique and non-renewable resources that deserve respect and consideration.
- . Understand the importance of offering help.
- . Recognize fundamental rights as citizens.
- . Understand the importance of good use of public space.

The second group of competencies, related to participation and democratic responsibility, promotes students to:

- . Be familiar with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Constitution, and the constitutional mechanisms that protect rights.
- . Analyze institutions' coexistence manuals and comply with them.
- . Reject the violation of rights.
- . Identify the possible consequences of participating in conflicts.

The third group of competencies, related to plurality and identity, expects students to:

- . Understand that discrimination should not be accepted and that all human beings have the same rights.
- . Recognize cultural diversity in societies.
- . Respect and defend the freedoms of people.

Finally, the MEN (2015) presented the Colombian Citizenship Competencies Program, which aimed to develop the abilities, skills, and knowledge regarding citizenship and coexistence among students from all over the country. The program gathers the lessons learned from several private initiatives, implements a planning process, and establishes the institutionalization of citizenship competencies as a primary goal. It defines its actions related to three components: social mobilization, support for educational practices, and knowledge management for the development of citizenship competencies.

These aspects show that civic and citizenship education in Colombia has been a government priority. However, it is necessary that society and institutions realize the educational proposals to achieve a higher education level in the youth of future generations.

Relationship between gender and attitudes toward civic and citizenship education

Some relationships between the ICCS 2016 attitude test categories and gender are found in the specialized literature. Below, they are described in the following order: government, violence, disobedience, empathy, and homosexuality. In terms of young people's attitudes toward the government, some studies report that they have little interest in matters related to countries' governments, which is probably related to attitudes and distrust toward government institutions and politics. Furthermore, young people believe that governments do not attend to their needs and positively respond to their demands (Vivero & Díaz, 2017). Other research has established that tensions between countries can lead to negative attitudes toward the governments of other countries by young people (Ghorbani & Khajavy, 2023). According to Barber and Torney (2009), men participate more confidently in politics-related activities. In addition, both men and women have knowledge of their countries' political affairs.

Research on violence has shown that violent attitudes among young people are formed by social learning, that is, they observe these attitudes in their immediate environment. In this sense, Pinos et al. (2016) established that young people reject different types of violence. However, the strongest factors justifying violence between peers, domestic violence, and sexual violence are the male sex, alcohol consumption in the family, violence between siblings, and a high degree of enjoyment of violence in the media. In addition, the researchers established that the strongest attitudes of rejection toward violence are among women between 14 and 16 years of age as they report having experienced sexual violence.

According to Schultz et al. (2016), studies in Latin America have shown a high level of disobedience of the law by young people. This finding was justified with the following arguments: as the only way to achieve things, to help the family, and when it was done without bad intentions. Along these lines, Barber and Torney (2009)

established that men are more likely to participate in illegal activities than women, that is, they tend to disobey the law more easily.

As for the meaning of empathy, Schulz et al. (2016) connect it to an individual's willingness to influence another person's world without being influenced by their own views and values. This influence can be affective or cognitive. A sense of emotional empathy is considered to motivate helping others and indicates compassion and concern for other human beings (Hoffman, 1981). In this regard, studies have determined that women are characterized by helping others, that is, they have high levels of empathy compared to men (Barber & Torney, 2009; Clarke & Sulsky, 2017; Sanchez et al., 2015).

Regarding homosexuality, Lim (2002) studied gender differences in attitudes toward homosexuals among university students. The results suggested that respondents had negative attitudes toward homosexuals; however, women indicated that they were less uncomfortable coexisting with homosexuals in comparison to men. It also demonstrated that these attitudes were influenced by conservative attitudes in education and the gender roles assigned in society.

Similarly, Guittar and Pals (2014) identified relationships between gender and homosexuality in the adult population of the United States. The study established a relationship between both variables. Men have more negative attitudes toward homosexuality than women, which can be explained by gender roles; that is, men have more traditional gender beliefs than women and are also more conservative. In this sense, Loverno et al. (2019) state that the adoption of same-sex couples has negative attitudes among young people, which is influenced by religion or conservative thoughts in societies. The research establishes clear relationships between gender and the attitudes assessed by the 2016 ICCS test. In this regard, it is necessary to continue inquiring with the purpose of training young people in society.

Methodology

In this study, the results of the 2016 ICCS Latin American Questionnaire in Colombia were reviewed, enabling an analysis of the gender relationship with civic and citizenship education. The data analyzed were provided by the IEA in the 2016 ICCS study, which are open access (<https://www.iea.nl/en/node/1968>). The questionnaire was administered by the IEA, and information was collected from 5,609 eighth-grade students (2,567 males and 2,801 females) between 14 and 16 years of age, randomly selected from 150 educational institutions in the country. The students completed the questionnaire in approximately 15 minutes, which was implemented between October 2015 and June 2016.

The questionnaire contained 3 affective-behavioral components, 9 categories, and 72 items. The first component determined students' perceptions of the government and the law through three categories: attitudes toward authoritarian rule, dictatorships, and corrupt practices. The second component was related to students' perceptions of peaceful coexistence through four categories: attitudes toward violence, acceptance of disobeying the law, and feelings of empathy. Finally, the third component evaluated students' perceptions of discrimination in their country, the acceptance of social minorities, and attitudes toward homosexuality through two categories (Table 1). Response options were presented using a Likert scale. The information analysis was carried out using SPSS version 23.0.

Table 1. Categories of the Latin American ICCS 2016 questionnaire

Component	Category	Description	Number of items
1	Government	Student attitudes about the government and its leaders.	6
	Authoritarian government	Student attitudes toward authoritarian government practices and dictatorships.	5

	Corrupt practices	Young people's perceptions toward corrupt practices in the public sector.	6
2	Violence	Student attitudes toward the use of violence in the national, school, and family context.	10
	Disobedience	Students' acceptance of breaking the law in different circumstances.	10
	Acceptance of diversity	Students' acceptance of social minorities in their neighborhood.	8
	Empathy	Students' sense of empathy, that is, compassion and concern for other human beings.	11
3	Homosexuality	Students' attitudes toward homosexuality.	5
	Discrimination	The degree to which students perceive social groups as discriminated against in their countries.	11

Source: Adapted from Schultz et al. (2016)

Results

The validity test of the questionnaire determined a Cronbach's alpha of 0.884 for the instrument in general. The validity analysis of each category established that they all presented a high Cronbach's alpha (Arévalo & Padilla, 2016); that is, the ICCS Latin American Questionnaire 2016 in Colombia reliably measured the 9 categories of analysis. These reliability values align with the results of Schultz et al., 2018.

Table 2. Reliability of the instrument categories

Category	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Government	6	0.795
Authoritarian government	5	0.723
Corrupt practices	6	0.837
Violence	10	0.810
Disobedience	10	0.846
Acceptance of diversity	8	0.923
Empathy	11	0.861
Homosexuality	5	0.871
Discrimination	11	0.911

Source: Own elaboration

Table 3 presents the means of each category according to gender. As can be seen, differences were determined in the nine categories. Subsequently, the Kruskal–Wallis non-parametric test was applied to establish which categories presented significant differences between men and women.

Table 3. Means obtained by gender in each category

Category / Gender		Mean	Standard deviation	Typical error	Confidence interval for the mean at 95%	
					Lower limit	Upper limit
Government	Male	2,893	0,624	0,012	2,869	2,917
	Female	3,034	0,596	0,011	3,012	3,056
Authoritarian government	Male	2,546	0,593	0,011	2,523	2,569
	Female	2,556	0,553	0,010	2,536	2,577
Corrupt practices	Male	2,869	0,660	0,013	2,844	2,895
	Female	2,970	0,624	0,011	2,947	2,994
Violence	Male	2,778	0,504	0,010	2,758	2,797

	Female	2,982	0,446	0,008	2,965	2,998
Disobedience	Male	2,522	0,549	0,011	2,501	2,544
	Female	2,634	0,530	0,010	2,615	2,654
Acceptance of diversity	Male	1,874	0,271	0,005	1,864	1,884
	Female	1,917	0,216	0,004	1,909	1,925
Empathy	Male	2,602	0,378	0,007	2,587	2,617
	Female	2,737	0,290	0,005	2,726	2,747
Homosexuality	Male	2,226	0,772	0,015	2,197	2,256
	Female	1,888	0,719	0,013	1,861	1,914
Discrimination	Male	2,507	0,710	0,014	2,479	2,535
	Female	2,251	0,708	0,013	2,224	2,278

Source: Own elaboration

The results in Table 4 allow us to establish significant differences according to gender in eight of the nine analysis categories according to the Kruskal–Wallis test. The category that did not show significant differences according to gender was authoritarian government.

Table 4. Kruskal–Wallis results

Category	Government	Authoritarian government	Corrupt practices	Violence	Disobedience	Acceptance of diversity	Empathy	Homosexuality	Discrimination
Chi squared	63,095	0,841	29,946	221,402	56,223	32,182	175,723	257,958	186,279
df	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
P	0,000	0,359	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000

Source: Own elaboration

The ICCS Latin American Regional Questionnaire for Students 2016 determined students' perceptions of government and its leaders with the help of the following

statements: (a) “It is better for government leaders to make decisions without consulting anyone” (men mean = 3.211 and women mean = 3.270), (b) “Leaders must assert their authority, even if they violate the rights of some citizens” (men mean = 3.005 and women mean = 3.141), (c) “Leaders lose their authority when they admit their mistakes” (men mean = 2.525 and women mean = 2.701), (d) “People who have different opinions from the government should be considered its enemies” (men mean = 3.191 and women mean = 3.279), (e) “The most important opinion in the country must be that of the president” (men mean = 2.414 and women mean = 2.598), and (f) “It is fair that the government does not comply with the laws when it deems it necessary” (men mean = 3.000 and women mean = 3.170). Thus, in all items, the women’s mean was higher than that of men, which in general determined significant differences in favor of women; that is, women tend to strongly disagree with the statements in this category (mean = 3.034) compared to men (mean = 2.893).

The authoritarian government category established the students’ perceptions through the following statements: (a) “The concentration of power in a single person guarantees order” (men mean = 2.425 and women mean = 2.403), (b) “The government should shut down the media that criticizes it” (men mean = 3.056 and women mean = 3.113), (c) “If the president does not agree with the <congress>, he should <dissolve it>” (men mean = 2.787 and women mean = 2.849), (d) “Dictatorships are justified when they bring order and security” (men mean = 2.211 and women mean = 2.157), and (e) “Dictatorships are justified when they bring economic benefits” (men mean = 2.244 and women mean = 2.245). The results obtained do not show significant differences based on gender in the category; however, they do reflect disagreement among students before authoritarian governments.

In the corrupt practices category, student’s perceptions were determined through the following statements: (a) “It is acceptable for a public official to accept bribes when his salary is very low” (men mean = 3.092 and women mean = 3.195), (b) “It is

appropriate for a public official to use the institution's resources where he works for personal benefit" (men mean = 2.979 and women mean = 3.063), (c) "Good candidates give voters personal benefits in exchange for their vote." (men mean = 2.843 and women mean = 2.999), (d) "It is acceptable to pay something additional to a public official to obtain a personal benefit" (men mean = 2.914 and women mean = 3.032), (e) "It is acceptable for a public official to support his friends by getting them jobs in his office" (men mean = 2.451 and women mean = 2.470), and (f) "Since public resources belong to everyone, it is right that whoever is able should keep part of them" (men mean = 2.889 and women mean = 3.008). The results show significant differences between men's (mean = 2.8696) and women's (mean = 2.9708) attitudes since women present an attitude of disagreement toward corrupt practices compared to men.

The violence category included the following statements to determine students' attitudes toward the use of force in national, school, and family contexts: (a) "Peace is only achieved through dialogue and negotiation" (men mean = 1.716 and women mean = 1.905), (b) "To achieve peace, the end justifies the means" (men mean = 2.185 and women mean = 2.371), (c) "If the authorities do not act, citizens must organize to punish criminals" (men mean = 2.485 and women mean = 2.734), (d) "It is justified to hit someone who commits a crime against my family as punishment" (men mean = 2.692 and women mean = 3.007), (e) "he who lives by the sword, will die by the word" (men mean = 2.872 and women mean = 3.073), (f) "Watching fights between classmates is fun" (men mean = 3.116 and women mean = 3.313), (g) "If you can't do it for good, <play> the hard way" (men mean = 3.025 and women mean = 3.255), (h) "You have to fight so that people don't think you are a coward" (men mean = 3.191 and women mean = 3.391), (i) "Revenge is sweet" (men mean = 3.135 and women mean = 3.260), and (j) "Aggression serves to achieve what one wants" (men mean = 3.302 and women mean = 3.496). In all the statements, differences in men's and women's attitudes are evident. The category indicates significant differences between men's (mean = 2.778) and women's (mean = 2.982) means; that is, women tend to disagree more than men about violence. The results are likely

related to the coexistence and peace competencies promoted by the standards since young people are expected to know the processes of conflict mediation, with the goal of avoiding the use of violence in any scenario.

The disobedience category established students' attitudes toward breaking the law in different circumstances. This category presented the following statements as response options in the following situation "A law can be disobeyed...": (a) "When it is the only alternative left to achieve important objectives" (men mean = 2.254 and women mean = 2.410), (b) "When it is the only way you have to help your family" (men mean = 2.112 and women mean = 2.215), (c) "When others who didn't follow it were not punished" (men mean = 2.709 and women mean = 2.818), (d) "When others do it" (men mean = 2.860 and women mean = 2.973), (e) "When the institution that made the law isn't trusted" (men mean = 2.613 and women mean = 2,741), (f) "When you're sure that no one is going to notice" (men mean = 2,803 and women mean = 2.955), (g) "When it is the only way to publicly fight against an unjust law" (men mean = 2.287 and women mean = 2.390), (h) "When no one is hurt" (men mean = 2.325 and women mean = 2.380), (i) "When it is done without bad intentions" (men mean = 2.382 and women mean = 2.408), and (j) "When one can profit economically" (men mean = 2.784 and women mean = 2.980). The category indicated significant differences between men (mean = 2.522) and women (mean = 2.634), which shows a clear position of women disagreeing with disobedience. The results could improve if the students knew the rules and follow them in the different areas in which they operate, as expressed by the standards in civic and citizen competence.

The acceptance of diversity category inquired about the attitudes toward social minorities in the students' immediate environment through the following statements: (a) "People of a different skin color than yours" (men mean = 1.887 and women mean = 1.935), (b) "People from a different social class than yours" (men mean = 1.864 and women mean = 1.914), (c) "People of a different religion than yours" (men mean = 1.857 and women mean = 1.907), (d) "People who come from another region of

the country” (men mean = 1.888 and women mean = 1.929), (e) “People with physical disabilities” (men mean = 1.896 and women mean = 1.940), (f) “People with mental disabilities” (men mean = 1.847 and women mean = 1.877), (g) “People who come from another country” (men mean = 1.884 and women mean = 1.924), and (h) “People of indigenous origin” (men mean = 1.880 and women mean = 1.928). The results established significant differences based on gender; that is, women (mean = 1.8744) show stronger attitudes of accepting diversity compared to men (mean = 1.9176). The results show that Colombian educational institutions must promote the acceptance of diversity since it is necessary to think about the organization of tolerant societies with differences.

The empathy category led us to determine the students’ attitudes of compassion and concern for other human beings. The following statements were found in this category: (a) “A classmate falls and hurts himself” (men mean = 2.575 and women mean = 2.740), (b) “A classmate gets hit” (men mean = 2.687 and women mean = 2.813), (c) “They scold a classmate unfairly” (men mean = 2.572 and women mean = 2.711), (d) “They unfairly punish a classmate” (men mean = 2.629 and women mean = 2.773), (e) “A classmate was robbed of something” (men mean = 2.735 and women mean = 2.809), (f) “They make fun of a classmate” (men mean = 2.519 and women mean = 2.694), (g) “They insult a classmate” (men mean = 2.592 and women mean = 2.751), (h) “A classmate is very sad” (men mean = 2.667 and women mean = 2.820), (i) “A classmate gets bad grades” (men mean = 2.414 and women mean = 2.532), (j) “A classmate has no one to play with” (men mean = 2.590 and women mean = 2.685), and (k) “There is a fight between classmates” (men mean = 2.587 and women mean = 2.737). The results show significant differences between men (mean = 2.602) and women (mean = 2.737), which indicates that women demonstrate greater attitudes of concern for others compared to men.

The questionnaire established attitudes toward homosexuality through the following statements: (a) “People of the same sex should have the right to marry each other” (men mean = 2.426 and women mean = 2.063), (b) “Two people of the same sex

should have the right to adopt children” (men mean = 2.511 and mean women = 2.140), (c) “Homosexuals should have the same rights as other citizens” (men mean = 1.934 and mean women = 1.617), (d) “All schools should accept homosexuals” (men mean = 2.078 and women mean = 1.750), and (e) “Homosexuals should have the right to run for any political or public office” (men mean = 2.194 and women mean = 1.893). In this category, women tend to strongly agree with the statements, while men agree; therefore, the results show significant differences between men’s (mean = 2.226) and women’s (mean = 1.888) attitudes. The topics in this category need to be included in the standards competencies related to gender diversity issues, and schools need to carry out a training process.

Finally, the questionnaire established that discrimination occurs when a person’s access to rights and opportunities is unfairly limited due to specific characteristics such as age, gender, or skin color. In this sense, the study presented students with groups of people who could be discriminated against and asked them to assess this condition. The groups of people were (a) women (men mean = 2.492 and women mean = 2.224), (b) young people (men mean = 2.796 and women mean = 2.656), (c) homosexual people (men mean = 1.590 and mean women = 1.448), (d) people without a job (men mean = 2.758 and women mean = 2.558), (e) people with disabilities (men mean = 2.490 and women mean = 2.045), (f) people of African descent (men mean = 2.251 and women mean = 1.973), (g) religious minorities (men mean = 2.657 and women mean = 2.427), (h) poor people (men mean = 2.406 and mean women = 2.058), (i) older people (men mean = 2.843 and women mean = 2.642), (j) immigrants (men mean = 2.708 and mean women = 2.477), and (k) persons of indigenous origin (men mean = 2.521 and women mean = 2.232). This category also shows differences between men (mean = 2.507) and women (mean = 2.251). The results can be interpreted in favor of men since they indicate attitudes of little discrimination, while women tend to present discriminatory attitudes to a certain extent. In this regard, it is necessary that the competencies related to plurality, identity, and an appreciation of differences are widely shared in school with the goal of recognizing Colombian society’s cultural diversity.

Conclusions

The results demonstrate that in Colombia, there is a relationship between gender and the attitudes evaluated in the Latin American questionnaire of the ICCS 2016. The comparison of men's and women's means established significant differences in eight of the nine categories. Furthermore, the government and leaders category indicated significant differences in favor of women, which means that they strongly disagreed with inadequate practices involving leaders, while men expressed disagreement. This is consistent with previous studies in which men showed greater confidence in government-related activities (Vivero & Diaz, 2017).

The authoritarian government category did not show significant differences; men and women indicated strongly disagreement with authoritarian practices of governments, which is likely related to the findings of Ghorbani & Khajavy (2023). They found that young people may have negative images of some governments due to political tensions between countries.

The corrupt practices category indicated significant differences, which showed that women have greater attitudes of rejection toward this type of practice in governments compared to men. This finding is important since Latin America has low levels of transparency in governments, which prevents a democratic society from being successful (Schultz et al., 2018). In addition, a high perception of corruption is related to low levels of trust in governments (Canache & Allison, 2005). Thus, educational institutions should strengthen knowledge about corruption in young people and how it affects democracy, which will impact attitudes toward this type of practice.

The violence category showed significant differences, which infers that women have attitudes of disagreement with aggressive behaviors in national, school, and family scenarios. The results align with other studies that established that women reject violence more emphatically compared to men since they have been victims of different types of violence, including sexual violence (Pinos et al., 2016; Schultz et

al., 2018). According to Schulz et al. (2018), Colombia has one of the lowest approval ratings for the violence of the countries that participated in the 2016 ICCS test, which may be due to the violence experienced in the country. In this regard, future studies should determine what explanations young people give to justify violent actions.

The disobedience category presented significant differences, which is evidence of marked attitudes among women toward obeying laws. This has been confirmed by some studies that found that men are more likely to disobey rules and laws than women. Moreover, it is easier for men to participate in illegal activities (Barber & Tourney, 2009; Schultz et al., 2016). Accordingly, Schultz et al. (2018) state that disobeying the rules and laws is a constant among young people in Latin America, which should be analyzed by governments and thus find educational strategies that allow young people to improve their perceptions of the political system's illegitimacy and cultural beliefs with the goal of positively impacting the rates of compliance with the laws.

The acceptance of the diversity category demonstrated positive attitudes of women in this regard, compared to men. As such, Côté & Erickson (2009) note that discrimination affects minority social groups the most; therefore, Colombia should strengthen the acceptance of different social groups in schools to ensure the well-being of all subjects of society.

The empathy category indicated significant differences, which allowed us to interpret those women showed greater concern and compassion toward other human beings compared to men. In this sense, the findings in Colombia align with studies that found women are characterized by the attitude of helping others (Barber & Tourney, 2009; Clarke & Sulsky, 2017).

The homosexuality category showed significant differences; that is, men were in favor of relationships between subjects of the same sex, compared to women who

stated that they strongly agreed. In this regard, some research results are consistent with these findings since they determined that the following. 1. Women coexist with homosexuals in different scenarios without any problem compared to men. 2. Men have negative attitudes toward homosexuals. 3. Men tend to be more conservative than women, which may be due to religion, conservative thoughts of societies, or traditional gender beliefs (Lim, 2002; Mora, 2013; Guittar & Pals, 2014).

The discrimination category indicated differences between men's and women's attitudes, with men presenting few attitudes toward discrimination, compared to women who discriminate to a certain extent. The results are consistent with studies that have shown that there is a high degree of discrimination due to gender, poverty, and ethnic diversity in Latin America (Ñopo et al., 2010; Morgan & Bruce, 2013; Seligson, et al., 2012). This suggests the need to strengthen training on the acceptance of diversity in the school.

Finally, the results show the need to update the standards of civic and citizenship competencies in Colombia, including aspects such as governments and leaders, corrupt practices, and acceptance of diversity and homosexuality. While the 2004 standards guide educational institutions in some of the aspects evaluated in the ICCS studies, it is necessary to include competencies and knowledge that did not seem necessary 20 years ago, it requires educational systems to be updated and consider training criteria to achieve societies that accept and respect diversity.

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