

Attitudes towards savings from the perception of a Mexican sample

Actitudes hacia el ahorro desde la percepción de una muestra mexicana

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ABSTRACT

Objective. To describe the attitudes towards savings perceived by Mexican adults. **Methods.** A descriptive quantitative approach was used, with a non-experimental and cross-sectional design. The population consisted of 260 adult participants. The technique used was the online survey and the scale of attitudes towards saving was applied as an instrument, which consists of 20 items and four dimensions, with an acceptable Cronbach's alpha for each one of them. Inferential analysis was performed using Student's t-test. **Results.** Seventy-two percent of the respondents expressed a medium level attitude towards positive savings, while a few were at the low (18%) and high (10%) levels. As for the attitude by dimensions, the low level attitude was predominant in positive savings (72.3 %), the medium level in savings conditioned by the socioeconomic context (59.6 %) and hedonistic (49.2 %), while the high level was the attitude towards negative savings (48.5 %). Finally, it was found that there is a significant difference in attitudes towards saving according to gender. **Conclusion.** The level of attitudes towards saving in the selected sample is not encouraging, so efforts are needed to promote financial culture and savings habits at the individual and social level.

Keywords: attitude; saving; quantitative; descriptive; finances; perception.

RESUMEN

Objetivo. Describir las actitudes hacia el ahorro percibidas por adultos mexicanos. **Métodos.** Se empleó un enfoque cuantitativo de nivel descriptivo, con diseño no experimental y transversal. La población estuvo constituida por 260 participantes adultos. La técnica utilizada fue la encuesta vía *online* y como instrumento se aplicó la escala de actitudes hacia el ahorro, la cual consta de 20 ítems y cuatro dimensiones, con un alfa de Cronbach aceptable para cada una de ellas. Se realizó el análisis inferencial mediante la prueba de *t* de Student. **Resultados.** El 72 % de los encuestados expresaron una actitud de nivel medio hacia el ahorro positivo, mientras que unos pocos se situaron en el nivel bajo (18 %) y alto (10 %). En cuanto a la actitud por dimensiones, predominó la actitud de nivel bajo en el ahorro positivo (72.3 %), el nivel medio en ahorro condicionado por el contexto socioeconómico (59.6 %) y el hedonista (49.2 %); mientras que en el nivel alto se ubicó la actitud hacia el ahorro negativo (48.5 %). Finalmente, se encontró que sí existe diferencia significativa en las actitudes hacia el ahorro según el género. **Conclusión.** El nivel de actitud hacia el ahorro en la muestra seleccionada no es alentador, por lo que se requieren de esfuerzos que fomenten la cultura financiera, así como los hábitos de ahorro a nivel individual y social.

Palabras clave: actitud; ahorro; cuantitativo; descriptivo; finanzas; percepción.

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INTRODUCTION

In the field of psychology, when defining attitude by various authors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Quiles et al., 1998), all refer that it is the predisposition that the person has toward certain stimuli and situations, which is manifested in thought, feeling, affect, and behavior, which induce choosing and deciding about such objects. On the other hand, in finance, saving is conceived as the portion of money that the person, with discipline, values, and education (Lusardi, 2019), does not use for the present, but preserves for future needs or investments (Central Bank of the Argentine Republic [BCRA], 2023; National Commission for the Protection and Defense of Users of Financial Services [CONDUSEF], 2024; Financial Market Commission [CMF], 2024).

For the above, attitudes toward saving are human behaviors and thoughts around money, which seek to satisfy future needs, resulting from financial planning and self-control (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014), originated by internal factors, external factors, and by the economic conditions of the environment (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2020), which can be analyzed from diverse perspectives, such as: a) positive saving, which seeks to accumulate wealth (Núñez-Letamendia et al., 2024); b) saving dependent on the socioeconomic context, which reserves money depending on the economic situation of the region; c) negative saving, which does not save but does spend more than what enters (Alves Cruz et al., 2024); and, d) hedonistic saving, which means saving for desires and preferences without ceasing to enjoy life (Ondrej & Petr, 2020).

In different parts of the world, some have associated attitudes toward saving with financial literacy (Klapper et al., 2015). Others consider that there are people who make little or scarce efforts to save (Aidoo Mensah, 2023). Or, that they possess negative attitudes toward saving (Álvarez et al., 2023), although also with good saving habits (Godoy et al., 2018; Mohd & Kim, 2024), circumstances in which Mexico is not exempt, because it has been found that university adults face challenges to save while other groups maintain an adequate saving standard of living (Álvarez et al., 2024).

In view of this panorama, this research, being of current relevance given the diverse factors involved in saving, has established as its objective to describe the attitudes toward saving perceived by Mexican adults.

METHODS

Type and area of study

The study was of a quantitative approach, descriptive level, with a non-experimental, deductive, and cross-sectional design. The research was conducted from August 2024 to May 2025 in various regions of southern-southeastern Mexico.

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of accessible adult individuals between 19 and 65 years of age, evaluated online and with access to an electronic device to be able to respond to the instrument. The sample size was 260 participants; probabilistic convenience sampling was chosen, establishing as selection criteria that they were individuals willing to voluntarily respond to the survey. Those who did not agree to participate voluntarily or did not sign the informed consent were excluded, as well as those who had difficulties understanding the content of the survey, preventing informed and conscious participation.

Variable and Data Collection Instruments

The study variable, "attitude toward saving," is the positive or negative disposition of a person toward keeping money for future purposes, such as covering unforeseen expenses or achieving financial goals (Robayo & Chacón, 2017). The instrument used was the Attitudes toward Saving Scale developed by Brenlla and Fernández Da Lama (2023). The instrument is answered using a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = "Completely agree"; 2 = "Mostly agree"; 3 = "Neither agree nor disagree"; 4 = "Mostly disagree"; and 5 = "Completely disagree." The scale consists of 20 items, four dimensions with their respective items, and the corresponding reliability for each: "positive saving" (1, 5, 10, 14, 17; $\alpha = 0.82$); "saving dependent on the socioeconomic context" (3, 6, 9, 12, 18, 20; $\alpha = 0.80$); "negative saving" (2, 8, 11, 12, 15; $\alpha = 0.74$); and the dimension "hedonistic saving" (4, 7, 16, 19; $\alpha = 0.69$).

Data Collection Techniques and Procedures

The technique used to collect the data was a survey conducted through a Google Forms questionnaire, which was sent digitally to the participants. For this purpose, the researchers requested, in person, by phone, and by email, that acquaintances, family members, friends, and colleagues kindly respond to the instrument. If they accepted the request, regardless of the method used, they were provided with the electronic link to access the scale.

Having accessed the form, the first thing they read was the name of the instrument, the purpose of the research, and the statement that the data would be used only for research purposes and in a confidential manner. Next, the instrument contained the following declaration: "I agree to voluntarily respond to this survey," and immediately afterward the options "Yes" and "No" were provided, so that they could mark one of them.

If the respondent answered "No," the form no longer allowed them to continue reading the instrument, and their participation ended at that point. Those who answered "Yes" agreed to voluntarily participate in completing the survey and continued reading the instructions for responding to each of the items and the demographic section. This data collection process was carried out during the month of September 2024.

Table 1
Sample Gender

General Characteristics	n = 260	
	fi	%
Gender		
Female	142	54.6
Male	118	45.4

Based on the previously mentioned Likert-type response scale (1–5), the following summation was established: if all respondents answered with 1 for the 20 items, they would obtain 20 points. By answering with 2, they would obtain 40 points. By answering with 3, they would obtain 60 points. By answering with 4, they would obtain 80 points, and by answering with 5, they would obtain 100 points. The above procedure made it possible to construct a scale with a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 100 points, which generated a total difference of 80 points.

This difference was distributed equally into three levels to classify the attitude toward saving, assigning 27 points to each level. In this way, the following levels were established: low-level attitude (20–47 points), medium-level attitude (48–74 points), and high-level attitude (75–100 points). Once the sample was completed, data cleaning was carried out.

Data Analysis

For the analysis of the collected data, descriptive statistics were used, through which tables were obtained using frequencies and percentages. In addition, inferential analysis was carried out using Student's t-test. All these processes were performed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Ethical aspects

Entre los principios éticos aplicados en todo el proceso investigativo, figuran el del consentimiento informado vía *online*, la participación voluntaria, así como la privacidad y confidencialidad en el uso de la información, los cuales fueron comunicados a los participantes desde antes de iniciar la colecta de los datos.

RESULTS

It was observed that, regarding gender, 54.6% of the respondents were women, while 45.4% were men. Likewise, the average age of the sample was between 18 and 23 years, with a standard deviation of 8.022 (see Table 1).

In general terms, the results indicate that most of the respondents showed a medium-level attitude toward saving, representing nearly three-quarters of the total sample. In second place, and far behind the former, is the group with a low-level saving attitude, which constitutes

Table 2
General level of attitudes toward saving

Attitudes toward saving	n = 260	
	fi	%
Low	47	18.1
Medium	187	71.9
High	26	10

nearly one-fifth of the surveyed population. Finally, one-tenth of the respondents exhibited a high-level attitude toward saving (see Table 2).

Regarding saving by dimensions, in the "positive attitude toward saving," nearly three quarters showed low-level attitudes; one fifth obtained a medium level, and the rest displayed a high-level attitude.

In the dimension "attitude toward saving dependent on the socioeconomic context," the medium level predominated in more than half of the participants, followed by the group identified with a little over one fifth at the high level, while only slightly more than one tenth were at the low level.

The dimension "negative attitude toward saving" was characterized by nearly half of the sample scoring at the high level, more than one third at the medium level, and slightly more than one tenth at the low level.

When observing the dimension "hedonistic attitude toward saving," half were at the medium level, and nearly one fourth presented both low-level and high-level attitudes (see Table 3).

Table 3
Levels of attitudes toward saving by dimensions

Levels of attitudes	n = 260	
	fi	%
Positive attitude toward saving		
Low	188	72.3
Medium	55	21.2
High	17	6.5
Attitude toward saving dependent on the socioeconomic context		
Low	41	15.8
Medium	155	59.6
High	64	24.6
Actitud negativa hacia el ahorro		
Low	38	14.6
Medium	96	36.9
High	126	48.5
Attitude toward saving hedonistic		
Low	63	24.2
Medium	128	49.2
High	69	26.5



DISCUSSION

The discussion of the results will be carried out in the same order presented in the previous section. According to the general results, the Mexican sample obtained, in about three quarters of the total participants, a medium level of attitude toward saving. The result of this research is opposite to that found in two Peruvian studies (García Huamán et al., 2024; Marecos Cabral & Rojas Montiel, 2022). The first consists of a quantitative study, at a descriptive level, in a sample of 120 students from the National Autonomous University Altoandina of Tarma (Peru), in which 56.7% of the students stated that they plan, control their financial objectives, and promote a culture of saving, implying that they have high attitudes toward saving.

In the second study, 72% of 57 Peruvian students also indicated that they practiced saving habits (Marecos Cabral & Rojas Montiel, 2022), contrary to the Mexican group, which still lacks information, culture, and financial education (Castillo Cira et al., 2024). These deficiencies lead to the inadequate management of personal and national financial resources (Heredia et al., 2024). Meanwhile, in the Peruvian context, the high-level attitude may be due to the fact that students have probably already begun to enjoy greater financial inclusion by Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria (BBVA, 2022), which leads them to show greater interest in saving and managing personal finances.

In the "positive saving" dimension, a low attitude level predominated in nearly three quarters of the participants, which is similar to the study by Ochoa Herrera and Tandazo (2023), who found that 95% of 377 Macareños from Seville (Spain) did not have a saving culture. This result obtained in both groups may be due to various factors, such as a lack of knowledge about the benefits of saving, a mistaken perception of it, and low income levels that do not allow them to save and, at the same time, negatively affect their educational, socioeconomic, and cultural spheres (Ochoa Herrera & Tandazo, 2023).

The dimension "attitude toward saving dependent on the socioeconomic context" was characterized by a little more than half of the sample showing a medium level. This contrasts with the findings of Guzmán Caballero et al. (2024), where 57% of university professors from a public institution in the State of Mexico stated that they had the ability to save for unforeseen events, emergencies, or out of habit, although only 1% saved for their old age. Although both results come from Mexican samples, the present study focused on the south-southeast region of the country, which is characterized by a lower cultural and educational level, while Guzmán Caballero et al. (2024) examined the central region of the country, which has a higher standard of living in all aspects. These characteristics are a reason for the disparity in results, considering that, many times, saving is a matter of opportunities.

The dimension "negative attitude toward saving" scored high in just under half of the respondents. This result is consistent with that of Adam et al. (2024), who observed through 32 in-depth interviews that disadvantaged Arab adults in Israel also do not practice saving. Although the Mexican group studied was not classified as disadvantaged, the fact that its inhabitants are in the process of economic growth may explain the reasons for holding negative views toward saving, which may also share characteristics with the Arab group's results: not planning due to the negative influence of the social group with which they relate, the need for financial literacy, dependence on state support, and a lack of trust in the state regarding saving (Adam et al., 2024).

Lastly, the dimension "hedonistic attitude toward saving" scored at a medium level in half of the sample. This result is similar to that of Godoy et al. (2024), conducted with 120 Chilean university students, who expressed a favorable attitude toward saving, indicating a tendency to positively evaluate the accumulation of personal resources for medium- or long-term future use; for this reason, they generally save for travel, entertainment, and personal well-being, and not only to secure the future.

For Mexicans, this hedonistic attitude may be due to saving with a purpose oriented toward luxuries or personal improvements that provide them with a certain personal and social satisfaction, since when incomes increase, people tend to seek a comfortable life of pleasure, happiness, and social recognition, which leads them to save (Sharmila & Rerumandla, 2023).

To finalize, it is worth noting that this study has as strengths the fact that it is one of the few carried out in the south-southeast region of the Mexican Republic. In addition, the sample investigated is of an acceptable size. Nevertheless, among the limitations are that the sampling was non-probabilistic and that the data were collected online, which may generate greater biases when responding to the scale. Despite these limitations, the study is useful as an initial diagnosis for local and regional governments in this Mexican area to implement financial policies that promote saving from early ages through adulthood.

CONCLUSIONS

The level of attitude toward saving among adults is not worthy of imitation, because a clear outstanding sociocultural debt in terms of financial education and saving is observed in this Mexican sector. All of this prevents people from improving, up to this moment, their financial well-being at the family, personal, and social levels, even for the immediate and future generations.

Recommendation

It is recommended to design and develop workshops in various modalities (in-person and online) for adults,

especially for vulnerable communities, on topics of saving; to offer courses or workshops on strategies for generating wealth as sources for living and saving, with the purpose of enjoying better economic well-being to face present and future needs with dignity, security, and financial comfort.

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Authorship contribution

ELL: Conception, design, statistical interpretation, and final review of the manuscript's writing.

LCLG: Data collection, and writing of the Introduction and Methodology sections.

LJCS: Data collection, and writing of the Results and Discussion sections.

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