

## An Empirical Analysis of the Economic Values Variable, 'Competition Is Good or Harmful' Variances Based on Gender, Age and Education- Evidence from World Values Survey

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### **Abstract**

According to the Cambridge dictionary, competition is a situation in which someone is trying to win something or be more successful than someone else. The word competition is used in different contexts with different meanings. For example, competition between the players of a sport, competition between different companies selling the same product, competition among the students to come first in the race or class, and so on. In Economics the word competition has a different meaning. It depends on the economic values a person holds. The main objective of this study is to explore the economic values variable "Competition is good or harmful" from different cultures and nations' perspectives taking the data from the world values survey the seventh wave. Another objective is to analyze whether any variance of opinion exists among the respondents based on gender, age and education. The study applied exploratory methodology taking the data from 84 countries, where the number of respondents are  $N = (1,24,443)$  among which there are  $(57,865)$  males and  $(66,578)$  female participants across nations. Mann-Whitney-U- Test and Kruskal Wallis tests are run to find the variance. The major findings include that there is significant variance exists in the perception of male and female participants as well as variance exist with different age groups and educational qualifications.

**Keywords:** Competition, Economic Values, Gender, Age, Education. Variance

### **Introduction**

Competition between humans or groups of humans is something we come across daily, sports events reported in the paper, corporations trying to sell more than their competitors, kids racing each other to the door, most published papers, or answering the teacher's question first. Whether competition is in human genetics or something learned has been debated in psychology for a long time; Sigmund Freud argued that humans are born competing for the attention of their parents and Charles Darwin's work about natural selection has also been

used as an argument that competition is in our genetics, even though he never stated such a thing. However, other studies suggest that competition is something induced by culture and how it's viewed is based on how society values competition. For example, in Swedish culture, it's not encouraged to tell people how good you are compared to others whereas in the USA it's more accepted (Kristensen, Troeng, Safavi, & Narayanan, 2015). Is there a difference of opinion for the word competition being good or harmful across nations? If yes which are the countries where the respondents perceive that competition is good and which countries respondents believe that competition is harmful. Is there any difference of opinion among the male and female respondents? If yes which gender considers competition is harmful? Is there any difference of opinion among different age groups and different education groups? If yes who supports competition and who does not? In this study, the researcher focuses on one of the economic values variables 'whether competition is good or harmful' taking the data from eighty-four countries from the world values to survey the seventh wave, which was conducted from 2017 to 2021. The term "economic values" is that belthathich people believe related to economic terms like money, income, trade, industry, private or public ownership of business and government responsibility, competition, and success of the person (Begum, 2021). Another study by (Kavulu & Begum, 2021) explored the gender variance for the ethical values variable. The study found that there are significant variances based on Gender, Age and Educational background of the respondents from the world values survey data for the ethics and norms variable. This study focuses on one of the economic values variables, 'Competition is good or harmful'.

### **1. Objectives:**

- To explore the economic values variable "Competition is good or harmful" from the perspective of different nations and cultures.
- To analyze and explore whether any variance exists in the perspectives between different gender, age and educational qualification groups.

### **Review of Literature**

According to (Dehejia, 2015), there is an exploratory question which says, Is more competition always better? Most economists would say yes and, in the marketplace, their wisdom is usually true. An economics student is taught in the very first year that competition is good for consumers as it leads to lower prices and more choice and on the other hand monopolies raise prices and limit choice. Economists would say that more competition is better among governments be it

in the economic or political marketplace.

According to (Competition Bureau, 2022) in a competitive environment, businesses must produce and sell the products that consumers want and offer them at prices they are agreeable to. This clearly means in a competitive market; the consumers hold the power. When there is inadequate competition and consumer choice, businesses have the command to lay down their terms which can lead them to offer products and services that are too expensive and of low quality. Without competition, consumers might have to accept inferior products and services that lack features. A study by (Harrison, 2017) states that the feedback from the competition can be utilized to evaluate social, behavioral psychological outcomes and can also help to provide a rich learning environment where kids can express and develop their physical and personal skills. The study further elaborates that with proper instructions, competition can encourage a child to work on their behavior under emotional and intense situations and will develop strong emotional intelligence in them. It says that competition and competence are correlated as such that if you can control your emotions, you will prefer to work hard and accept new challenges to increase your learning.

An opinion stated by (Saltzman, 2014), states that Capitalism is driven by a competitive market. He says, don't hate the player instead hate the game or more better love the game as competition will drive you to the best you can be. It will take you out of your comfort zone and will force you to create enhanced products and services. According to him, if you persistently don't try to make things better, you are not innovating and its failure will lead you to obsolescence, so keep making your product better and better.

The (Competition Bureau, 2022) says productivity and standard of living are improved in competition as it pushes individuals, markets, and firms to make the best use of their resources and also to think outside the box that develops new ways of doing business and winning customers. Sometimes competition can be unhealthy and can make one put a disproportional amount of focus and emphasis on the outcome rather than making them value the process or journey it took to reach there. If outcome becomes the sole focus, it can change the mind of the individual or team to do whatever it takes to succeed. And this kind of mindset can lead to bad decisions and make them choose unethical practices. (Sky Bound, 2020). A study published in a journal, (Stucke, 2014) states that Americans strongly agreed than any other surveyed country's residents that they love competition and like situations where they can compete. Competition is the backbone of US economic policy as Supreme Court observed, 'The heart of

our national economic policy long has been faith in the value of competition.’

One of the research by (Brynne C & Tricomi, 2015) states that; competition can be implicated as a means to improve one’s effort-based learning and attention. The two experiments conducted by them examined the effects of competition on effort and memory. Participants in experiment 1 completed a physical effort task in which they were rewarded for winning an overall percentage, or for winning a competition they believed was against another player. And in experiment 2 they performed a memory task in which they were rewarded for remembering an overall percentage of shapes, or more shapes than a “competitor.” The result of the experiment indicated that in the physical effort task participant’s demonstrated faster reaction time a previous indicator of increased attention in the competitive environment and also individual differences predicted the salience of competition’s effect.

Another work by (Bishop, 2020) explores that over time, the education system has evolved as a complex competitive game involving grades, marks, prizes, and points. It is important to understand the impact of this on student and teacher performance and also consider how individuals driven by such motivations have to pay a hefty price. It is to be noted that competition might have opposite effects and is not just a motivating force.

Another research work by (Manikandan, 2019) illustrates that competitive TV shows are gaining popularity these days which raises the question of whether people are getting satisfaction from watching people compete. This trend of increased competitiveness shows obsession to win, people willing to go too far to achieve, for example, many people are willing to cheat to be successful in competition. The impact of this can be seen in the students who are caught cheating because of the pressure that they feel to get good grades as the competition to get better opportunities continues to get tougher. Competition has been intertwined with the basic need for human survival.

From all the above studies it can be noted that there is no study which focused on the people perspectives on good or harmful for the word competition and hence this study.

## **Methodology**

This research uses the primary data taken from the world values survey conducted from 2017 to 2020 (Haerpfer, et al., 2020). For the economic values variable, whether competition is good or harmful. The study applied exploratory methodology taking the data from 84 countries, where the number of respondents are N= (1, 24,443) among which there are (57,865) males

and (66,578) female participants across nations. SPSS version 25 was used to analyze the data. To explore the variances based on countries the mean values are taken. Since the scale of this variable ‘Competition is Good or Harmful’ takes the positivity from the left side of the scale and negative response on the right-hand side, a low mean value indicates that the nation’s perspective on competition is good, whereas a high mean value indicates that the perception of the Nation’s respondent on competition is harmful. From the descriptive statistics it was observed that the data values are skewed, hence the non-parametric tests are applied instead of the parametric tests. Mann-Whitney-U-Test is run to know the variance between male and female respondents and Kruskal Wallis Test is run to know the variances based on age and Education.

## Results and Discussion

Table (1): Descriptive statistics for the variable Competition is good or harmful:

Competition is Good or Harmful					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Competition is good	32950	25.9	26.5	26.5
	2	13169	10.3	10.6	37.0
	3	16261	12.8	13.1	50.1
	4	12739	10.0	10.2	60.3
	5	20707	16.3	16.6	77.0
	6	8216	6.5	6.6	83.6
	7	6106	4.8	4.9	88.5
	8	5098	4.0	4.1	92.6
	9	2694	2.1	2.2	94.7
	Competition is harmful	6569	5.2	5.3	100.0
	Total	124509	97.8	100.0	

Source: Own Computation data from the seventh wave of world values survey

Table (1) depicts the descriptive statistics for the variable ‘Competition is good or harmful’, It can be observed that (25.9) percent of respondents responded to the question as competition is good. The cumulative percent shows that (77) percent of the respondents from the 84

countries are more towards the perception that competition is good. Only (23) percent of the respondents perception is towards competition is harmful. The total respondents for this question are (1, 24,509). Based on the question framed, a lower mean indicates that the respondents are for the Competition and a higher mean indicates that the respondents are against the competition or they believe that competition is harmful. Hence the mean values of this variable are important to be analyzed and explored for getting the correct perception.

Table (2): Country-wise Mean Values:

Competition is Good or Harmful- Mean Values of Countries							
Country	Mean	Country	Mean	Country	Mean	Country	Mean
Iraq	7.14	Mexico	4.41	Puerto Rico	3.92	Peru	3.44
Nicaragua	5.54	Ukraine	4.41	Singapore	3.88	China	3.43
Thailand	5.27	Pakistan	4.34	Serbia	3.85	Georgia	3.41
Bolivia	5.05	Azerbaijan	4.33	United Kingdom	3.77	Armenia	3.38
Netherlands	4.94	Spain	4.29	Brazil	3.76	New Zealand	3.36
Ecuador	4.86	Russia	4.28	Bosnia Herzegovina	3.71	Taiwan ROC	3.34
Argentina	4.83	Philippines	4.27	Slovakia	3.7	Vietnam	3.32
Mongolia	4.78	Italy	4.22	Poland	3.67	United States	3.3
Guatemala	4.75	Malaysia	4.2	Cyprus	3.62	Croatia	3.29
South Korea	4.74	Greece	4.19	Hungary	3.62	Sweden	3.27
Turkey	4.65	Zimbabwe	4.17	Australia	3.6	Bulgaria	3.25
Kazakhstan	4.63	Canada	4.15	North Macedonia	3.6	Andorra	3.13
Colombia	4.6	Slovenia	4.15	Kenya	3.59	Czech Rep.	3.1
Chile	4.59	Portugal	4.1	Nigeria	3.59	Estonia	3.08
Japan	4.57	Macau SAR	4.06	Austria	3.57	Romania	2.97
France	4.56	Finland	4.02	Iran	3.53	Iceland	2.95
Kyrgyzstan	4.53	Hong Kong SAR	4.02	Norway	3.5	Tunisia	2.93
Lebanon	4.51	Lithuania	4.02	Denmark	3.45	Egypt	2.59
Indonesia	4.49	Myanmar	4	Bangladesh	3.44	Jordan	2.57
Montenegro	4.45	Switzerland	3.95	Belarus	3.44	Albania	2.45
Tajikistan	4.42	World	3.92	Germany	3.44	Ethiopia	1.76

Source: Own computation data from world values survey

Table (2) depicts the Mean values of the eighty-four (84) countries of the world values survey as well as the mean of all the countries put together for the variable, 'Competition is good or

harmful'. A higher mean indicates the perception that competition is harmful and a lower mean indicates that the competition is good. It can be observed that Iraq has the highest mean with (7.14) followed by Nicaragua (5.54), Thailand (5.27), Bolivia (5.05). This shows that these countries' people's perception is competition is harmful. On the other side, Ethiopia has the lowest mean of (1.76) followed by Albania (2.45), Jordan (2.57), Egypt (2.59), the United States which is well known for its competitive society has a mean value of (3.3) and China has (3.43). These countries 'people's perception is that competition is good.

Table (3): Competition is Good or Harmful and Gender Cross tabulation:

Competition is Good or Harmful * Gender Cross tabulation				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Competition is good	Count	16582	16358	32940
	% Within Gender	28.7%	24.6%	26.5%
2	Count	6711	6445	13156
	% Within Gender	11.6%	9.7%	10.6%
3	Count	7808	8442	16250
	% Within Gender	13.5%	12.7%	13.1%
4	Count	5698	7032	12730
	% Within Gender	9.8%	10.6%	10.2%
5	Count	8741	11957	20698
	% Within Gender	15.1%	18.0%	16.6%
6	Count	3472	4739	8211
	% Within Gender	6.0%	7.1%	6.6%
7	Count	2677	3427	6104
	% Within Gender	4.6%	5.1%	4.9%
8	Count	2265	2831	5096
	% Within Gender	3.9%	4.3%	4.1%
9	Count	1161	1531	2692
	% Within Gender	2.0%	2.3%	2.2%
Competition is harmful	Count	2750	3816	6566
	% Within Gender	4.8%	5.7%	5.3%
Total	Count	57865	66578	124443
	% Within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Own Computation data from the seventh wave of world values survey

Table (3) depicts the cross-tabulation of gender and the observed variable competition is good or harmful. It can be observed that more female respondents' perception is towards competition

is harmful. In the latter part, this will be discussed further.

Table (4) (A): Cross-tabulation of Education level and Competition is good or harmful:

Competition is Good or Harmful * Highest educational level attained Cross tabulation					
		HThe higher educational level attained			Total
		Lower	Middle	Upper	
Competition is good	Count	9640	13110	9952	32702
	% Within Highest educational level attained	27.7%	27.0%	24.7%	26.5%
2	Count	3208	5180	4706	13094
	% Within Highest educational level attained	9.2%	10.7%	11.7%	10.6%
3	Count	3566	6274	6311	16151
	% Within Highest educational level attained	10.2%	12.9%	15.7%	13.1%
4	Count	2860	4963	4818	12641
	% Within Highest educational level attained	8.2%	10.2%	12.0%	10.2%
5	Count	5770	8207	6557	20534
	% Within Highest educational level attained	16.6%	16.9%	16.3%	16.6%
6	Count	2440	3139	2560	8139
	% Within Highest educational level attained	7.0%	6.5%	6.4%	6.6%
7	Count	1840	2305	1912	6057
	% Within Highest educational level attained	5.3%	4.8%	4.8%	4.9%
8	Count	1704	1918	1448	5070
	% Within Highest educational level attained	4.9%	4.0%	3.6%	4.1%
9	Count	1022	1004	643	2669
	% Within Highest educational level attained	2.9%	2.1%	1.6%	2.2%
Competition is harmful	Count	2757	2414	1332	6503
	% Within Highest educational level attained	7.9%	5.0%	3.3%	5.3%
Total	Count	34807	48514	40239	123560
	% Within Highest educational level attained	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Own Computation data from seventh wave of world values survey

Table (4) (A) depicts the cross-tabulation of educational qualification and the competition is good or harmful. Is there any variance between the respondent's educational level and the perception on competition is good or harmful is further explored in the latter part.



Table 4 (B): Education level of the respondents:

Highest educational level attained – Respondent					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lower	36014	28.3	28.5	28.5
	Middle	49552	38.9	39.2	67.7
	Upper	40746	32.0	32.3	100.0
	Total	126312	99.2	100.0	

Source: Own Computation data from seventh wave of world values survey

Table (4) (B) depicts that; three levels of education level are recorded, lower, middle and upper. Around (32.3) percent of the respondents are holding upper-level education. The total respondents for this variable are (1,26,312) excluding the missing values and other responses.

Table (5): Cross-tabulation of Age and Competition:

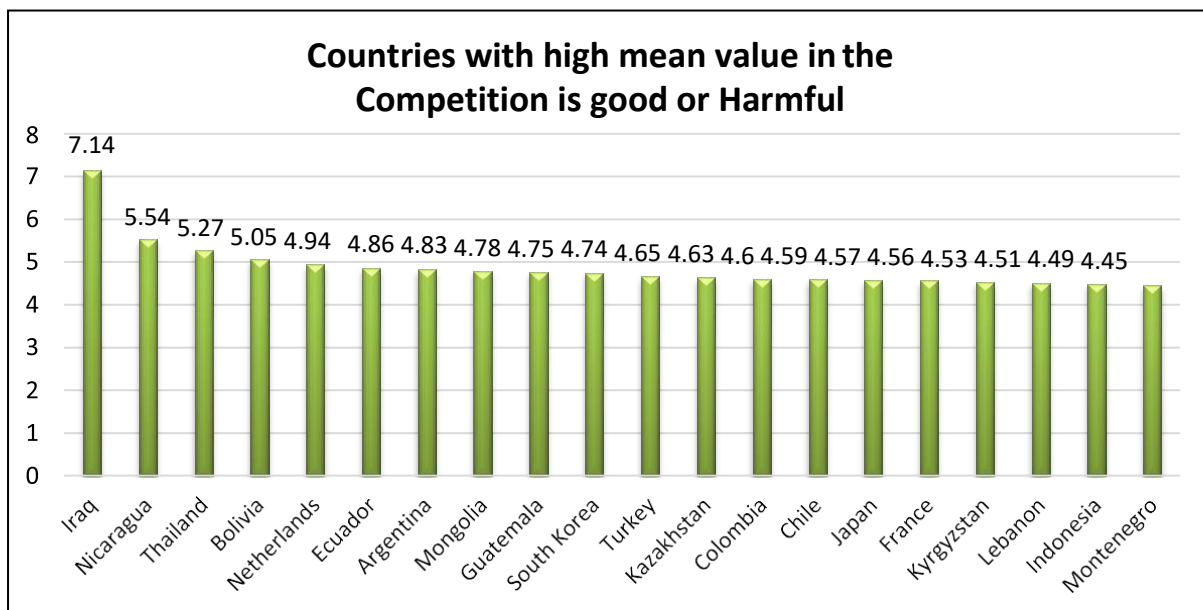
Competition is Good or Harmful * Age of the Respondents Cross tabulation					
		Age of the Respondents			Total
		15-29 years	30-49 years	50 and more years	
Competition is good	Count	7071	12196	13541	32808
	% Within Age of the Respondents	26.0%	26.6%	26.6%	26.5%
2	Count	2538	4890	5689	13117
	% Within Age of the Respondents	9.3%	10.7%	11.2%	10.6%
3	Count	3328	6008	6853	16189
	% Within Age of the Respondents	12.2%	13.1%	13.5%	13.1%
4	Count	2798	4652	5210	12660
	% Within Age of the Respondents	10.3%	10.1%	10.2%	10.2%
5	Count	4499	7268	8826	20593
	% Within Age of the Respondents	16.5%	15.9%	17.3%	16.6%
6	Count	1798	3059	3308	8165
	% Within Age of the Respondents	6.6%	6.7%	6.5%	6.6%
7	Count	1408	2303	2365	6076
	% Within Age of the Respondents	5.2%	5.0%	4.6%	4.9%
8	Count	1249	1888	1929	5066

	<b>% Within Age of the Respondents</b>	4.6%	4.1%	3.8%	4.1%
<b>9</b>	<b>Count</b>	699	1028	961	2688
	<b>% Within Age of the Respondents</b>	2.6%	2.2%	1.9%	2.2%
<b>Competition is harmful</b>	<b>Count</b>	1814	2548	2191	6553
	<b>% Within Age of the Respondents</b>	6.7%	5.6%	4.3%	5.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>Count</b>	27202	45840	50873	123915
	<b>% Within Age of the Respondents</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Own Computation data from seventh wave of world values survey

Table (5) depicts the cross-tabulation of the Age of the respondent with the variable competition is good or harmful. The age of the respondents is categorized into three categories. Is there any variance based on the age in the perception for the competition is further explored.

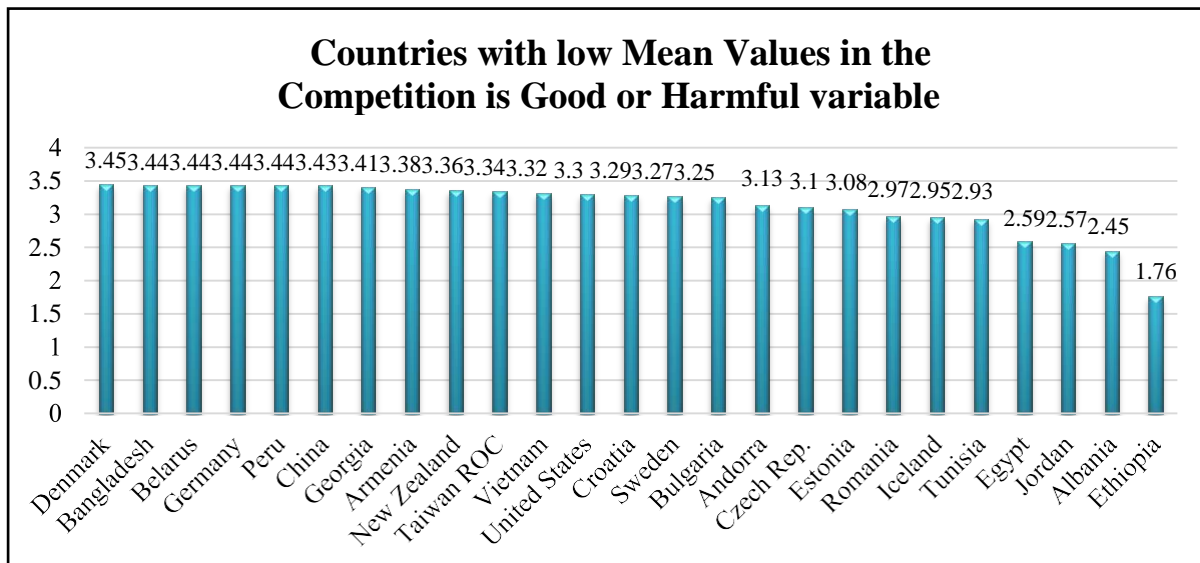
Figure (1): Countries with high mean value:



Source: Own computation data from WVS

Figure (1) depicts the countries with the highest mean values. As mentioned earlier the countries with high mean indicate that these economies perceive that completion is harmful. Iraq, Nicaragua, Thailand, Bolivia, Netherlands, Ecuador, Argentina, Mongolia, and the other nations mentioned above perceive that competition is harmful.

Figure (2): Countries with low mean value:



Source: Own Computation data from seventh wave of world values survey

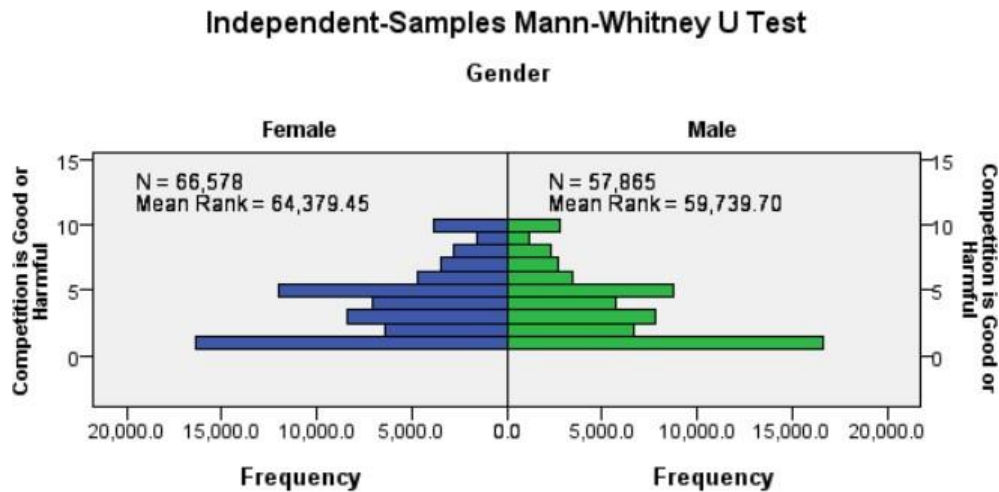
Figure (2) depicts the countries whose mean value is low. Ethiopia, Albania, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Iceland, and Romania have mean values lesser than (3). This is an indication that these countries' respondents are more towards the perception that competition is good. Countries like Armenia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Vietnam, United States, have mean values lesser than (3.4) which indicates that these economies are pro-completion. Countries like Denmark, Bangladesh, Germany, Peru, China, and Georgia also support and perceive Competition as good.

Table (6): Hypothesis Test Summary for Competition and Gender:

Hypothesis Test Summary			
Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
The distribution of Competition is Good or Harmful is the same across categories of Gender	Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0	Reject the null hypothesis
<b>Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05</b>			

Source: Own Computation data using SPSS from WVS

Figure (3): Independent Sample Test Mann-Whitney U Test:



Source: Own Computation data from seventh wave of world values survey

Table (7): Mean Values for the variable Gender and Competition cross-tabulation:

Report			
Competition is Good or Harmful			
Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Male	3.73	57865	2.598
Female	4.05	66578	2.640
Total	3.90	124443	2.625

Source: Own Computation data from WVS

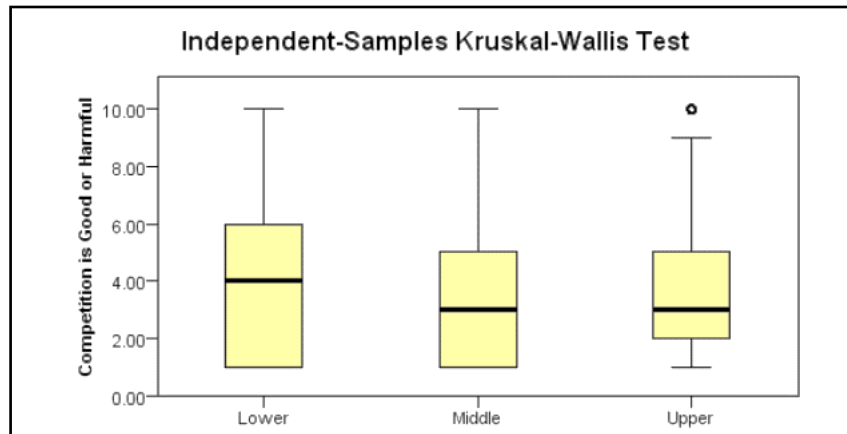
Figure (3) depicts the output of the Independent Sample Mann-Whitney U test for the Gender and Competition is good or harmful. From the above output, it can be concluded that there is significant variance found among the male and female respondents for the question competition is good or harmful. From the Table (7) it can be observed that the mean of females is more than the mean of males. Male respondents are more towards the perception that competition is good and female respondents perceive that competition is harmful from the total respondents of (1, 24,443). From the Table (6) it can be observed that the null hypothesis is rejected with an asymptotic significance two-sided value of (0.00) which is less than (0.05)

Table (8): Hypothesis summary and the output of Kruskal Wallis Test:

Hypothesis Test Summary			
Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
The distribution of Competition is Good or Harmful is the same across categories of Highest educational level attended	Independent Samples Kruskal - Wallis Test	0	Reject the null hypothesis
<b>Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05</b>			

Source: Own Computation data using SPSS from WVS

Figure (4): Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test:



Source: Own Computation data from seventh wave of world values survey

Table (9): Cross-tabulation of Education and Competition:

Report			
Competition is Good or Harmful			
Highest educational level attained	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Lower	4.16	34807	2.868
Middle	3.85	48514	2.600
Upper	3.72	40239	2.405
<b>Total</b>	3.90	123560	2.624

Source: Own Computation data from the seventh wave of world values survey

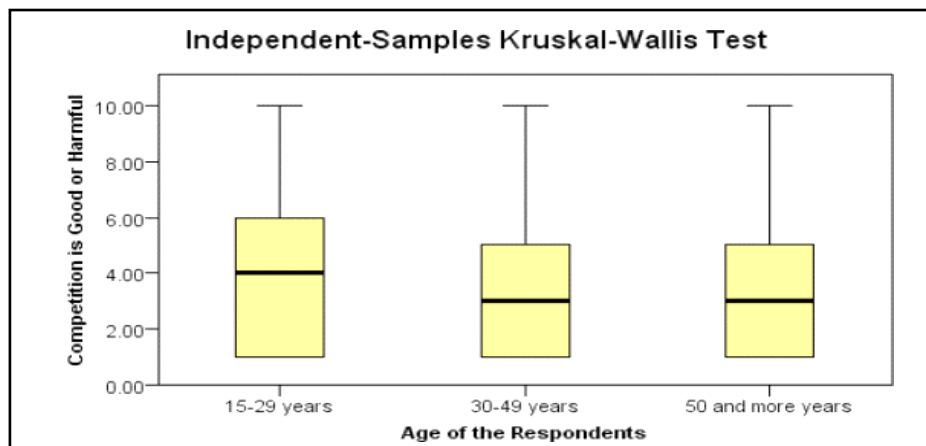
From Table (8), (9) and Figure (4) it can be observed that the mean values of lower education acquired respondents are more than the upper education respondents. The hypothesis that there is no variance between the different educational qualification groups is rejected with an asymptotic significance two-sided value of (0.000) which is less than (0.05).

Table (10): Hypothesis summary for the Age Variation:

Hypothesis Test Summary			
Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
The distribution of Competition is Good or Harmful is the same across categories of Age of the Respondents	Independent Samples Kruskal - Wallis Test	0	Reject the null hypothesis
<b>Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05</b>			

Source: Own Computation data using SPSS from WVS

Figure (5): Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test:



Source: Own Computation data from seventh wave of world values survey

Table (11): Mean values of Age and Competition cross-tabulation:

Report			
Competition is Good or Harmful			
Age of the Respondents	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
15-29 years	4.08	27202	2.739
30-49 years	3.91	45840	2.654
50 and more years	3.79	50873	2.533
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>123915</b>	<b>2.626</b>

Source: Own Computation data from seventh wave of world values survey

Figure (5) depicts the report of the Kruskal Wallis Test. The null hypothesis there is no variance among different age groups is rejected with the asymptotic significance value of (0.000) which is less than (0.05). It can be observed that the younger generation consider competition is harmful than the age group of 50 years and above. There is an inverse relationship between the age group and mean values.

### Findings

1. The countries which are positive towards competition is good are Ethiopia, Albania, Jordan, Egypt and so on.
2. The countries which are positive towards competition is harmful are Iraq, Nicaragua, Thailand, Bolivia, and so on.
3. Iraq has the highest mean value depicting the perception of the people that competition is harmful.
4. Ethiopia has the lowest mean value depicting the people's perspective as Competition is good.
5. There is significant variance in the mean values of males and female.
6. Females consider excess competition as harmful.
7. There is significant variance in the mean values of different education attained groups.
8. There is significant variance in the mean values of different age groups.
9. There is an inverse relationship between age and Competition perspectives.
10. Respondent in the age group of (15-39) consider competition as harmful.
11. There is an inverse relationship between Education level and Competition perspectives.
12. Lower education groups consider competition as more harmful than the upper education group.

### Conclusion

The main aim of this study is to explore whether, "competition is good or harmful" from different cultures and nations' perspectives taking the data from the world values survey the seventh wave. Based on the analysis it is concluded that there is a difference in the perspectives of the respondents of different cultures and nations. Some countries support competition and take it as good and some countries take competition as harmful. Another objective is to analyze whether any variance of opinion exists among the respondents based on gender, age and education. It is concluded that there is a significant variance between different gender groups and the male respondents consider competition as good and female respondents consider competition as harmful comparatively. Similarly, different age groups perceive it differently, the younger generation considers competition as harmful and the older age group considers it as good. There is significant variance among the respondents of different educational backgrounds. The lower education group considers it as harmful compared to the group with upper education.

## Future Study

It is proposed to study the variable from the cross-cultural perspectives of the respondents of a nation and the actual economy of the nation.

## Acknowledgements

The results of the analysis for this research paper are derived from the recorded variables from the world values survey's seventh wave data. Therefore, all the credits and all the value aspects and thanks go to the World Values Survey Team for providing the data source and the researcher acknowledges her special thanks to the Tishk International University Management for providing a congenial environment and encouragement to conduct this research.

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