

Stolen dreams: Youth in poor communities on the Coast of Paraná – Brazil

Adilson Anacleto¹, Allan Santos Greim dos Prazeres², Larissa do Rosário Lopes Marques³, Luciane Scheuer⁴, André Ricardo Antonovicz Munhoz⁵, Ana Carolina da Silva Soares⁶, Emanoela Amanda Pinto da Cruz Rodrigues Teixeira⁷, Jaqueline de Souza dos Santos⁸, Alessandro Vinicios Schneider⁹

1. (Corresponding author) Administration Department, Associate Professor, Professor from the Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Program Society and Development – PPGSeD, Professor from Postgraduate Program in Coastal and Insular Environments - PALI. State University of Paraná, Paranaguá Campus, Paraná, Brazil. Orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1050-4643>, Adilson.anacleto@unespar.edu.br
2. Administration Department, Scientific Initiation Researcher, State University of Paraná, Paranaguá, Brazil, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1324-0268>, allandex71@gmail.com
3. Administration Department, Scientific Initiation Researcher, State University of Paraná, Paranaguá, Brazil, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9378-4227>, ldorosariolopesmarques@gmail.com
4. Administration Department, Associate Professor State University of Paraná, Paranaguá Campus, Paraná, Brazil.
5. Graduated in Law from the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences of Cascavel – UNIVEL, Orcid: 0000-0002-3127-4181, dpmunhoz@hotmail.com
6. Administration Department, Scientific Initiation Researcher, State University of Paraná, Paranaguá, Brazil, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7162-3577>, anacarolinasoares2595@gmail.com
7. Administration Department, Scientific Initiation Researcher, State University of Paraná, Paranaguá, Brazil, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5386-3286>, emanoela.teixeira.51@estudante.unespar.edu.br
8. Administration Department, Scientific Initiation Researcher, State University of Paraná, Paranaguá, Brazil, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7191-7666>, Jaque_gd@outlook.com
9. Administration Department, Professor Unioeste, Paraná, Brazil, Orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9247-4670>, alessandro.schneider1@unioeste.br

Abstract

Brazil is going through a period of instability in the economic and social areas, resulting from a model of governmental management that cares little, especially for the new generations. In this context, a descriptive exploratory study was carried out with 173 young people about the problems faced in building the future. The study revealed that the average age was 19.24 years old and the average income was USD 270 for a family with an average of 4.6 people, without their own residence. 40% of these families did not have formal

employment. 36.5% of young people felt deeply discouraged about the future, and among the reasons revealed by them there were the absence of a minimum income (39.9%), difficulty in accessing free public education (28%), low job offer that can reconcile with studies (22%), not considering themselves capable of overcoming difficulties (18%) and fear of failure (14%). According to the perception of all respondents, public policies to encourage minorities and access to education and work have been dilapidated in recent years and that has been the main cause that prevents the future desired by new generations.

Keywords: hope; public policy; education; social vulnerability

1. Introduction

Human youth is by its nature associated with dreams and expectations about the future, during this phase, the young person seeks within himself, the construction of his own identity, in the process of change from young phase to adult, in this period there is a change of concerns, because they live in a time of instability and uncertainties about their future, since the transformations that the world is currently going through cause great impacts on the socialization and insertion of young people in the relationships that will be established in their lives.

The arrival of the adult period coincides with the trajectory that the young person must follow for a professional career, it is not uncommon for them to feel frightened by the idea that they are responsible for their own history and the construction of the future, however they often have lack of prospects for the future, especially for young people living in poorer communities (RAITZ, PETTERS 2008).

Apparently, the main way to reverse this situation that generates anxiety and fear is education, and in this context, qualification becomes necessary, since the job market is constantly changing and young people need to adapt to this reality. From this perspective, Leccardi (2005) describes that the future is the space for the construction of a life project and, at the same time, for the definition of oneself, when he/she projects what he/she will do in the future, he/she also projects, in parallel, who will take the decision at this stage refers to the deferral of rewards in an extended time horizon, which involves the capacity for self-control and the conduction of his/her life for which time programming becomes crucial.

At this stage of life, it is still relevant to emphasize what was described by Nunes et al (2021) who says that young people who are tired of being treated as young people live a time of waiting and preparation, without considering what they are, what they can and what dream, they claim the right to the present and to build a better future for themselves, perhaps, for the world.

The conquest of new paths of freedom and spaces of experimentation as well as self-identification becomes a relevant factor in the process of this person building, and Paredes and Pecora (2004) describe through their study that 71.5% of the young people are most concerned about “being able to study to have a better life”, and this “being someone in life” is closely linked to the process of transforming young people into adults, and the incessant search for social acceptance (LECCARDI 2005). This idea is closely linked to the deepest dreams and nightmares of young people, who this way, reject the idea of failing in some of these aspects, which in turn would represent a failed trajectory in their future or low social acceptance.

Other factors must be considered in this trajectory, such as those revealed by Bastos (2005), who adds that for this it is necessary to consider certain social barriers intrinsic to the future of these young people, such as social class and income, the socioeconomic determinants. It must be taken into account that the socioeconomic determinants represent the main obstacle to the realization of the professional options of them, since the condition of being a young person limits him/her to the options of choice in which he/she is assigned, where, he/she tends to cease his/her own will in favor of a choice that can lead to a broader social and economic ascension.

Looking at the question of social class, it is realized that the social class that the young person lives in does not definitively determine the young person's destiny, but it certainly reduces the probability of reaching their goals, or even forces them to change their choices, denying them or adapting them to get better odds. (BASTOS, 2005). Thus, the socioeconomic condition and access to income makes it possible to summarize that there is a dispute of decisions made in the personal context of the young person, in which, although socioeconomic conditions are mostly decisive, perspectives related to time, family constitution and even access to study conditions, in this context are the obstacles that the young person will face to achieve personal and professional ascension, that will be great, therefore, it is essential to have access to knowledge and adequate training for future success and social progress. (LECCARDI 2005; KRUGMAN AND WELLS, 2011).

In this way, at this stage of life, new needs and priorities are defined, where, with the advance of globalization and capitalism, it is increasingly necessary for a diversely qualified workforce with competitive differentials, where qualification factors are abundantly promoted since it is created a more professional and specific demanding job market.

For Pochmann (2007, p. 2) the access to education, professional training and employment among young people facilitates the possibilities of constituting a life linked to social ascension, that is, generally, it is a period of transition, in which the young person leaves their familiar comfort zone for the job market and he/she is in a maturation phase. Little by little, they are adapting to the new paradigms and thus managing to enter the market, starting their careers as apprentices. According to Pereira (2020) the work environment, despite being subject to the control that superiors exercise over their work activities, provides opportunities to live with different people and learns to order their forms of sociability and their representations, which expands their experiences and contributes to the process of psychological and intellectual maturation in pursuit of their dreams.

In addition to work being an ambition for youth, it is also a matter of concern, because in addition to the uncertainty regarding their career, Brazilian economic policy is experiencing a difficult period, according to IBGE (2019) the economic downturn has promoted rapid changes in the labor market, with the most severe impacts for about 40.4% of people who live informally, and unemployment currently affects about 14% of young Brazilians between 18 and 24 years old, thus facing the period of instability that Brazil is going through in the economic and social areas, resulting from a governmental management model that is not particularly concerned with the new generations. Thus, this study aimed to organize an overview of the problems faced in the construction of the future of young people living in poor communities on the Coast of Paraná – Brazil.

2. Methodology

The present study is an exploratory descriptive research with a qualitative and contextual approach, as proposed by Anacleto et al. (2021), and the research was built through data collection with young people seeking professional qualification.

2.1 The nature of the study

The survey and diagnosis methodology were carried out based on exploratory research that aims to promote a reading of reality in the face of causal events that are relevant to know, as well as the effects caused by the way it is presented, its meaning and the context in which it is inserted. As for the nature of the research, it is qualitative in view of the fact that data collection was used based on the self-perception of the young people who participated in the study, without worrying about giving greater emphasis to the use of statistical techniques.

The research sought to assess a qualitative and interpretive approach to the dreams of young people who live in impoverished communities on the Coast of Paraná, Brazil, seeking a specific understanding of the phenomena in terms of the meanings of self-perception of the future, as well as establishing a contextual approach analyzing the relationship of poverty with other facts such as social and psychological issues.

Thus, the diagnosis was constituted in the portrait about the thinking about the dreams of 173 young people and the difficulties regarding the problems faced in the construction of their future.

2.2 Characterization of the study region

Paraná Coast is composed by seven municipalities: Antonina, Guaraqueçaba, Guaratuba, Matinhos, Morretes, Paranaguá and Pontal do Paraná. The regional population according to IBGE (2022) is over 250,000 inhabitants and the average per capita income is on average R\$ 765.85, and the region receives two million summer tourists annually.

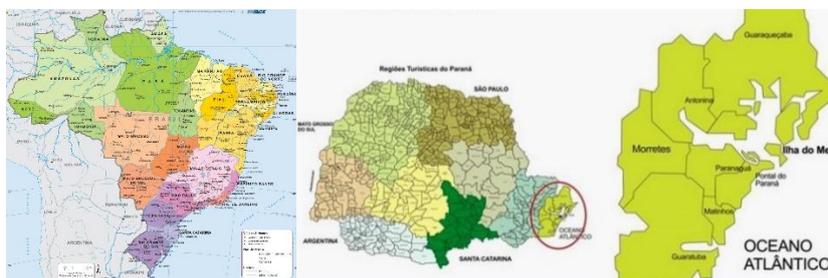


Figure 1. Geographical location of coastal cities in the State of Paraná.

Source: IBGE (2022).

2.3 Visits, data collection and analysis

The field research was from January to June 2022, with 173 young people seeking professional qualification in the seven municipalities of the coastal region of the State of Paraná and who were predisposed

to collaborate with the research.

Data collection was carried out with a semi-structured interview with a pre-prepared script of questions. Initially, the people interviewed answered questions about the socioeconomic profile, and later they answered questions about the social and psychological implications, in order to understand the complexity of psychosocial environments and the direct dialogue of the people interviewed with the scenario of economic crisis experienced in Brazil.

After data collection, an interpretative analysis was carried out through the data triangulation technique, classifying elements of cause and effects of the young people's experience in relation to the dreams of the future, so that the crossing of this information could reveal trends among the people interviewed, and so as it was sought to homogenize the possible objects within groups, it was also sought to maximize the heterogeneity between the investigated group as proposed by Vergara (2015).

3. Results

The average age among the volunteers participating in the study was 19.24 years old, with women being the majority (n=104 people, 60.12%). Regarding the identification of people by color, similarly to what was written by IBGE (2019), whites and browns were the majority of respondents (Figure 2).

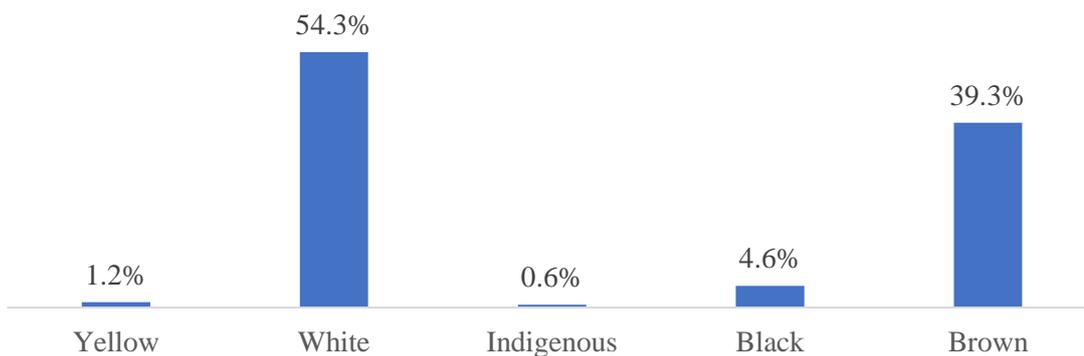


Figure 2. Sample distribution % by skin color (n=173 people)

Regarding marital status, there was a strong predominance of single people (n=91.33%) followed by married people (n=6.36%) and in a stable relationship (n=2.31%), and regarding the other categories were not recorded, probably due to the age of the target audience for the study. The family structure among the people interviewed was an average of five people, of which on average three of them were working. It was identified that 78.03% of young people still lived in their parents' house.

Regarding sexual orientation, most of the people interviewed declared themselves to be heterosexual, however other groups were also sampled (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Sample distribution % by sexual orientation (n=173 people)

The formal study among the interviewees proved to be a strong factor in plans for the future, all the study participants already attend formal education and have dreams related to school education in their plans for the future (Figure 4)

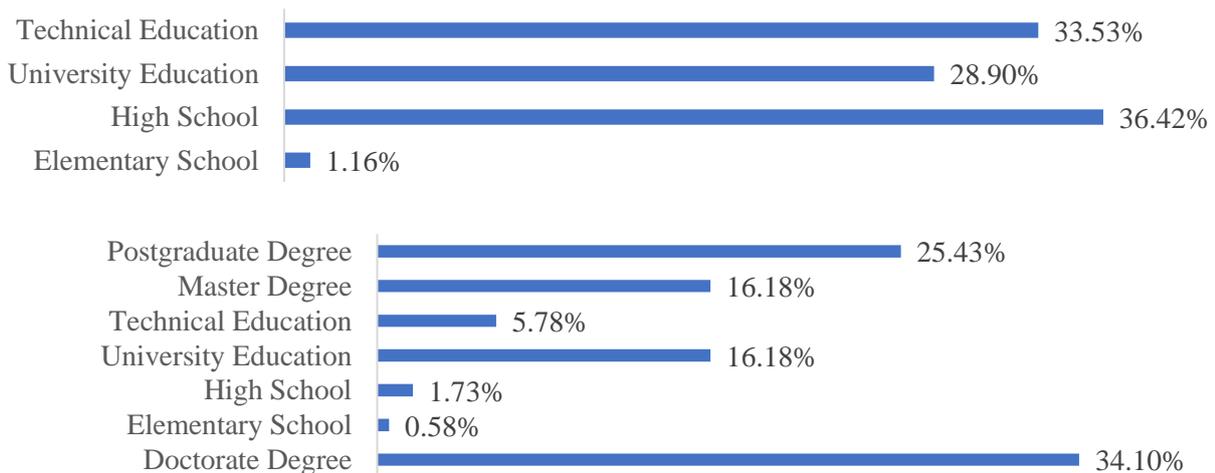


Figure 4. Distribution of formal education in progress X intended education (n=173 people).

The family income is classified as limiting the realization of dreams revealed that among the interviewees, the vast majority belonged to social class C (50.68%) followed by classes B (26.03%), D (12.33%), A (9.59%) and final E (1.37%), however, regardless of social class, completing a higher education is the priority in relation to the dreams of young people living in these impoverished communities (Figure 5), the average income was USD 270 for a family with an average of 4.6 people, without their own residence.

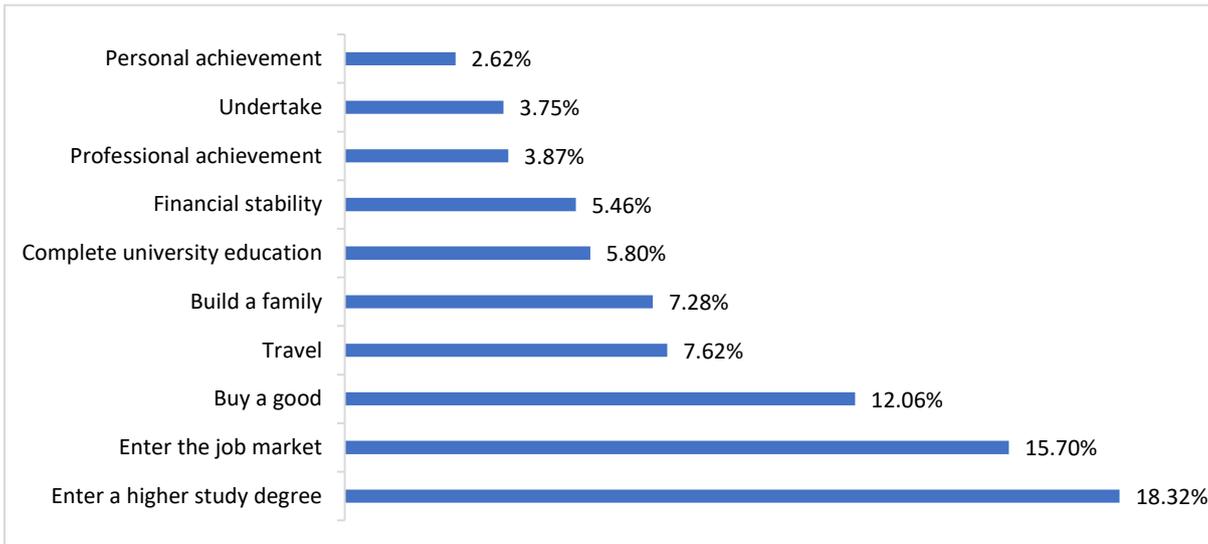


Figure 5. Main dreams related to youth in poor communities on the Coast of Paraná – Brazil.

Multiple answer question

Regarding the difficulties in realizing their dreams, the results of the study show that they are associated with the economic scenario that Brazil is currently experiencing (Figure 6), with great evidence of the financial issue pointed out as the biggest constraint to development among the evaluated group. 40% of the families to which the young people belonged did not have formal employment.

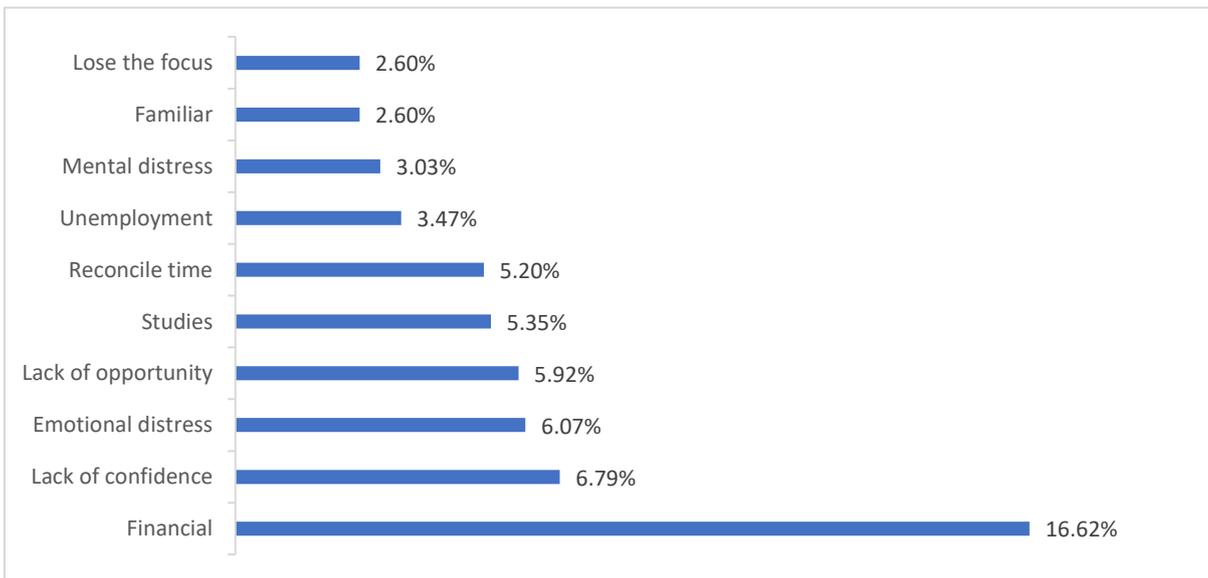


Figure 6. Main difficulties in realizing dreams related to youth in poor communities on the Coast of Paraná – Brazil.

Multiple answer question

The level of satisfaction with the reality currently experienced by the young people interviewed indicates that the majority give themselves a grade lower than the minimum considered satisfactory, this

situation corroborates what was described by Anacleto et al. (2021) who describe that in Brazil, the scenario installed by the lack of effective public policies aimed at young people has caused a pessimistic scenario where half of the young people interviewed perceive themselves to be discouraged with the realization of their dreams (Figure 7).

The study revealed that although young people in a general context feel discouraged, a subgroup revealed this behavior more sharply, of all 36.5% of those feeling "deeply discouraged" in relation to the future, among the reasons were revealed the absence of a minimum income (39.9%), difficulty in accessing free public education (28%), low offer of work that can be reconciled with studies (22%), not considering themselves capable of overcoming difficulties (18%) and fear of failure (14%).

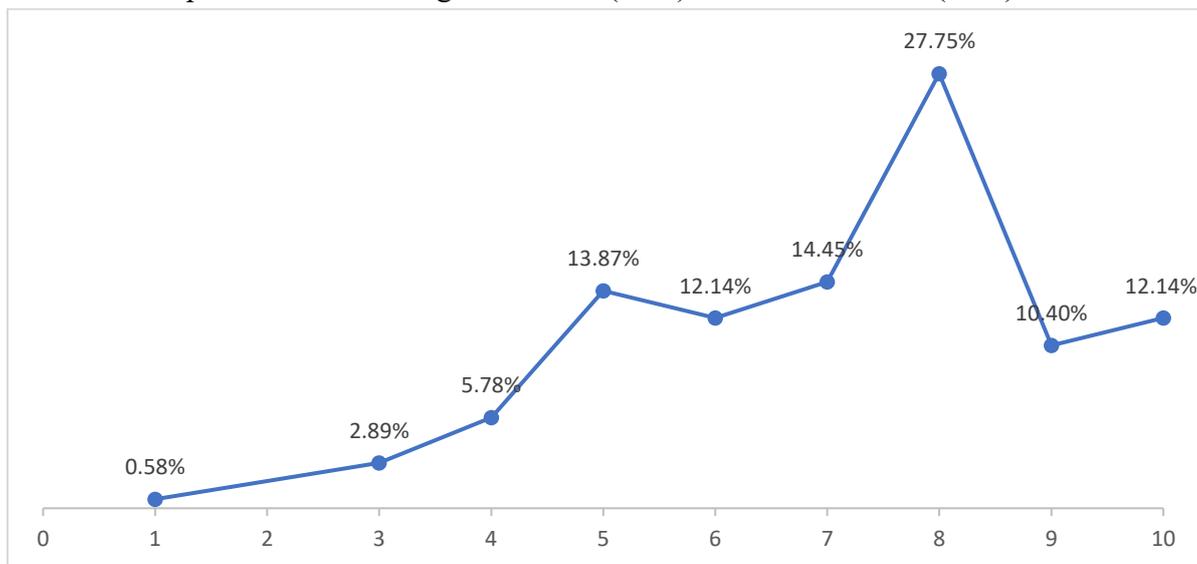


Figure 7. Level of satisfaction with the reality currently experienced by young people interviewed on the Coast of Paraná.

Multiple answer question

Young people also reported personal problems that can make it difficult to achieve their dreams, it was observed that factors related to psychological strength were the most cited (Figure 8).

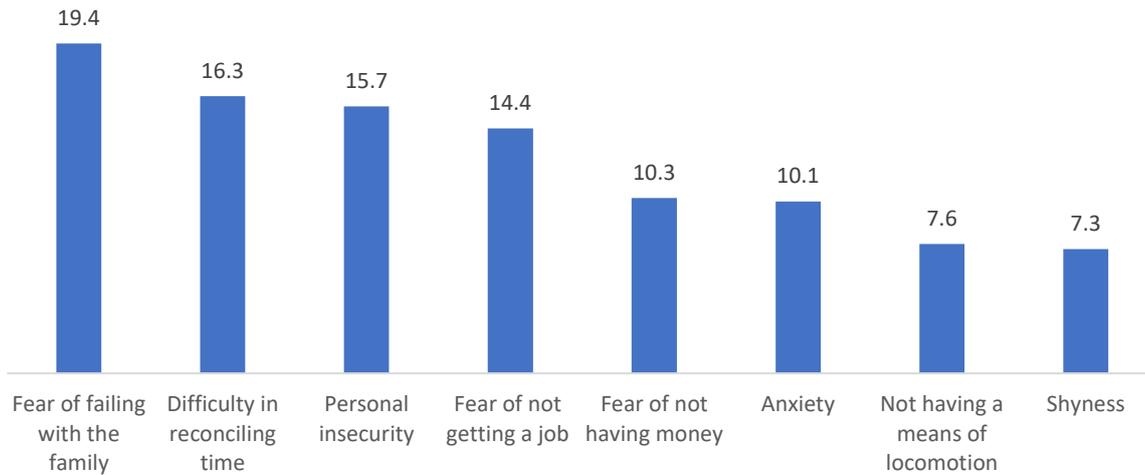


Figure 8: Negative factors that hinder the realization of dreams in the self-perception of young people who live in poor communities on the Coast of Paraná – Brazil.

Multiple answer question

The effort as an individual often transcends the difficulties of the environment among the factors that drive young people to have a better perception of what the intricacies are so that they can have a better future, so the cycle of personal maturation related to these young people can occur. (Figure 9).

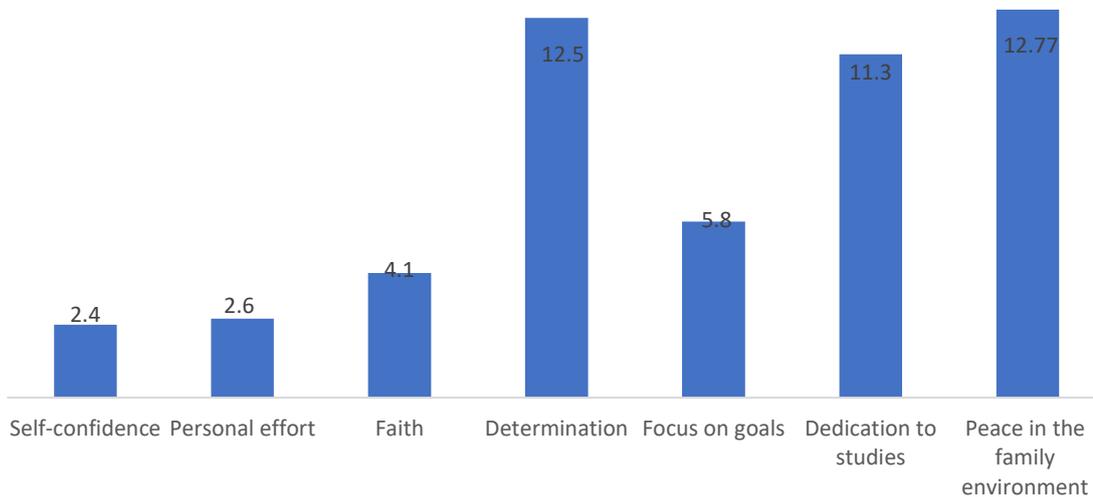


Figure 9: Positive personal factors that lead to the realization of dreams in the self-perception of young people who live in poor communities on the Coast of Paraná – Brazil.

Multiple answer question

Finally, according to the perception of all the interviewees, public policies to encourage minorities and access to education and work, and policies aimed at training and strengthening youth have been dilapidated in

recent years and have been the main cause that prevents the desired future by the new generations.

4. Discussion

The future represents a new center of looking at youth, considered as the uncertain that demands that many challenges be overcome, from day to day to the highest achievements, so the search for a better future brings with it fears and insecurity characteristic of this phase of human life.

The social class in Brazil represents a facilitator in the realization of dreams, since the higher income allows the tranquility of the choice of the university to be studied, as well as guarantees the means of realizing the biggest dream of youth, which is permanence and survival during the study phase.

From the year 2000 onwards, there was an increase in the offer of public secondary education in Brazil, which in that period had the effect that thousands of young people, who previously did not have access to this level of education, had the opportunity to attend it. This fact could mean that young Brazilians currently have greater chances of entering the job market in professions that require higher qualifications, in addition to a greater possibility of attending higher education as also described by Bastos (2005), however, despite the increase in resources were not always guaranteed for permanence in education and the possibility of the poorest classes to dedicate themselves to studies.

The permanence of young people in a socially vulnerable condition to study is a condition for the improvement of life, as described by Paredes and Pecora (2004) who emphasize that the social representation of study as a possibility of ascension and manifested in the permanence in school, is aimed at being someone in life and this representation can lead young people to conquer a better future and the realization of their dreams in an easier way than in the natural conditions of their life and the daily confrontations to which they are subjected.

Education plays a very important role in the lives of young people, it is where the identity of each one is built, where they learn to make choices for their life and future, to acquire values. The access to education is a social right, guaranteed to everyone by the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, it is characterized as a privileged instrument for the development of human potential, fostering the effective citizenship based on the formation of individuals aware of their rights and thus strengthening the democratic state, also serving as a driving force to achieve the fulfillment of the fundamental objectives of the Republic related to the promotion of the good of all regardless of age and origin or other forms of discrimination, the reduction of social inequalities and the eradication of poverty, aiming at the construction of a free, fair and solidary society (BRASIL, 1988).

The access to education in Brazil is in fact one of the essential factors for entering the job market, as well as being an essential factor for professional, personal and social development. However, for young people with low purchasing power it is not a simple task, since education and, consequently, the job market is often far from the reality of young people.

“We can define work, whether paid or not, as the performance of tasks that require mental and physical effort, which aims to produce goods and services to meet human needs. An

occupation, or a job, is work done in exchange for a salary or regular pay. In all cultures, work is the basis of the economy. The economic system consists of institutions that facilitate the production and distribution of goods and services” (GIDDENS, 2012).

The world of work has always been in constant change, it can be characterized by frenetic and intense, a rhythm of changes and transformations that occur in an accelerated progression, and that invades and modifies the characteristics of the world we are used to living.

They are looking more towards the future, they follow the trend of the world in search for more qualification, in their conceptions they need to adapt to the new reality that foresees to increase the productivity of companies through automation. For this, it is necessary to have qualified people to perform such activities, such as specialization, technical training, professional experience and technological knowledge. And the youth nowadays who were born connected with technology are involved in a productive system that transforms the economy and the way of designing, manufacturing, delivering products and services. In this context Pais (2016) and Budin and Lopes (2019) describe that young people often idealize dreams that allow them to go beyond simple work, and They seek ways of working that allow life to be fully lived, they do not want to be work slaves, but they also do not reject it, both as a source of income and personal fulfillment, however, in impoverished communities, work is synonymous of survival and the conditions experienced impose the possible work in the salary conditions available, often in inadequate conditions.

Young people who live in impoverished communities, given their vulnerability, live in a situation opposite to that described above for young people in natural conditions of the current scenario. As reported at the beginning of this study, in addition to work being an ambition for youth, it is also a matter of concern, and in poor young people there is uncertainty about their career, fear of unemployment, since they yearn to be independent, but repeatedly it is emphasized that according to the IBGE (2019) unemployment affects about 14% of young Brazilians between 18 and 24 years old, this group of young people, in addition to having to deal with life's anxieties, suffer greater pressure because they are inserted in the social context of poverty and also suffer psychological pressure, in addition to the difficulty of employment also due to the lack of decent housing, violence, difficulty in accessing free education and even the issue of food security. This set of situations has promoted the emergence of psychological disorder more frequently, which according to the IBGE (2019) affects about 10.2% of young people aged over 18 years old in Brazil.

The mental health of young people and the pressure exerted by the socioeconomic situation they experience is a topic that is increasingly popular in the issues discussed in society, since this age group is one of the most vulnerable when dealing with emotional issues and transition to life. adult life, this is because expectations are highly encouraged at this stage of life, where young people are pressured to choose a path to follow. This group of people experience daily a series of emotions such as joy, love, satisfaction, sadness, anger and frustration, and a person's mental health is related to the way he reacts to the demands of life and the way he harmonizes his desires, abilities , ambitions, ideas and emotions.

The Brazilian government is responsible for this situation, given the conflict between the neoliberal model of the federal government and the consequences in the field of education and training of Brazilian youth.

According to Belmiro et al. (2021) neoliberalism is an ideological matrix that is anchored in the thought of the market and who should regulate capital and wages in a nation, which assumes ease of trade and the free movement of goods, labor and capital, privileging holders of the nation's economic resources and private enterprise. The freedom and autonomy of capital over the rights of equality and social justice in Brazil makes the rich richer and the poor poorer.

The neoliberal concept causes profound changes in the area of education in Brazil, proposing changes that aim more at preparing for work according to the interests of the market and less at the formation of a critical and humanist citizen, the market is therefore interested in education in the formation of manpower to meet the urgent demands, especially of large businessmen and multinationals, considering purely the expectation of capital accumulation.

In addition to the concept of training focused more strongly on technical issues, in this political typology, parents and students are considered clients, the private educational institutions have government support that reduces investments in research, extension and teaching in Brazilian public schools, in a process where public schools, although not privatized or extinct, agonize for the lack of basic resources and the quality of education is affected. The government then explains its exemption and abandonment of the public education system and aims to solve educational problems with privatization and marketing solutions.

The privatization of Brazilian public education occurs in a disguised way, especially with the use of the public-private partnership system. This model aims to resize the school management and also the education systems with the creation of mechanisms of competition for public resources. This process results in the standardization of learning with recorded and replicated classes without the use of teachers and the proposition of nationalized curricula that do not respect the specificities regions, as reported by Oliveira et al. (2021) public education comes to be understood as a non-exclusive service of the State, which commodifies public goods in particular one of the main development alternatives that is the education.

Also, according to Belmiro and Santos (2021), the current educational moment in Brazil is influenced by neoliberalism, with economic practices that negatively interfere in education, vilifying the population's right as it transfers responsibility for social development from the State to the citizen, but as can young people living in socially vulnerable communities adapt to this perverse model? The answer is that, except for the determination of young people in an individualized way, for the youth collective in a short space of time it can be considered impossible. Public policies to encourage minorities and access to education and work have been dilapidated in recent years and have been the main cause that prevents the future desired by the new generations, being then necessary the rupture and educational reforms proposed by the neoliberal system as a way to correct the distortions and lag in the quality of Brazilian education.

5. Final considerations

The average age among the volunteers who participated in the study was 19.24 years old, with women being the majority (n=104 people, 60.12%). Regarding the identification of people by color, blacks were the minority among those interviewed.

The average income was USD 270 for a family with an average of 4.6 people, without own residence.

40% of families did not have formal employment. 36.5% of young people felt deeply discouraged about the future, among the reasons revealed were the absence of a minimum income (39.9%), difficulty in accessing free public education (28%), low job offer that can reconcile with studies (22%), not considering themselves capable of overcoming difficulties (18%) and fear of failure (14%).

Education plays a very important role in the lives of young people, it is where the identity of each one is built, where they learn to make choices for their life and future, to acquire values. The access to education is a right for all, guaranteed by the Brazilian constitution, and through it is sought to develop the citizenship and form fair citizens, thus strengthening the democratic state.

The access to education in Brazil is in fact one of the essential factors for entering the job market, as well as being an essential factor for professional, personal and social development. However, for young people with low purchasing power it is not a simple task, since education and, consequently, the job market is often far from the reality of young people.

The neoliberal policy causes profound changes in the area of education in Brazil, proposing changes that aim more at preparing for work according to the interests of the market and less at the formation of a critical and humanist Citizen. The market is therefore interested in the formation of manpower to meet the urgent demands, especially of large businessmen and multinationals, considering purely the expectation of capital accumulation. The Brazilian government is responsible for this situation, given the conflict between the neoliberal model of the federal government and the reflexes in the field of education and training of Brazilian Youth. According to the perception of all respondents, public policies to encourage minorities and access to education and work have been dilapidated in recent years and it has been the main cause that prevents the future desired by new generations.

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