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Youth Employment in tourism: a multidimensional approach of job quality in Latin America

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Abstract

Young people entering the labor markets face several and important challenges. These issues deepen due to rooted structural barriers such as informality or precarity, low-paid jobs, and low economic growth in regions like Latin America and sectors such as tourism (Abramo, 2022). Tourism has great potential to employ many of these young people because it provides opportunities for skilled and unskilled workers, it has low barriers to entry and flexible conditions, and it provides critical skills for their professional life. However, the youth population needs to reduce the gap between their available skills and experienced gained and the future requirements of labor markets to avoid being socially excluded. We apply the multidimensional poverty methodology developed by Alkire and Foster (2011) to build a Quality of Employment index (QoE) for young workers employed in the tourism industry in Latin America for the period 2015-2019. Focusing on two groups of young workers -*super young* for those aged 15 to 24 and *young* those aged 25 to 35- we consider several aspects of working conditions and discuss some differences in job quality across countries by gender and education considering different levels of deprivation in the index. The results suggest a high level of deprivation in the young workers, specially in the *super young* group. However, employment quality increased in both groups for all countries in the region during the period 2015-2019.

JEL Classification: J81, L83.

keywords: tourism, employment, quality of employment.

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1 Introduction

Latin America faces an important challenge in terms of the social and economic inclusion of young people in the labour markets. It is one of the most inequality regions in the world and its labour markets present deep-rooted structural barriers, such as high informality rates, insufficient training opportunities, and complex tax structures that attempt to prevent the inclusion of youth in the formal labor market. According to ILO the youth unemployment rates in Latin America were between two and four times higher than the adult rates in all years 2015 to 2019 (Table A1), and a significant percentage of young people work in the informal sector, without social protection or access to employment benefits (David et al., 2020).

When compared to adults, young people have more challenges in entering the labor market, mainly because of their limited work experience and the mismatch between the skills they bring and what employers are seeking¹. Thus, the youth population must acquire the skills needed for the labor market and access quality employment to avoid being socially excluded. In this sense, the phenomenon referred in the literature as *scarring effects* reveals that cohorts exposed to higher levels of unemployment and informality during their youth face systematically worse in the labor market as adults (Cruces et al., 2012; Schmillen and Umkehrer, 2017) So, there is a crucial process for progress toward a more egalitarian and sustainable region setting a framework of good-quality labor market institutions, where people have the incentives to be productive and contribute to social cohesion.

The tourism industry has great potential to employ many of these young people because it provides opportunities for skilled and unskilled workers, it has low barriers to entry and flexible conditions, and it provides critical skills for their professional life. From 2015 to 2019, the tourism sector has made a significant contribution to youth employment in various Latin American countries. In particular, the industry has contributed more than 7% to the overall rate of youth employment in Mexico, Colombia, and Peru. In Brazil and Uruguay, it has represented almost 5% of the total employment of young people, while in Argentina the sector has provided employment opportunities for young people, contributing almost 3% of their total employment (Figure A1).

Nevertheless, it is worth acknowledging that certain sectors within the tourism industry, such as airlines, accommodations, and restaurants, are identified as high-risk activities for their workers, who are particularly vulnerable to reduced working hours, pay cuts, and layoffs during economic downturns (ILO, 2020b). Tourism is, in fact, a labor intensive industry that could be highly seasonal, low-paid with little stability, and short-term and temporary contracts (Stacey, 2015a). Therefore, the trade-off faced by tourism is to serve as a catalyst for the participation of young people in employment promoting their social integration, but also creating employment prospects in tourism activities that are frequently identified with precarious conditions (Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015; Winchenbach et al., 2019; Dolcet et al., 2022).

With those caveats in mind about the tourism industry, we follow the poverty framework developed by Alkire and Foster (2011) (AF, onwards) to build a Quality

¹According to ManpowerGroup (2015) LAC experiences the widest disparity between the available skills and those needed by formal business. About 50% of formal firms in Latin America struggle to find the required workforce, while the same issue affects 36% of OECD countries' firms

of Employment (QoE) index for two young groups (young workers from 15-24 and young adults from 25-35) and adult (from 36-65) workers in the tourism industry to broaden our knowledge of employment quality in Latin America, which remains an under-discussed issue in the region. We use microdata from household surveys for six Latin American countries for the period 2015-2019: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay. First, we aim to study the quality of jobs among young workers compared to those of adults. Second, we use the index to decompose the results through socioeconomic variables such as gender and educational level to study the role of the tourism industry in creating employment opportunities for young workers and the quality of the jobs. Based on previous literature we consider four dimensions of employment quality: labor earnings (Sehnbruch et al., 2020; González et al., 2021; Hovhannisyan et al., 2022; Ortega Diaz et al., 2013; Sehnbruch, 2004; Huneus et al., 2012; Huneus et al., 2015; Gómez-Salcedo et al., 2017), employment conditions (Hovhannisyan et al., 2022; González et al., 2021), job stability, and job benefits (Hovhannisyan et al., 2022).

Our main findings show that the quality of employment among workers between 15 and 24 years old is lower than among those between 25 and 35 years old. In addition, quality of employment among workers between 25 and 35 years old is lower than among those over 35 years old. However, according to our calculations, employment quality increased in both groups for all countries in the region during the period 2015-2019.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the literature related to job quality, focusing on institutional frameworks and applied studies in Latin America. Section 3 sets the research design, including the data and methodology used to approach employment quality. Section 4 presents the findings of the index proposed in this work and Section 5 studies the main correlates of job quality in the tourism industry. Finally, concluding remarks are made in Section 6.

2 Job Quality Literature

Quality of Employment (QoE) has been on the agenda of international organizations since the ILO's Decent Work concept was launched more than 20 years ago (ILO, 1999). Specifically, ILO identifies that decent work must be: (1) productive and provide a fair income, (2) ensure security on the job and social protection for families, (3) provide better prospects for personal development and social integration, (4) guarantee freedom for people to express their concerns, and (5) equal opportunities and treatment for all women and men (ILO, 2013). Although the concept was developed based on the subjects of 'precarious work' and 'nonstandard work' in the late 1980s, ILO failed to design a cohesive set of indicators to measure decent work in a comparable way around the world (Burchell et al., 2014), which has significantly limited the concept's impact. In contrast to ILO, Eurofound (2012) focused specifically on the concept of job quality, which was first introduced as an employment policy objective in the Lisbon Treaty in 2000, and takes into account the characteristics of the worker and the job

position.²

In Latin America, the [IADB \(2017a\)](#) put forward the Better Job Index to measure employment conditions in the region. The index is based on a macro-approach that combines a quality dimension (including formality and earning a living wage) and a quantity one (participation and employment rates). Although the information is summarized in a single index, it only considers variables at the macro level, which does not allow to identify vulnerable workers in the labor market.

Although it is clear that quality of employment is at the forefront of institutional concerns, it is a topic that has also been explored in the academic literature and faces several challenges. First, it is a complex task to encompass all the dimensions of employment quality outlined by international institutions due to insufficient data. Second, even when the information is available, there is no clear consensus on how to aggregate all the dimensions to measure job quality, which makes the methodological aspect a relevant issue. There are several studies that use the [Alkire and Foster \(2011\)](#) framework to build a multidimensional index for employment quality.³ For instance, [Sehnbruch et al. \(2020\)](#) consider labor earnings, job security and employment conditions using household microdata for nine Latin American countries for 2015. They find that Chile presents the best results in the region, while Mexico, Bolivia, and Peru perform relatively worse; being income the most important measure representing a third of the total index.

In the same line, [González et al. \(2021\)](#) propose a QoE deprivation index at the individual level for a group of six Central American countries finding that nearly 60% of the deprivation levels are attributable to non-income variables, such as occupational status and job tenure. Applying the same methodology in a more recent work, [Hovhannisyan et al. \(2022\)](#) builds a job quality measure for wage employment in 40 developing countries and six geographic regions. Their results show that the quality of employment shows strong heterogeneity among economic sectors: workers in public administration, finance, and business services have stable jobs and earn a salary above the poverty line and are linked to greater job satisfaction. In contrast, at the other end of the spectrum, the low-skill sectors of agriculture and construction have the lowest levels of job quality. Agriculture workers have significantly lower scores than the rest of the economic sectors in all dimensions except working conditions, while construction workers fare particularly poorly in the benefits and stability dimensions. The average job quality is relatively similar between men and women, while older workers (aged 25 or more) have higher job quality than workers aged between 16 and 25.

Given the difficulty in harmonizing micro-data in Latin America and the complexity of measuring job quality, some studies focused on a single country. [Ortega Diaz et al. \(2013\)](#) find that around 29% of the workers of Mexico have a nondecent work (considering variables related to ILO's definition) while around 60% at least suffer from one violation to labor rights stated by law for the period 2005-2011. In the case of Chile, [Sehnbruch \(2004\)](#) shows that 13% of the labor force have low quality jobs and another 34% medium low quality jobs, meaning that almost half the Chilean la-

²Other institutions have put forward their own proposals for conceptualizing and measuring the quality of employment such as the *Quality of work environment* approach developed by OECD ([Cazes et al., 2015](#)) and the *Quality of Employment* framework of UNECE ([UNECE, 2015](#)).

³Table [A2](#) in the appendix summarize the dimensions and variables considered by different applied studies of employment quality.

bor force works under certain disadvantages conditions, i.e., no social security and no contract. More recently, [Huneus et al. \(2012\)](#) document that there is higher job quality among larger and unionized firms and that labor history predicts job quality, confirming the existence of persistence in employment quality in 2002-2009. For Brazil, [Huneus et al. \(2015\)](#) show an increase in employment quality in the years 2009-2011, where major economic reforms were introduced to promote the formalization process of workers, but differences between employees and self-employed workers, and between industries as well. In the case of Colombia, [Gómez-Salcedo et al. \(2017\)](#) find higher levels of the employment quality index up to age 30.

Regarding specifically to the tourism sector, there are only a few precedents that have developed specific measures related to QoE in tourism. [Santero-Sanchez et al. \(2015\)](#) propose a Composite Index of Job Quality (CIJQ) for the tourism industry in Spain in 2011. Their main finding is that women have lower quality jobs than men and that the gender gap widens with age. A more psycho-social debate related to job quality is set by [Winchenbach et al. \(2019\)](#). They identify dignity in tourism employment as a conceptual basis for decent work, taking into account the identity of employees, the organizational context, and the broader socio-economic context and actors involved at all these levels.

As far as our knowledge, there are few specific measures of employment quality in the tourism industry in Latin America. Following a Principal Component Analysis, [Dolcet et al. \(2022\)](#) build a QoE index for workers in Uruguay for the period 2016-2019. They find that activities related to tourism industry present low job quality characteristics and a gender gap against women in the tourism sector, which is not observed in retail activities. They also show a lower quality of employment for unskilled workers in tourism compared to those in the trade sector.

3 Data and Methodology

As discussed in the previous section, the multidimensional poverty literature has been adapted to the measurement of job quality in previous studies. Following the conceptual framework developed by Sen on capabilities ([Sen, 1973, 1981 and 1999](#)), we use the multidimensional measure proposed by Foster, Greer and Thorbecke ([1984 and 2010](#)) and revisited by [Alkire and Foster \(2011\)](#) to build a Quality of Employment index (QoE) for young workers in the tourism industry for Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay for the period 2015-2019.

The information used to build the QoE index comes from households' microdata, where all surveys are carried out by the country's statistical agencies throughout the year, and report cross-sectional information on labor and sociodemographic variables. The final sample used in this research is condensed to an annual frequency to obtain a sample size for the tourism industry. We restrict the information to those individuals between 15 and 65 years old to avoid the influence of retirement decisions on labor market participation, and identify *super young* workers as those between the ages of 15 and 24, and *young* those between the ages of 25 and 35, while adult workers are defined as those between the ages of 36 and 65. When defining the tourism industry homogeneously across all countries, we follow [Porto and Espinola \(2019\)](#) and [Porto](#)

et al. (2020) considering all the workers who report any of the following two-digit sectors at his main job: 1) accommodation services, 2) restaurants, 3) travel agencies and 4) entertainment, culture, and sport services. Information on household surveys is summarised in Table A4 in the appendix.

As multidimensional poverty considers deprivations beyond the shortage of financial resources, the use of this framework for the quality of employment makes it possible to include several dimensions of work-life balance satisfaction beyond the indicator of monetary income subject to a threshold. In a nutshell, the use of Alkire and Foster (2011) approach offers a significant advantage to measure employment quality, implying first the definition of different dimensions and then the measure of job quality based on this definition. Furthermore, the index has a simple structure that complies with desirable axiomatic properties such as additive decomposability and subgroup consistency, thus allowing decomposition by population subgroups (e.g., by gender) and deprivation domains (e.g., income and employment conditions).

The QoE index uses d employment quality dimensions for n workers in the sample. First, $c_{it} = \sum_{j=1}^d w_j I(g_{itj} < z_j)$ is defined as a counting vector of deprivations across quality of employment dimensions ($j = 1, \dots, d$) within each worker (i), where g_{itj} is the achievement of individual i in dimension j at time t , and z_j is the deprivation cut-off of dimension j . Thus, the identification function I is equal to 1 if the content is true and 0 otherwise. Second, w_j is the weight assigned to each dimension j where $\sum_{j=1}^d w_j = 1$. Thus, the aggregated indicator of (bad) employment quality ($M_{0t}(k)$) is defined as:

$$M_{0t}(k) = \frac{[\sum_{i=1}^n c_{it} \times I(c_{it} \geq k)]}{n} \quad (1)$$

Since the index is defined in a negatively way, if the number of deprivations is greater than k then the worker i will have a low employment quality at time t .⁴ The index has a value between 0 and 1, therefore the closer it is to 1, the worse the employment quality as the worker is deprived in more employment quality dimensions. For instance, if the index takes the value of 0.25, it means that workers with low employment quality suffer 25% of all possible deprivations.

Measuring employment quality implies considering numerous aspects of working conditions. Based on the applied studies of job quality, we use four different dimensions to conceptualize employment quality: (i) earnings, (ii) employment conditions, (iii) job stability, and (iv) job benefits. Table 1 provides a summary of the four dimensions and the selection of individual variables included in the QoE index, which will be discussed shortly.

Accordingly to build the QoE index, we need to define two sets of thresholds: one that defines deprivation in each labor dimension and two, a threshold k , that corresponds to the amount of deprivation that identifies a low-quality job. For the first set of thresholds, a worker is considered deprived in the earnings dimension if his monthly wage is less than the minimum wage stated by law in each country. Regard-

⁴An index of the QoE could be positively or negatively oriented (IADB, 2017b). However, the dimensional decomposition of the positive index is not straightforward (González et al., 2021), thus in this paper we present a negatively oriented measure that preserves the decomposition properties proposed by the AF framework.

ing the employment conditions dimension, we use two individual indicators with the same weighting. Thus, a worker is considered deprived in this dimension if working hours exceed 48 weekly hours or if the worker has a job but wishes to work more hours.

The third dimension is job stability, and it includes whether the employment is permanent or temporary, written contract, and the observed tenure at the main job. The first two variables attempt to capture whether there is a formal arrangement between workers and employees, but since they are not available in all countries, we also include observed tenure at main job, considering that having at least one year of work experience implies some job stability. For the first two variables, a worker will be deprived if he has a temporary employment or a non-written contract and the person will be deprived in the job stability dimension if at least one of the individual variables is not fulfilled. The last dimension considers different job benefits: health insurance, annual vacation leave, and pension contributions. The workers are considered deprived in this dimension if they do not have at least one of these benefits stated by country law. Regarding the second threshold, we report the results for $k=2$, so the worker is considered to have a low-quality job if he is deprived in two of the dimensions stated before.

The selection of individual variables is in line with the conceptual foundations of the framework developed by the [UNECE \(2015\)](#) and the OECD (in [Cazes et al. \(2015\)](#)) and driven by the availability of the data across countries. Although this limitation is shared with the literature, this is not an issue to build the employment quality index for two reasons. First, all countries report information in the income dimension and between 5 to 7 individual indicators over a total of 8 to build the other three dimensions.⁵ Second, the proposed QoE uses equal weights for each dimension to compensate for any potential bias that could exist due to less available variables in some employment dimensions.⁶ Far from a perfect solution of missing some variables in household surveys, this methodological decision allows us to capture each employment dimension as accurately as possible when all individual indicators are available, and to mitigate the effects of the bias without restricting the index to the exact same variables across countries.

⁵Table A3 in Appendix A illustrates this variability between surveys and highlights the challenges of harmonizing the data. In certain countries, most variables are included, while in others, only a limited set is covered.

⁶Although there are numerous ways of weighting for multidimensional indices, a standard and transparent practice is to give equal weight to each dimension ([Decancq and Lugo, 2013](#)).

Table 1: Dimensions of QoE index for the tourism industry

Dimension	Indicators	Definition of deprivation in employment dimension
Earnings	Wage at main job	Total wages below the minimum waged stated by country law
Employment conditions	Working hours	Individual exceed 48 weekly hours
	Would you like to work more	Individual responds "yes"
Job stability	Tenure	1 year or less of tenure at main job
	Permanent employment	Employment is temporary, not permanent
	Written contract	Employment is not bound by written contract
Job benefits	Health insurance	Job does not provides health insurance
	Holiday leave	Job does not provides annual paid holiday leave
	Pension contributions	Job is not associated with pension benefits

Note: Own elaboration based on the state of the literature summarized in Table A2 and the availability of information on the selected countries in Table A3 in the appendix.

4 Results

4.1 Individuals deprived by indicator

Table A5 shows the proportion of deprived employees in each of the individual indicators used to create the QoE index. As shown in the table, *super young* workers experience significantly higher levels of deprivation compared to *young* and *adult* workers. Furthermore, *young* workers also experience greater deprivation than *adult* workers. This trend is evident across all dimensions and countries, particularly in areas such as job benefits and job stability.

The data show that the variables in which both young groups are more deprived are a priori the same as those of adult workers, job benefits and job stability: However, there are huge differences in the percentage of workers who are in this situation between the *super young* and the rest. In Argentina, 67% of the *super young* employed in the tourism industry do not have pension contributions, compared to only 26% of adults and 36% of *young* workers. In addition, 67% of *super young* workers do not receive paid holidays, compared to only 25% of adults and 35% of *young* workers. Similarly, in Brazil, the majority of *super young* people (52%) do not have more than a year of tenure, compared to only 24% of adults and 35% of *young* workers. In this sense, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay are the countries with more differences across groups.

Colombia, Mexico, and Peru exhibit higher levels of deprivation across all age groups in the index. For example, 74% of *super young* colombian workers do not have access to have a paid holiday leave, compared to 58% of *young* and 60% of *adult* workers respectively. In Mexico, 80% of *super young* workers in the tourism sector do not

have a permanent employment, compared to 61% in both other groups. Finally, in Peru, 84% of *super young* workers in tourism do not have health insurance, while approximately 70% of *young* and *adult* workers suffer the same condition.

Argentina, Colombia and Peru workers are more deprived in variables of the job benefits dimension and earnings, while in Brazil, Mexico, and Uruguay the problem of job quality seems to be related to job stability.

The high levels of deprivation of young workers do not give an encouraging picture in terms of the quality of employment. However, the fact that earnings is not the main variable in which they are deprived could indicate that the problems in generating good quality employment are related to the institutional arrangements of the countries' labor markets. These results are in line with ILO (2023) estimates. The share of informal employment or a portion of total employment is around 65%, and for the group of countries in only Latin America it is about 62%.⁷

4.2 QoE index

Analyzing the proportion of deprived workers in individual indicators does not provide an overall picture of the quality of youth employment in the tourism industry. For this, we will calculate the results of the QoE index proposed in this paper, noting that, as discussed in previous sections, a higher value of the index reflects a higher level of deprivation in aggregate labor dimensions, thus implying a lower QoE (Figure 1). On average, we find that super young workers face lower quality jobs than young and adult workers in all countries.

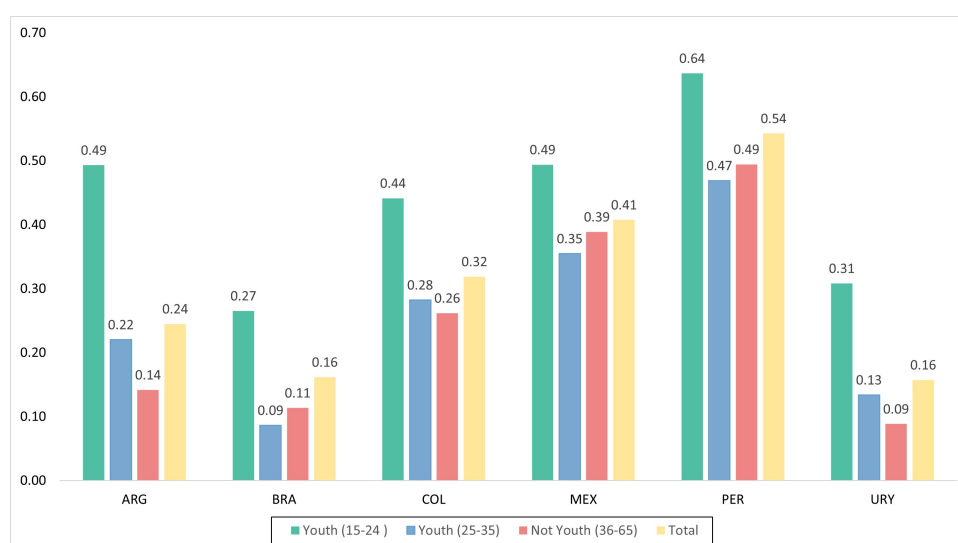
Mexico and Peru have the worst performance in quality, for all the groups. In particular, super young workers in the tourism industry suffer between 49% and 64% of all possible deprivations (compared to the 39% and 49% of adult workers). Results for Argentina are similar, but only for *super young*. The best performance for *super young* is found in Brazil and Uruguay where the deprivation level are 27% and 31% respectively.

This result becomes particularly interesting when we consider the percentage of young workers captured by the tourism industry. Those countries with the worst job quality results are those with the highest percentage of youth employment in tourism, along with Colombia, between 9-11% (Figure A1 in the appendix). This result is interesting in terms of discussing public policy designs to improve the quality of jobs generated by the tourism sector.

The employment quality index does not take into account macroeconomic factors that could influence the job creation dynamics of the tourism industry.

⁷<https://ilostat.ilo.org/blog/how-data-can-bolster-decent-work-in-the-tourism-sector/>

Figure 1: Average QoE index for the tourism industry



Note: This figure shows the average value of the deprivation QoE index for both youth groups (15-24), (24-35) and not youth (36-65) tourism workers. The report of the evolution of the QoE index for the period 2015-2019 is in Table A6 in the appendix. *Source:* Own elaboration based on household surveys.

4.3 QoE Evolution

Despite the average results of the index, it is still important to analyze the changes in job quality for those employed in the tourism sector over time. Table A6 presents the QoE values for every year in the period 2015-2019. We find an improvement in the QoE for tourism workers in the region, as the index shows a decrease in deprivations during the years 2017-2019 compared to 2015-2016. More interestingly, this result is found not only for young people, but also the quality of employment in the tourism sector also improves for adult workers also.

4.4 QoE by sex and skills

To provide a more in-depth discussion of the low quality of youth employment in the tourism sector, we evaluated the behavior of the index using the decomposition by age group and gender. Both dimensions are illustrated in Table A7.

The decomposition of the job quality indicator by gender is depicted in Panel (a) of Table A7 to investigate the potential for a gender-based disparity in QoE among young workers in the tourism sector. Generally, young female workers experience lower employment quality than their male counterparts in all countries, with the exception of Uruguay.

One of the most significant gap is in Peru, where adult women endure 62% of deprivations compared to 27% for adult men. This considerable gap is also evident among the *young* group of workers, with 57% of women experiencing deprivation in the index compared to only 34% of men. A possible explanation to this gap is found

in Cruz-Saco et al., 2022 where they examine the existence of a gender labor income gap among older persons in Peru and find labor income gap up to 71.1%. Mexico presents a situation similar to Peru, where the gender gap in the index widens with increasing age groups. Among *super young* workers, there is no difference in the index between men and women. However, this gap expands to 12% among *young* workers and further increases to 22% among *adult* workers.

Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay do not show major differences in employment quality by gender in the tourism sector and quality differences seem to be more related to age.

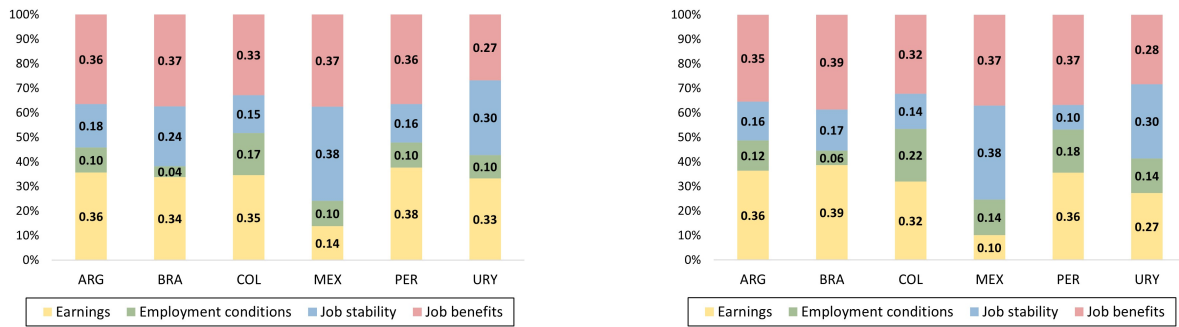
Panel (b) of Table A7 shows the decomposition of the index by skilled and unskilled workers, defined as such with the fulfillment of secondary school. A first overall result seems to be that this distinction makes a significant impact in higher group ages than in *super young* workers. As we progress through age groups, the gap between skilled and unskilled workers widens considerably. For instance show that education and training are relevant instruments to improve job quality, not only in tourism but also in most economic sectors. In particular, this may be strongly applies to the tourism sector, because of its characteristics such us seasonality or irregular work hours (OECD (2014) & Stacey (2015b)).

4.5 Contribution of different dimensions to the QoE

We also explore the contribution of each dimension to the overall index to identify differences in the importance of quality dimensions. We present the results for the six countries in 2019, since we do not find significant changes during the period under analysis. When the dimension considered has more than one individual variable, the contribution of the group of indicators follows simply as the sum of the contributions of the individual indicators.

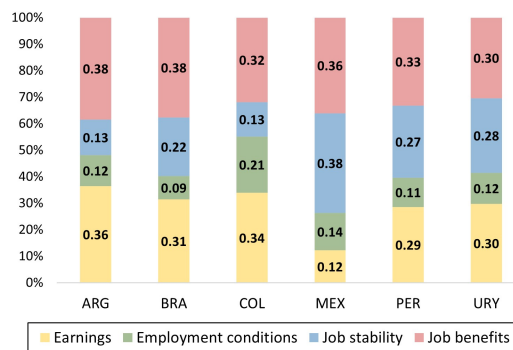
At first glance, considering all workers, labor earnings represents 30% of employment quality for all workers in the region, with the exception of Mexico (which also present a low percentage of deprived workers in the income dimension, nearly 18%), where it represents only 12%, and job stability has a higher share, close to 40% (Figure 2). Regarding this last dimension, it has a similar importance in Peru and Uruguay, where it accounts for almost 30% of employment quality, with a slight decrease close to 20% in Argentina, Brazil, and Colombia. We do not find differences between countries in the job benefits dimension, which seems to have a similar importance throughout the region accounting for over 30% of the index. Overall, we do not find differences in the share of dimensions between *super young*, *young* and *adult* workers, although we do have documented evidence on the lower quality of employment faced by young people in the tourism sector.

Figure 2: Contribution (%) of each dimension to overall QoE index



(a) Young workers (15-24)

(b) Young workers (25-35)



(c) Adult workers (36-65)

Note: This figure shows the average contribution (%) of each employment quality dimension to the overall index. Panel (a) presents the values for the *super-young* workers (15-25), panel (b) for the *young* (25-35) and panel (c) for the *adult* (36-65) employees in the tourism industry. Source: Own elaboration based on household surveys.

5 Exploring the main correlates of QoE in the tourism industry

In this section we study the main factors correlated with job quality, considering that variation in job quality can be attributed not only to the country level of development and institutional arrangements that could vary within countries, but also to personal characteristics such as gender or education that could influence quality as well (Brummund et al., 2018). During the process of matching between employers and employees, firms typically offer contracts based on certain characteristics of workers, while people who are seeking for a job accept or not based on their preferences and economic conditions. If there are variables that influence this selection process that are not observable, then the characteristics that we include in our model might not capture a causal effect on job quality. Despite this, following Huneus et al. (2015) we estimate the probability of observing low-quality employment using a standard probit model to identify conditional correlations that could be predictors of employment quality for young workers in the tourism industry:

$$QOE_{jct} = \alpha + \beta \cdot x_{jc} + \gamma_c + \delta_t + \varepsilon_{jct} \quad (2)$$

where QOE_{jct} equals 1 when a young worker j in the tourism industry in country c has low employment quality, according to the index at time t ; x_{jc} is a vector of covariates that can help inform the design of public policies to improve the quality of employment created in the sector for young people, γ_c are regionally fixed effects and δ_t are year-fixed effects. The regressors used in x_{jc} include workers' age and gender, variables of educational level, and a dummy indicating whether the job is in a small private firm as a proxy of workers' job characteristics.

The first column of Table 2 presents the results of the estimation of Equation 2 for all countries, while columns 2-7 show the results for each country individually. There are some results that hold across all estimates. At first glance, the relationship between age and job quality is straightforward: As the worker gets older, this correlates negatively with the probability of seeing poor quality jobs in the tourism industry. Although we cannot identify the factors behind the negative age coefficient, this result is consistent with the performance of the job quality index, with young people being more deprived than adults in the tourism sector.

In terms of gender, being a male worker is an advantage in the tourism industry over being a female, as it correlates negatively with low-quality jobs. This finding is in line with the literature that document a gender gap in employment quality within the tourism industry (Huneus et al. (2015) find that being male has a positive correlation with employment quality in Brazil for wage and self-employed workers between 2002-2011.). However, the sex of the worker might not have an effect on employment quality in Uruguay for young workers in the tourism industry, since the gender variable is not significant. Every degree of education, regardless of whether it is complete or not, correlates with a decrease in the probability of facing a low quality job in every country. This last result is consistent with Hovhannisyan et al. (2022), which find the largest difference in job quality between different educational groups, suggesting that educational achievement is a strong predictor of job quality in developing countries.

Table 2: Main correlates of employment quality in the tourism industry

Variables	All countries (1)	ARG (2)	BRA (3)	COL (4)	MEX (5)	PER (6)	URY (7)
Age	-0.057*** (0.000)	-0.106*** (0.000)	-0.062*** (0.000)	-0.070*** (0.000)	-0.050*** (0.000)	-0.053*** (0.000)	-0.069*** (0.000)
Male	-0.042*** (0.000)	-0.316*** (0.002)	-0.117*** (0.000)	-0.177*** (0.001)	-0.236*** (0.003)	-0.457*** (0.002)	-0.019*** (0.003)
Complete primary educ	-0.103*** (0.001)	-0.607*** (0.015)	-0.191*** (0.001)	-0.239*** (0.006)	-0.593*** (0.014)	0.118*** (0.012)	-0.523*** (0.021)
Incomplete secondary educ	-0.077*** (0.001)	-0.447*** (0.014)	-0.161*** (0.001)	-0.309*** (0.005)	-0.427*** (0.015)	-0.425*** (0.010)	-0.533*** (0.021)
Complete secondary educ	-0.338*** (0.001)	-0.974*** (0.014)	-0.473*** (0.001)	-0.598*** (0.005)	-0.740*** (0.013)	-0.773*** (0.010)	-0.935*** (0.022)
Incomplete tertiary educ	-0.205*** (0.001)	-0.599*** (0.014)	-0.214*** (0.001)	-0.726*** (0.005)	-0.825*** (0.013)	-1.052*** (0.010)	-0.799*** (0.021)
Complete tertiary educ	-0.479*** (0.001)	-0.980*** (0.014)	-0.738*** (0.001)	-1.141*** (0.005)	-1.021*** (0.013)	-1.509*** (0.010)	-1.185*** (0.023)
Constant	2.563*** (0.002)	3.429*** (0.016)	1.108*** (0.003)	2.043*** (0.006)	2.272*** (0.015)	3.131*** (0.012)	1.641*** (0.023)
Observations	51,876,649	1,494,101	42,501,740	4,438,366	651,721	2,100,515	690,207
Pseudo R-squared	0.093	0.179	0.128	0.098	0.061	0.212	0.0975

Note: This table shows the estimated correlations with job quality for youth workers in the tourism industry. The dependent variable in all regressions equals 1 when a low-quality job is observed in the index for a young worker in the tourism industry. Column 1 shows the results for the aggregate estimate for all countries, while Columns 2-7 present the individual results for each country. The base category in educational attainment is incomplete primary school. Data cover the period 2015-2019 and tourism workers are identified as those who report any of the following two-digit sectors at their main job (1) accommodation service, (2) restaurants, (3) travel agencies, and (4) entertainment, culture and sports services. All regressions include year, and region fixed effect, and standard errors are reported in parentheses. *, **, and *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% levels. *Source:* Own elaboration based on household surveys.

6 Conclusions

In Latin America, young people face several and important challenges when accessing to their first jobs. On the one hand, the region has weak labor market institutions to regulate labor market dynamics. As a result, the Latin Americans' labor markets present deep-rooted structural barriers such as informality or low-quality jobs. On the other hand, activities related to the tourism industry has great potential to employ many of these young people because it provides opportunities for skilled and unskilled workers, it has low barriers to entry and provides critical skills for their professional life.

In this paper, we develop a multidimensional Quality of Employment (QoE) in six Latin American countries: Argentina, Brasil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay for the period 2015-2019. We apply the poverty framework revisited by Alkire and Foster (2011a) to include four dimensions of working conditions: earnings, employment conditions, job stability and job benefits.

Overall, we have documented that employment quality among young workers under the age of 35 in the tourism industry is lower than for the ones over 35 years old. However, according to our calculations, employment quality increased in this group for all the countries of the region over the period 2015-2019. *Super young* workers (15-24) seem to be much more affected than the rest of the groups, even though the variables in which both young groups are deprived are the same as those of adults. Our work is an important contribution in the field because previous literature and evidence is scarce.

It is worth to mention a relevant study of [Melián-González and Gidumal \(2024\)](#) regarding the relationship between the quality of jobs and the level of development of the countries. They found that tourism development does not affect the quality of employment but the institutional regime of the country does, so there are a bulk of determinants to take into account youth labor in tourism.

Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes difficult focused strategies to deal with these issues. These strategies include:

- i. Education and training
- ii. Development and enforcement of skills
- iii. Career pathway, support true public sector
- iv. Improvement and strengthen of labor market institutions to provide good conditions to all labor force, including for the tourism sector.
- v. Provide young people with access to financial resources and opportunities for entrepreneurship.

An example of this may be the employment policy in Buenos Aires “10,000 jóvenes con empleo formal”. This plan aims for 10,000 young people between 18 and 24 years of age to access formal employment. The city partially subsidizes their salaries for 12 months, with a focus on women and residents in the south of the city. Linking meetings, employability fairs and promotion of sectors such as technology, gastronomy and tourism are held. So far, more than 6,000 young people have gained employment through the program.

Another similar program was developed in Uruguay. The “Yo Estudio y Trabajo” program in Montevideo encouraged private companies to hire young people between 16 and 20 years old, allowing them to combine studies and work of up to 20 hours per week. The state will subsidize up to 80% of salary (up to 100% for people with disabilities), with a cap of 15,000 pesos per month for 6 to 12 months. Companies that support young people after internships will be exempt from employer contributions until the employees turn 25 years old.

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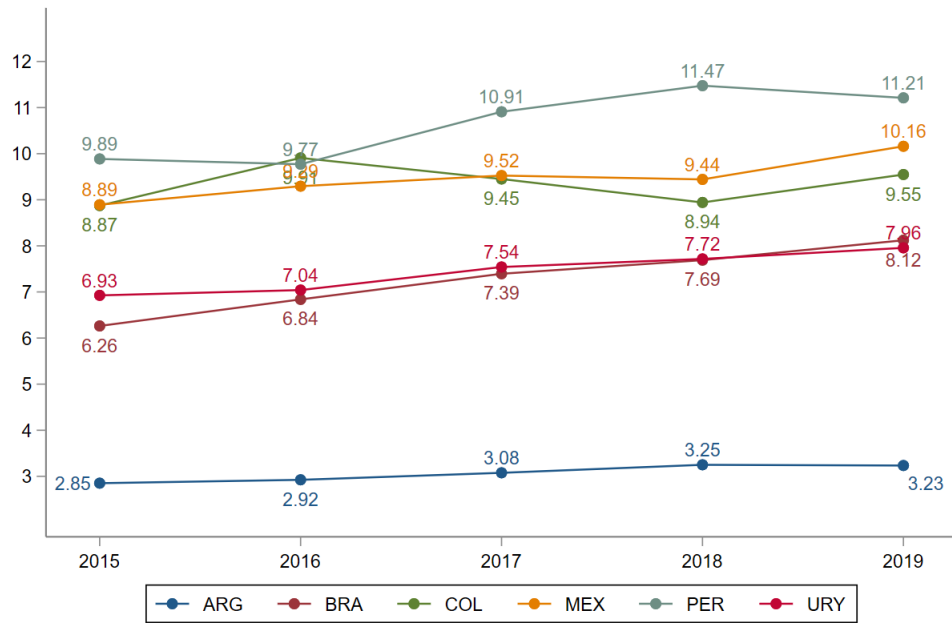
A Appendix Tables and Figures

Table A1: Unemployment rate by country and age, 2015-2019 (%)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average
<i>Youth (15-24)</i>						
ARG	20.56	21.83	22.83	23.83	25.81	22.97
BRA	19.83	26.70	28.66	28.03	27.18	26.08
COL	17.29	17.59	17.88	18.62	20.05	18.28
MEX	8.76	7.67	6.88	6.85	7.22	7.47
PER	6.86	8.27	8.30	8.33	7.38	7.83
URY	23.14	24.13	25.23	26.54	28.14	25.44
<i>Adults (25+)</i>						
ARG	5.54	5.87	6.00	6.89	7.39	6.34
BRA	6.18	8.37	9.41	9.05	8.78	8.36
COL	6.54	6.73	6.94	7.12	7.95	7.06
MEX	3.36	3.04	2.69	2.54	2.72	2.87
PER	2.43	2.68	2.61	2.38	2.47	2.51
URY	4.83	5.05	5.03	5.37	5.63	5.18
<i>Ratio (Youth / Adults)</i>						
ARG	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.6
BRA	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1
COL	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.6
MEX	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.6
PER	2.8	3.1	3.2	3.5	3.0	3.1
URY	4.8	4.8	5.0	4.9	5.0	4.9

Note: Own elaboration based on ILO modelled estimates database, ilo-stat. It was not possible to disaggregate the data into the age groups of 15-24, 25-35, and 35+. Available from <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>

Figure A1: Share of tourism employment among young workers (%)



Note: Own elaboration based on household surveys. Young workers are defined as those between 15 and 35 years of age.

Table A2: Job Quality Index: applied studies

Author	Countries	Years	Data	Dimension QoE	Variables
Sehnbruch et al. 2020	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Perú, and Uruguay	2015	Houshold and labor force microdata	Labor income Employment stability Employment conditions	Monthly income above a threshold Occupational status (written contract, self-employed) and tenure at current job Social security affiliation and excessive working hours
González et al. 2021	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama	2011	Central American Health and Working Conditions Survey (ECCTS)	Labor income Employment stability Employment security Employment conditions	Monthly income above a threshold Duration of unemployment and tenure at current job Social security affiliation and occupational status (written contract, self-employed without a professional qualification) Excessive working hours and high work intensity (posture related risk and physical risk)
Hovhannisyan et al. 2022	40 developing countries, including 12 in Latin America and Caribbean region	2014-2018	Household and labor force microdata	Labor income Employment stability Employment benefits Employment conditions	Annually income Written contract, permanent employment, formal employment and tenure Health insurance, unemployment insurance, pension, social security affiliation, paid leave and sick leave Excessive hours, second paid job and would you like to work more indicator
Sehnbruch 2004	Chile		Author's survey carried out in Santiago	Labor income Employment stability Social security Contractual status Training	Monthly income defined as multiples of the minimum wage Tenure at current job Health insurance contributions Written contract Formal training during the last year
Huneus et al. 2012	Chile	2002-2009	Social Protection Survey (SPS or EPS)	Labor income Contracts and Social Protection Job tenure Training	Monthly income defined as multiples of the minimum wage Temporality of contracts and contributions to pension savings Tenure at current job Formal training in the current job
Ortega Diaz et al. 2013	Mexico	2005-2011	National Survey of Occupation and Unemployment for Mexico (ENOE)	Labor income Employment stability Social security Combination of work with family life Sufficient work Protection to labor rights	Monthly income above a threshold Tenure at current job, permanent employment and temporal contract Hours worked; pension, health services, access to credit to buy a house Benefit of child care Looking for a second job or declared to look for more hours to work Written contract, night job, yearly compensation and vacation leave
Huneus et al. 2015	Brazil	2002-2011	National Household Survey	Labor income Formality Job tenure	Hourly wage Employment contract and social security contributions Tenure at current job
Gómez-Salcedo et al. 2017	Colombia	2009 and 2015	Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (GEIH)	Labor income Job stability Social security Working conditions Employment perception Underemployment	Income in relation to the minimum wage Union membership, tenure and type of contract Affiliation to pension and health services, professional risk coverage, severance payments and union membership Hours worked, overtime paid and workplace Job satisfaction, work-family compatibility second job, underemployment

Note: Own elaboration.

Table A3: Availability of indicators across countries

Country	EARNINGS	EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS		JOB STABILITY			JOB BENEFITS		
	Wage	Working hours	Would you like to work more?	Tenure	Permanent employment	Written contract	Health insurance	Holiday leave	Pension Contributions
ARG	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
BRA	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
COL	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
MEX	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
PER	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
URY	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Note: Own elaboration based on household surveys.

Table A4: Household surveys in Latin America

Country	Household Survey	Acronym	Years	Periodicity	Coverage
Argentina	Permanent Household Survey (Encuesta Permanente de Hogares)	EPH	2015-2019	Quarterly	Urban
Brazil	National Survey by Household Sample (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicios Continua)	PNADC	2015-2019	Quarterly	National
Colombia	Great Integrated Household Survey (Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares)	GEIH	2015-2019	Quarterly	National
Mexico	National Survey of Occupation and Employment (Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo)	ENOE	2015-2019	Quarterly	National
Peru	National Household Survey (Encuesta Nacional de Hogares)	ENAHO	2015-2019	Quarterly	National
Uruguay	Continuous Household Survey (Encuesta Continua de hogares)	ECH	2015-2019	Quarterly	National

Note: Own elaboration.

Table A5: Deprived workers for individual indicators in the tourism industry (%)

Dimension / Indicator	Super young (15-24)						Young (25-35)						Not youth (36-65)					
	ARG	BRA	COL	MEX	PER	URY	ARG	BRA	COL	MEX	PER	URY	ARG	BRA	COL	MEX	PER	URY
Earnings																		
earnings_i	0.66	0.35	0.55	0.23	0.65	0.40	0.35	0.17	0.34	0.13	0.43	0.17	0.23	0.15	0.37	0.17	0.50	0.14
Employment conditions																		
hours_i	0.09	0.08	0.45	0.24	0.26	0.04	0.15	0.10	0.42	0.30	0.37	0.08	0.20	0.11	0.36	0.29	0.36	0.08
wishwork_i	0.38		0.25		0.20	0.32	0.28		0.33		0.22	0.28		0.17	0.36		0.17	0.18
Job stability																		
tenure_i	0.39	0.52	0.68		0.68	0.65	0.18	0.35	0.52		0.47	0.38	0.10	0.24	0.38		0.38	0.22
permanent_i	0.30	0.15		0.80			0.15	0.09		0.61			0.09	0.07		0.61		
contract_i		0.48	0.00	0.67	0.74		0.32	0.00	0.51	0.61		0.29	0.00	0.55	0.68			
Job benefits																		
holiday_i	0.66		0.74	0.65		0.31	0.35		0.58	0.47		0.16	0.25		0.60	0.50		0.13
pension_i	0.67	0.46	0.74	0.66	0.78	0.30	0.36	0.28	0.55	0.50	0.55	0.17	0.26	0.24	0.57	0.51	0.60	0.12
healthins_i			0.34		0.84				0.23		0.69				0.19		0.72	

Note: Own elaboration based on household surveys.

Table A6: QoE index for the tourism industry (2015-2019)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
ARG					
<i>Youth</i>	0.362	0.455	0.260	0.282	0.302
<i>Not youth</i>	0.193	0.191	0.086	0.140	0.098
<i>Total</i>	0.280	0.339	0.185	0.214	0.206
BRA					
<i>Youth</i>	0.215	0.269	0.140	0.168	0.176
<i>Not youth</i>	0.121	0.162	0.077	0.099	0.109
<i>Total</i>	0.177	0.227	0.113	0.140	0.150
COL					
<i>Youth</i>	0.424	0.465	0.291	0.277	0.325
<i>Not youth</i>	0.355	0.299	0.225	0.218	0.210
<i>Total</i>	0.398	0.395	0.265	0.254	0.281
MEX					
<i>Youth</i>	0.540	0.589	0.335	0.297	0.383
<i>Not youth</i>	0.469	0.519	0.290	0.309	0.357
<i>Total</i>	0.506	0.556	0.314	0.297	0.364
PER					
<i>Youth</i>	0.724	0.700	0.471	0.478	0.474
<i>Not youth</i>	0.596	0.602	0.376	0.443	0.454
<i>Total</i>	0.680	0.666	0.439	0.464	0.464
URY					
<i>Youth</i>	0.247	0.270	0.188	0.175	0.197
<i>Not youth</i>	0.105	0.106	0.083	0.079	0.069
<i>Total</i>	0.182	0.195	0.140	0.130	0.139

Note: Own elaboration based on household surveys.

Table A7: Average QoE index for the tourism industry by sex and skill

Dimension / Group	ARG	BRA	COL	MEX	PER	URY
Gender						
Super young male	0.47	0.26	0.41	0.50	0.58	0.32
Young male	0.20	0.12	0.22	0.29	0.34	0.12
Adult male	0.10	0.10	0.17	0.26	0.27	0.08
Super female	0.52	0.27	0.47	0.50	0.50	0.30
Young female	0.28	0.15	0.32	0.41	0.57	0.14
Adult female	0.19	0.13	0.32	0.48	0.62	0.10
Skills						
Super young skilled	0.51	0.22	0.40	0.48	0.57	0.23
Young skilled	0.24	0.09	0.19	0.29	0.34	0.09
Adult skilled	0.14	0.05	0.12	0.27	0.27	0.05
Super young unskilled	0.46	0.27	0.46	0.52	0.69	0.33
Young skilled	0.23	0.15	0.33	0.42	0.58	0.16
Adult unskilled	0.14	0.12	0.29	0.45	0.45	0.10

Note: Own elaboration based on household surveys.