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Validation of competencies and credentials of venezuelan migrants in Peru

Moises Bresners O'brian Ricapa Toledo

Abstract

The objective of this study was to analyze the perception of Venezuelan migrant professionals in the processes of validation of competencies and credentials in the Peruvian labour market, 2023. Quantitative, non-experimental and exploratory research with the participation of 163 Venezuelan migrant professionals residing in the Constitutional Province of Callao and Lima, Peru, 2023. The instrument is a questionnaire adapted from the guidelines of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) network. The results show that, by statistically unifying the measurements using multivariate confirmatory techniques, the tetra-factorial configuration of the perceptions examined, corresponding to the proposed theoretical domains of Barriers/Supports, Validation Process, Equity/Discrimination and Socio-labour Integration, it was found that the contrast between barriers and equity deficits was perceived in multiple areas, with some sources of support and limited labour opportunities. Important gaps and obstacles were identified in the processes of validation of academic credentials and previous experience, transversalised by the perceived levels in the dimensions of equity/non-discrimination in comparison with the local population; as well as in the effective possibilities of economic entrepreneurship after migration. While participants recognise intermediate values of social and state support, structural limitations in other critical domains generate a moderate negative to strong critical view on the overall integrative experience after their migratory movement from Venezuela

Keywords: Labour; Personnel management; labour migrant

Validación de competencias y credenciales de migrantes venezolanos en Perú

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio fue analizar la percepción de profesionales migrantes venezolanos en los procesos de validación de competencias y credenciales en el mercado laboral del Perú, 2023. Investigación cuantitativa, no experimental y exploratoria donde participaron 163 profesionales venezolanos inmigrantes residentes en la Provincia Constitucional del Callao y Lima, Perú, 2023. El instrumento corresponde a un cuestionario adaptado de los lineamientos de la red International Organization for Migration (IOM). Los resultados evidencian que, al unificar estadísticamente las mediciones mediante técnicas multivariadas confirmatorias, la configuración de tipo tetra-factorial de las percepciones examinadas, correspondientes a los dominios teóricos propuestos de Barreras/Apoyos, Proceso de Validación, Equidad/Discriminación e Integración Socio-laboral, se encontró que el contraste entre barreras y déficit de equidad fue percibido en múltiples áreas, con algunas fuentes de apoyo y oportunidades laborales acotadas. Se identificaron importantes brechas y obstáculos en los procesos de validación de credenciales académicas y de experiencia previas, transversalizados por los niveles percibidos en las dimensiones de equidad/no discriminación en comparación con la población local; así como en las posibilidades efectivas de emprendimiento económico propio luego de la migración. Si bien los participantes reconocen valores intermedios de apoyo social y del Estado, las limitaciones estructurales en otros dominios críticos generan una visión negativa moderada a crítica fuerte sobre la experiencia integrativa global tras su movimiento migratorio desde Venezuela

Palabras clave: Trabajo; Gestión de personal; migrante laboral

Introduction

The mass exodus of Venezuelans is caused by a concomitance of factors, including the political crisis, economic instability and shortages of food and medicine, lack of employment opportunities and increased violence, the collapse of the health system, and hyperinflation (Ordóñez & Ramírez, 2019). Venezuelan migration has significantly impacted the countries of the region, particularly Colombia, Peru, Chile, Ecuador, and Argentina (Abuelafia, 2020; Obando, Ramoni, & Guerrero, 2022; Vega, 2022). This influx puts pressure on the social, educational, and health systems of these countries. At the global level, the Venezuelan diaspora creates challenges for humanitarian protection and a coordinated response (IOM, 2023). Host countries have taken a variety of measures to control Venezuelan migration, ranging from status checks to providing humanitarian aid. However, challenges persist in terms of socioeconomic integration and protection of the rights of migrants (Freitez, 2023;

Morán, Atencio & Moreno, 2022). Regional and international cooperation is also essential to effectively manage this crisis.

The impact of labor migration on human capital development is complex. While migration can provide a source of income and reduce unemployment, it can also undermine human capital and lead to economic stagnation and structural crises (Migration Advisory Committee, 2020; IOM; 2023). The effects of labor migration affect both countries of origin and destination, mainly affecting human capital (Grebennyk, Aleshkovski, & Maksimova, 2021). In addition to this, Venezuelan migrants have a significant impact on the economies of receiving countries, especially in Latin America. (Palomino, & Lovón, 2022; Yalta, Robles, & Lovón, 2021).

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the arrival of Venezuelans in search of a better life has tested the economies of Latin American nations, which were already facing tight public finances, especially since the pandemic (Arena, et al, 2022). Despite the challenges, Venezuelan immigration has also created economic opportunities for receiving countries. The analysis estimates that Venezuelan migration will have a positive impact on GDP growth in countries such as Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and Uruguay (Freitez, 2023). The rapid integration of immigrants into the world of formal work and their contribution to economic growth are important aspects to consider when analyzing the impact of Venezuelan immigration on the economy of the receiving country. In the same order, the ILO (2022) highlights the contribution of Venezuelan migrant workers on the front line of the fight against COVID-19 in Latin America (Nicolao, Debandi, & Penchaszadeh, 2022). Although many of these workers had precarious jobs, they were a pillar of the local economy during the pandemic. Andean communities adopted regulations to facilitate the movement of workers within the community, however, challenges remain, such as the vulnerability of workers and the need to protect the rights of migrant workers. Lovón, et al., 2021; Prado, Zavala, & Lovón, 2021).

In the specific case of Peru, it has been documented that Venezuelan migration had a positive impact on economic growth. According to a study by the Venezuelan-Peruvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Cavempi) and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Venezuelan refugee and immigrant population contributes approximately S273.6 million and S35.5 million in special taxes, which together represent 0.043% of Peru's GDP (ILO, 2022). In this context, the International Labor Organization (ILO) has focused on promoting the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Peru, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (ILO, 2022^a). The ILO strategy focuses on the provision of direct services, including validated methodologies to boost entrepreneurship, financial education, occupational health and safety. In 2021, the strategy was expanded to four regions of Peru to strengthen communication between government agencies and develop recommendations to improve public policies, programs, and services.

Validation of competencies and credentials

The scenario of the massive Venezuelan migration phenomenon led to an increase in demand for processes to validate skills and credentials for migrants in receiving countries (Nicolao, Debandi, & Penchaszadeh, 2022). The validation of skills and credentials constitutes a crucial step for the labor integration of migrants, enabling access to job opportunities linked to their academic training, experience, and transversal skills. In

the workplace of the receiving country, the validation of skills and credentials requires migrants to go through processes, regulated or not, where they must demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and qualifications acquired in their country of origin, governed by the legal and administrative mechanisms of the host country (Freitez, 2023). This process is essential as a protocol for integration into the formal labor market of the receiving countries, expanding access to a multitude of job opportunities in accordance with their academic credentials and references of previous work experience.

Given the quality of high levels of professionalized human capital inherent to a significant contingent of Venezuelan migrants, the validation of skills and credentials constitutes a challenge in host countries, which can potentially influence the modalities of socio-productive integration that benefit the migrant and the host country (Crespo del Río, et al., 2022). A significant contingent of Venezuelan migrants in Peru have higher education and qualified work experience. However, by not being able to validate their academic credentials and professional certifications, they are forced to enter jobs that do not correspond to their skills and qualifications (Chaves, Amaral, Mora, 2021). This underutilization of migrant human capital limits their contribution to the socioeconomic development of Peru. In this context, facilitating and streamlining the validation processes of titles, diplomas, and certifications is essential. In Peru, thanks to the Hague agreements, the validation of degrees from Venezuelan universities that qualify within the agreement is a transparent process, with moderate costs and that is achieved in a period of a few months (Government of Peru, 2023).

Regarding the validation of documents that certify work experience, the process is complex and is subject to the singularities of the work entity that the migrant aspires to enter. Consequently, Venezuelans in Peru face complex scenarios regarding the hiring of personnel as specialized and experienced workers. One of the main obstacles lies in the excessive and unclear documentation requirements that Venezuelan immigrants must present to prove their previous educational and professional qualifications (Blouin, 2021). Each agency, professional association and potential employer has its own, often restrictive, standards for what documents must be requested and how they are legalized, creating bureaucratic barriers to deter immigration.

In addition to this, gaps and inconsistencies persist in the verification process of university or technical degrees obtained in Venezuela. There are bilateral agreements between universities in both countries, but these do not necessarily cover all fields of study or careers. This forces highly specialized Venezuelan immigrants to rely on arduous and lengthy verification processes that can take years to resolve (Okumura, et al. 2022). Even after demonstrating their academic training, potential Peruvian employers do not recognize the skills and qualifications of professional and technical immigrants. Negative stereotypes persist about the supposed low quality of education and work experience available in Venezuela, forcing Venezuelan applicants to once again “prove” their experience. In this context, some private sector employers take advantage of legal loopholes in verification to hire highly qualified migrant workers in positions that do not correspond to their skills, under the threat of exposing their vulnerability to Peruvian authorities.

At the same time, the lack of contacts and references in Peru, as well as the labor discrimination associated with the migration phenomenon, reduces the possibility of formal integration into the Peruvian labor market. Many Venezuelan immigrants choose to become more flexible, enterprising, and in most cases make their working conditions precarious (Acuña, 2021; Bustillos, 2020). This negatively influences the nature and intensity of the

socio-productive integration of qualified migrant populations from Venezuela, and the potential contribution of their own personal development and advanced human capital to Peruvian society (IOM, ILO, Ministry of Labor and Promotion of Employment of Peru, 2019). In this context, the objective of this study was to analyze the perception of Venezuelan migrant professionals in the validation processes of skills and credentials in the labor market of Peru, in 2023.

Methodology

The study is framed within the quantitative paradigm, with a non-experimental design and exploratory scope. The process of analysis and development of the total research involved several phases:

Preparatory Phase:

In this phase the content of the questionnaire was established to analyze the perception of Venezuelan migrant professionals in the processes of validation of competencies and credentials in the Peruvian labor market, for this purpose an ad hoc questionnaire was designed, adapted from the guidelines of the International Organization for Migration network (IOM, 2021). The instrument consisted of 4 dimensions based on the proposals of the IOM, ILO and the Ministry of Labor of Peru, (2019), generating 22 Items, grouped into 4 dimensions that refer to the areas: Validation Process (6 items), Barriers and Support (6 items), Equity and Discrimination (6 items), Socio-labor integration (4 items). The result was the preliminary instrument to be validated. The complete process of this phase included: a) literature review b) identification of domains and contents c) identification of items and elements in existing instruments d) drafting of the preliminary instrument proposal; e) validation by expert judgment using the Delphi methodology and validation analysis by means of a limited sample. The final scale corresponds to a 4-point Likert scale.

Instrument Validation Phase:

This phase consisted of the following steps: 1) A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted with a representative sample of Venezuelan migrants (32), randomly selected. 2) Analysis of the internal consistency of the instrument by calculating the coefficients: Cronbach's alpha (0.895) McDonald's ω (0.894) and λ_2 Guttman (0.883) for the total of the questionnaire and each of its dimensions, showed values above 0.701, suggesting high internal consistency and reliability. Evaluation of the temporal stability of the questionnaire through a test-retest with a subsample, calculating Pearson's correlation coefficient, obtaining adequate values from 0.625 to 1.00). Finally, the exploratory factor analysis was performed with a limited sample (32 participants). The results indicated that all the items adjusted to the factors, the value of the KMO coefficient for the limited sample was obtained at 0.870, with values: minimum of 0.701 and maximum of 0.949, in the items analyzed, with an explained variance of 62.3% by the 4 factors, and indexes in the correlation matrix between factors between a range of 0.51 and 0.782.

Data Collection and Final Analysis Phase:

This step consisted of data collection and analysis by means of descriptive statistics

and exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Ordinary least squares and oblique rotation methods, Promax, were used. Finally, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to verify the factorial structure obtained in the EFA and to evaluate the model fit by means of indexes such as CFI, TLI, RMSEA and SRMR and to estimate the Structural Equations of the Model, in order to corroborate the guidelines proposed by IOM, ILO and the Ministry of Labor of Peru, (2019) selected for the study.

The final sample consisted of 163 professionals of Venezuelan origin who have emigrated and currently reside in the Constitutional Province of Callao and in the city of Lima, Peru. Data collection was carried out during the year 2023. In the sampling process, a recruitment strategy was implemented based on social networking platforms, specifically Facebook and WhatsApp. The initial selection of participants was done by random sampling using the random number generation tool of the Excel Spreadsheet Software. In the preliminary contact phase, the invitation to participate in the study was extended to a total of 300, obtaining a positive response from 206 subjects (68.67%). However, only 163 participants met the inclusion criteria: Venezuelan migrant university professionals, who had a foreigner's resident card. The questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms.

Instrument

The final instrument applied corresponds to a survey adapted from the guidelines of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2021). The instrument comprises a scale that allows the evaluation of four dimensions that influence the perception and assessment of the processes of validation of migrants' professional credentials and competencies. The questionnaire was structured on a 4-point Likert scale and four sections: a) Validation process: It addresses the clarity, accessibility and consistency of the information provided to applicants, as well as the opportunity to appeal or request a review of the results, b) Barriers and support: Evaluates the linguistic, cultural and administrative

barriers faced by applicants, as well as the support they receive during the validation process and c) Equity and discrimination: Refers to the perception of equity and non-discrimination of applicants during the validation process; d) Socio-labor integration: Refers to opportunities and difficulties in obtaining a job, access to training programs and labor market insertion (Table1).

Table 1 Questionnaire

Demographics	Gender	Female Male Other
		Age
	Work experience in your profession	
Validation Process	VP1	Were you provided with clear and accessible information on how to prepare for the validation process?
	VP2	Did those responsible effectively respond to your questions and doubts about the process?
	VP3	Did you know with certainty the necessary documentation and the deadlines established at each stage?
	VP4	Was the information about each stage of the validation process easy to access and understand?
	VP5	Was the validation process consistent with what you had been previously informed?

Validation Process	VP6	Did you have the opportunity to appeal or request a review if you did not agree with the results of the validation process?
	BS1	Have you faced language barriers during the validation process?
Barriers and Support	BS2	Have you had difficulties with the documentation required for the validation process?
	BS3	Did you receive enough support during the validation process?
	BS4	Did you have access to adequate resources to prepare for the assessments?
	BS5	Have you encountered difficulties understanding and navigating the validation system due to cultural differences?
	BS6	Have you received advice or support to overcome language barriers during the validation process?
	Equity and Discrimination	ED1
ED2		Did you experience any type of discrimination during the validation process?
ED3		Did you feel that your rights as a migrant worker were respected during the validation process?
ED4		Do you consider that all applicants are treated equally during the validation process?
ED5		Did you feel that your national or ethnic origin influenced the outcome of the validation process?
ED6		Were you given the same amount and quality of information as other applicants during the validation process?
Socio-labor integration	SLI1	Have you had access to education or training programs that enabled you to adapt to the needs of the local labor market?
	SLI2	Have you experienced difficulties in finding employment commensurate with your skills and qualifications?
	SLI3	Have you received orientation on your labor rights and the regulations of the host country?
	SLI4	Have you had access to job placement programs that promote equal opportunities for groups at risk of social exclusion?

Own elaboration

Analysis of data

The data analysis was executed using the Jasp 0.18 (2024) software; preliminary structural analyses sought to calculate the bivariate correlations between the study items. Each dimension was subjected to descriptive statistical analysis and its interpretation. The Chi-Square Test Analysis was used to identify the existence or not of a statistically significant association between the demographic variables (age, sex, work experience) and each of the items contained in the questionnaire, as well as the inquiry of response patterns in the questionnaire items and whether these differ significantly among the different groups defined by the demographic variables, as well as to evaluate whether the differences observed in the items among the demographic groups are the result of chance or whether they reflect a real relationship between these items. In relation to the factorial validity of the original scale based on IOM and ILO guidelines, it was tested in two phases

1. Exploratory factor analysis: Oblique rotation, promax method, and ordinary least squares with minimum residual solution due to the non-normal distribution of the items;
2. Structural equation modeling: confirmatory factor analysis with maximum likelihood estimator. The criteria to determine the appropriate number of factors was exploratory factor analysis. The structure of the questionnaire was tested using structural equations. The goodness of fit of the SEM models was evaluated based on: the chi-square test (X^2). The fit indices selected were: RMSE, corresponds to the root mean square of the square error of approximation, the CFI index is a comparative fit index and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and the Akaike information criterion (AIC), corresponding to a measure that

compares any pair of models that have the same set of items.

The final structure test consisted of three steps. First, a univariate model was estimated in which all remaining items loaded on the same underlying dimension (null model). Second, a model was estimated that represented the original theoretical model. Third, revised version that provided acceptable results. Several items were assigned a reverse order on the perception scale to mitigate the tendency of participants to respond uniformly and automatically and as a technique to mitigate response bias. The data fit and reliability analysis was carried out using three indices: Cronbach's alpha, Mac Donald's omega and Guttman's lambda square.

Results and discussion

Descriptive statistics

From the demographic items it was identified that they were grouped into 52.9% men and 45.6% women and 1.5% NS/NC. The age range was contained between 18 and 60 years, discriminated as follows: Between 18 - 25 years: 27.3%; between 26-35: 20.4%; between 36-45 years: 22.2%, between 46-55 years: 17.6% and with 56 years or more: 12.5% and with an average work seniority in their country of origin of 11 years, discriminated as follows: Less than 5 years: 10.8%; from 6 to 10 years: 20.4%, from 11 to 15 years: 24.3%, from 15 to 20 years 25.2%, and more than 20 years: 19.3%. The items analyzed correspond to the dimensions of Validation Process (VP1-VP6), Barriers and Support (BS1-BS6), Equity and Discrimination (ED1-ED6) and Social and Labor Integration (SLI1-SLI4). Table 2 shows the mean profile for each item:

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation. Questionnaire Items

Validation Process						
	VP1	VP2	VP3	VP4	VP5	VP6
Mean	2.852	3.022	3.136	3.002	3.036	2.950
Standard Deviation	0.827	0.802	0.763	0.808	0.779	0.818
Barrier and support						
	BS1	BS2	BS3	BS4	BS5	BS6
Mean	3.596	3.542	3.303	3.477	3.484	3.600
Standard Deviation	0.666	0.646	0.683	0.670	0.667	0.665
Equity and Discrimination						
	ED1	ED2	ED3	ED4	ED5	ED6
Mean	3.058	3.030	3.138	3.228	3.303	3.275
Standard Deviation	0.691	0.697	0.667	0.668	0.623	0.616
Social and Labor Integration						
	SLI1	SLI2	SLI3	SLI4		
Mean	2.338	0.942	4.563	2.766		
Standard Deviation	0.583	0.234	1.906	0.567		

Own elaboration.

Discrimination by mean values obtained

The results obtained from the descriptive statistical analysis regarding each of the dimensions and items analyzed indicated:

In the “Validation Process” dimension (VP1-VP6), a general trend towards moderately high scores was observed, with means ranging from 2.852 to 3.136. Item VP3, related to certainty about the necessary documentation and established deadlines, obtained the highest score ($M = 3.136$, $SD = 0.763$), suggesting that participants perceive some clarity in these aspects of the process. However, item VP1, referring to the provision of clear and accessible information about preparation for the process, showed the lowest score ($M = 2.852$, $SD = 0.827$), indicating a downward trend in perception regarding initial communication with applicants.

For the “Barriers and Support” dimension (BS1-BS6), the scores were found to be notably higher when compared to the other dimensions, with means ranging from 3.303 to 3.600. Item BS6, which assesses advice or support to overcome language barriers, scored the highest ($M = 3.600$, $SD = 0.665$), suggesting that participants perceive an adequate level of assistance in this regard. However, item BS3, related to general support during the process, showed the lowest score in this dimension ($M = 3.303$, $SD = 0.683$), which could suggest that, although there is specific support in certain areas, support in general could be improved.

In relation to the dimension “Equity and Discrimination” (ED1-ED6), the scores are moderately high, with means between 3.030 and 3.303. Item ED5, which assesses the perception of the influence of national or ethnic origin on the outcome of the process, obtained the highest score ($M = 3.303$, $SD = 0.623$), suggesting that participants perceive relative fairness in this aspect. However, item ED2, referring to experiences of discrimination during the process, showed the lowest score ($M = 3.030$, $SD = 0.697$), which could indicate that, although the overall perception is positive, there are still instances of perceived discrimination.

The dimension “Socio-Labor Integration” (SLI1-SLI4) presented the highest variability in scores. Item SLI3, related to orientation on labor rights and host country regulations, scored remarkably high ($M = 4.563$, $SD = 1.906$), suggesting a very positive perception in this aspect. In contrast, item SLI2, which assesses difficulties in finding employment commensurate with skills and qualifications, showed an exceptionally low score ($M = 0.942$, $SD = 0.234$), indicating that participants experience significant challenges in this area.

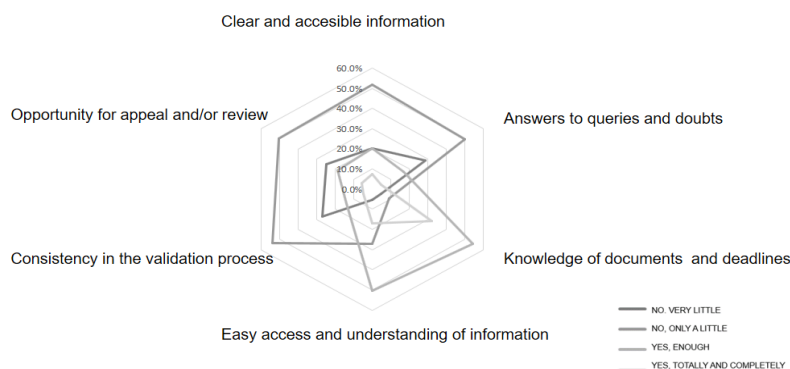
These results suggest that, although Venezuelan migrant professionals perceive certain positive aspects in the process of validating competencies and credentials in Peru, there are areas that require attention. The notable discrepancy in the Socio-Labor Integration dimension indicates that, despite receiving orientation on rights and regulations, participants face substantial obstacles in obtaining employment commensurate with their qualifications. This finding underscores the need to address not only the administrative aspects of the validation process, but also the structural barriers in the labor market that may be preventing the effective integration of these professionals.

It is important to note that the variability in standard deviations, particularly in the Socio-Labor Integration dimension, suggests that participants’ experiences are diverse and that there may be additional factors influencing their perceptions and experiences. Future analyses might benefit from exploring moderating variables that could explain this variability.

Distributions by dimensión

- Validation Process:** This dimension shows a relatively even distribution, with means ranging from 2.852 to 3.136. Item VP3, related to certainty about documentation and timelines, presents the highest mean ($M = 3.136$, $SD = 0.763$), suggesting a moderately positive perception of clarity in these aspects. However, all items show a negative skewness (between -0.516 and -0.870), indicating a tendency towards higher scores. The Shapiro-Wilk test ($p < .001$ for all items) confirms a significant deviation from normality, implying that the perception of the validation process does not follow a Gaussian distribution (Figure 1):

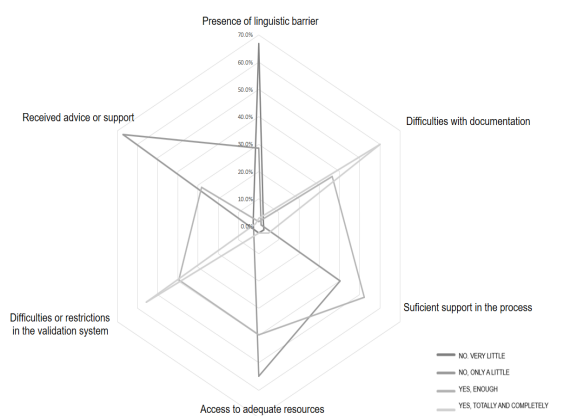
Figure 1 **Distribution of responses**



Own elaboration

- Barriers and Support Dimension:** This dimension exhibits higher means, ranging from 3.303 to 3.600, suggesting a generally positive perception of support received and overcoming barriers. Notably, all items show pronounced negative skewness (between -0.963 and -1.979) and high positive kurtosis (between 1.531 and 4.455), indicating a significant concentration of responses at the highest values of the scale. The deviation from normality is even more evident in this dimension, as confirmed by the Shapiro-Wilk values ($p < .001$), suggesting a consistently positive experience in terms of support and overcoming barriers (Figure 2).

Figure 2 **Distribution of Responses**

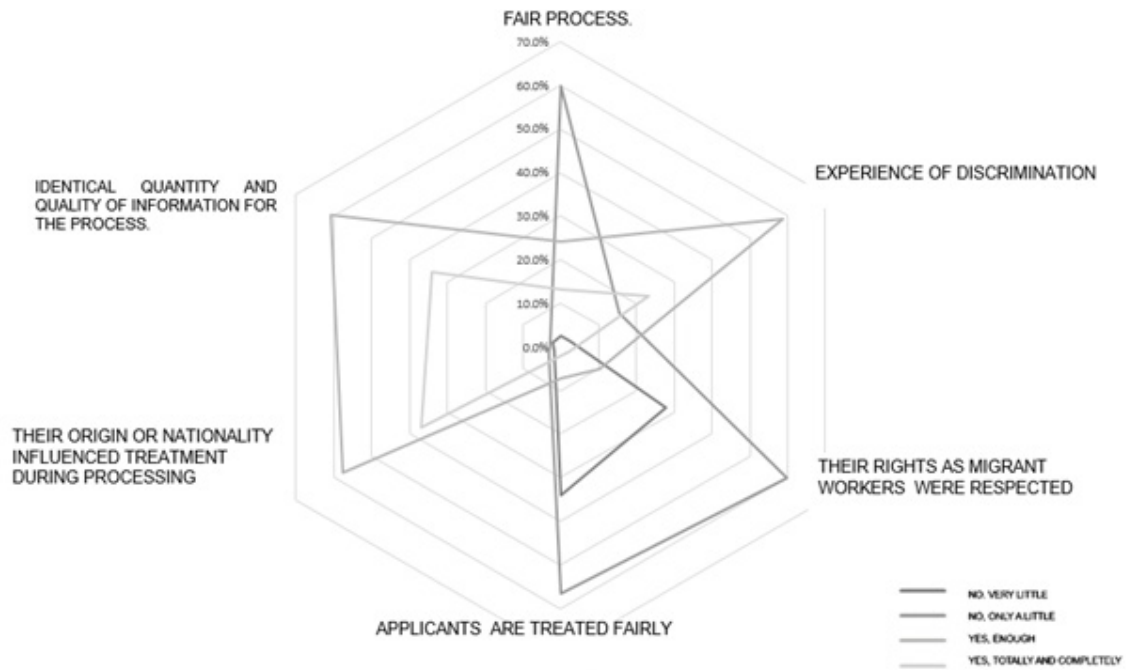


Own elaboration

Equity and Discrimination Dimension:

The means in this dimension range from 3.030 to 3.303, indicating a moderately positive perception of fairness in the process. Negative skewness (between -0.473 and -0.786) and positive kurtosis (between 0.389 and 2.073) suggest a trend toward more favorable evaluations, although less pronounced than in the previous dimension. Deviation from normality persists (Shapiro-Wilk, $p < .001$), implying that perceptions of fairness and discrimination are not normally distributed across participants (Figure 3):

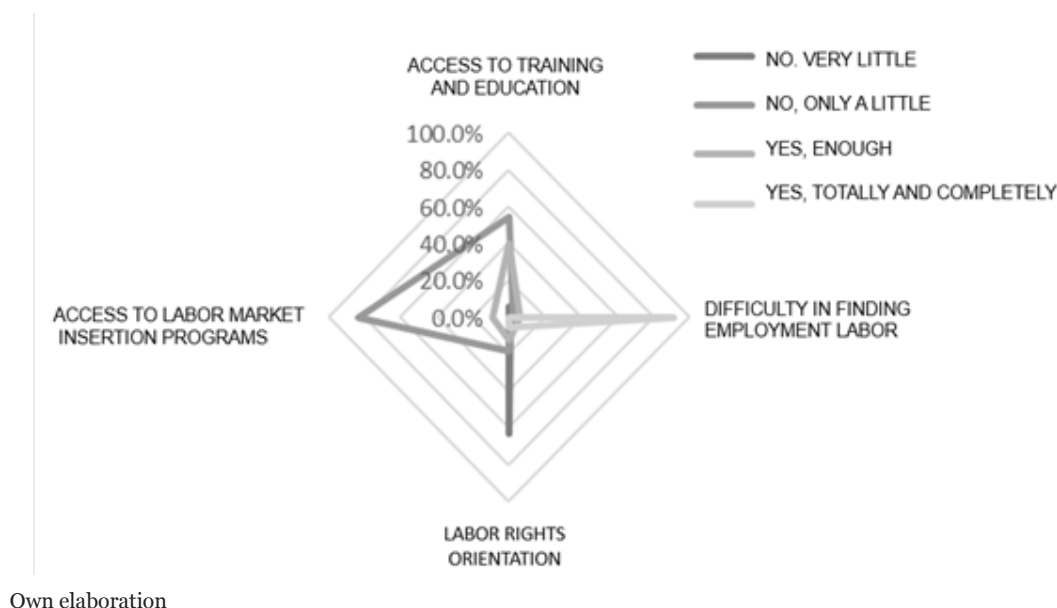
Figure 3 Distribution of Responses



Own elaboration

Socio-labor Integration Dimension:

This dimension presents the greatest variability and complexity in its results. The SLI3 item shows a remarkably high mean ($M = 4.563$, $SD = 1.906$), contrasting with SLI2, which has a very low mean ($M = 0.942$, $SD = 0.234$). This disparity suggests a significant dichotomy in work integration experience. Skewness is negative for all items, but varies considerably in magnitude (-0.229 to -3.795). The kurtosis also shows a large variability (-0.665 to 12.447), indicating very different distributions among the items. The Shapiro-Wilk test ($p < .001$) confirms a substantial deviation from normality in all items of this dimension, (Figure 4):

Figure 4 **Distribution of Responses**

The consistent deviation from normality in all dimensions indicates the need to use robust statistical or non-parametric methods in further analyses. In addition, the marked negative skewness in most of the items suggests the existence of subgroups of participants who report less favorable experiences, which calls for further research to identify the composition of these subgroups, contributing factors and potential areas for improvement in the process of validation and labor integration of Venezuelan migrant professionals in Peru.

Contingency Analysis:

The Chi-Square Test was used to evaluate the association between demographic variables and each of the items of the questionnaire for its verification, in this sense the results showed the following: The results of the Chi-Square test reveal few significant and marginally significant associations between demographic variables and various items of the questionnaire. First, a marginally significant association is observed between sex and item VP4 ($\chi^2 = 12.57$, $gl = 6$, $p = 0.0503$), which refers to the ease of accessing and understanding information about each stage of the validation process. This relationship suggests the existence of gender differences in the perception of the accessibility and clarity of the information provided, although statistical significance is at the conventional limit. A significant association was also found between gender and item BD4 ($\chi^2 = 16.58$, $gl = 6$, $p = 0.0109$), which assesses access to adequate resources to prepare for the assessments. This finding indicates that men and women may have different experiences in terms of access to preparatory resources, which warrants further investigation to identify and address possible gender disparities in this aspect of the validation process. The relationship between gender and the SLI3 item ($\chi^2 = 11.57$, $gl = 6$, $p = 0.0724$), although marginally significant, suggests possible gender differences in the receipt of orientation on labor rights and host country regulations. This trend could indicate the need to examine whether there are gender-specific barriers in accessing information crucial for labor integration.

With respect to age, significant associations were found with several items. The relationship with VP6 ($\chi^2 = 23.89$, $gl = 12$, $p = 0.0211$) suggests that perceptions of the opportunity to appeal or request a review of outcomes vary across age groups. This could reflect generational differences in the willingness or ability to seek rectifications in the validation process. The highly significant associations between age and items ED1 ($\chi^2 = 35.68$, $gl = 12$, $p = 0.000364$) and ED2 ($\chi^2 = 32.04$, $gl = 12$, $p = 0.00136$) indicate that perceptions of fairness and experiences of discrimination during the validation process vary considerably across age groups. These findings suggest that experiences of fairness and discrimination are not uniform across the age spectrum of migrant professionals. Furthermore, the significant associations between age and items ED3 ($\chi^2 = 20.7$, $gl = 12$, $p = 0.0505$) and ED4 ($\chi^2 = 23.34$, $gl = 12$, $p = 0.0248$) reinforce the idea that the perception of respect for rights as a migrant worker and equal treatment during the validation process are influenced by the age of the participants.

Finally, a marginally significant association is observed between work experience and item ED1 ($\chi^2 = 19.4$, $gl = 12$, $p = 0.0793$), suggesting that the perception of fairness in the validation process could be related to the migrant's previous career path.

Although these findings provide clues about associations between demographic variables and perceptions of the validation process, further analyses are required to determine the exact nature and magnitude of these relationships. Future studies could benefit from incorporating post-hoc analyses and consideration of moderating and modeling variables to gain a more complete understanding of the observed patterns. The observed differences in perceptions by demographic factors suggest that the experience of competency validation is not homogeneous for all migrant professionals. Variations by age in the perception of equity and discrimination could indicate that different generations of migrant professionals face different challenges in their labor integration process in Peru.

Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency for the final sample of participants of the scales was evaluated by means of different composite reliability coefficients. Cronbach's alpha for the total scale was 0.904, with a 95% confidence interval between 0.892 and 0.916, indicating meritorious reliability. McDonald's ω reliability coefficient resulted in a score of 0.905, with confidence limits between 0.893 and 0.917, also representing adequate internal consistency. Guttman's λ_2 coefficient reached a value of 0.913 with 95% confidence interval between 0.896 and 0.927. This result is interpreted as evidence of good composite reliability. At the level of the individual items, in the case of eliminating some of them, the values of the different internal consistency coefficients remain within adequate ranges and do not increase considerably. In summary, the scores obtained for Cronbach's alpha, McDonald's ω and Guttman's λ_2 strongly support the composite reliability of the scales used. All coefficients exceed the minimum cut-off point of 0.70 conventionally established in the literature to be considered acceptable (Viladrich et al, 2017; Frías-Navarro, 2022).

Exploratory Factor Analysis

As a preliminary step to the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the sample adequacy of the data was examined. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy index (KMO) reached a value of 0.910, far exceeding the minimum recommended value of 0.60 to

consider the application of the EFA appropriate. Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 10313.837$; $p < 0.001$), rejecting the null hypothesis and corroborating that there is sufficient correlation between the items to continue with the factor analysis.

Thus, the 4 factors identified together explain 67.0% of the total variance of the data. Specifically, the first factor BS Barriers and Support explains 22.1% of the variance; the second factor VP Validation Process contributes 18.1% of additional explained variance; the third factor ED Equity and Discrimination accounts for 17.8%; the fourth factor SLI Social and Labor Integration contributes 8.9% of the variance. According to the criteria used in the literature, these results as a whole provide acceptable evidence of the goodness of fit of the multidimensional model extracted using the AFE (Axpe, Subinas, Berciano, 2020). The KMO index as well as the results of total variance explained and the Chi-square statistic allow us to confirm that the exploratory factor analysis was appropriately applied in this data sample and that the resulting factor model presents an adequate fit, with the participation of each factor in the total variance as indicated in Table 2:

Table 3 **Factor Characteristics**

	Proportion var.	Cumulative
Factor 1	0.221	0.221
Factor 2	0.181	0.402
Factor 3	0.178	0.580
Factor 4	0.089	0.670

Own elaboration

The Factor Load or Saturation is indicated in Table 4, it expresses the factor structure or composition for each one, observing that the items of each dimension fit conveniently in each factor:

Table 4 **Factor Loadings**

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Unicidad
VP1		0.610			0.545
VP2		0.725			0.433
VP3		0.721			0.331
VP4		0.955			0.185
VP5		0.892			0.220
VP6		0.861			0.278
BS1	0.897				0.255
BS2	0.917				0.231
BS3	0.647				0.421
BS4	0.877				0.244
BS5	0.906				0.220
BS6	0.910				0.247
ED1			0.945		0.166
ED2			0.963		0.199
ED3			0.911		0.187
ED4			0.798		0.275
ED5			0.543		0.384
ED6			0.498		0.417

SLI1	0.819	0.348
SLI2	0.729	0.481
SLI3	0.827	0.335
SLI4	0.612	0.858

Note: Rotation method applied: promax.

Own elaboration.

The factor structure expressed the formation of 4 factors, with all items adjusted appropriately. The Factor with the greatest explained variance was the “Barriers and Support” Dimension, followed by the “Validation Process” dimensions, “Equity and Discrimination” and finally the “Socio-Labor Integration” dimension.

- **Factor 1:**

Which accumulates 22.1% of the explained variance, is made up of the 6 items linked to the Barriers and Support dimension (BS1-BS6). This indicates that the perceptions of barriers and the supports perceived by the participants share a common source of variance that could represent the influence of mechanisms from this domain on the opinions of the participants.

- **Factor 2:**

Groups the 6 items corresponding to the Validation Process dimension (VP1-VP6) and provides an additional 18.1% of explained variance. The grouping of these items into a single component accounts for a latent source of shared variation linked to the experiences reported around the validation process of credentials and competencies.

- **Factor 3:**

Composed of the 6 indicators of the Equity and Discrimination dimension (ED1-ED6). Together they represent 17.8% of the variance of the data. This factor suggests that experiences of fair and unfair treatment, equal opportunities, and situations of discrimination due to immigrant status are important and are grouped around this factor.

- **Factor 4:**

Brings together the 4 items of the Socio-labor Integration dimension (SLI1-SLI4). It explains an additional 8.9% of the observed variance. Their training reflects a latent substrate linked to the perceptions of institutional support and opportunities for job placement and entrepreneurship among the participants.

The grouping and conceptual interpretation of the factors resulting from the exploratory factor analysis correspond coherently with the 4 theoretical dimensions that initially motivated the construction and measurement of the study items. From what was obtained, the following relationships emerge:

- **Factor 1 *Barriers and Support:***

This factor groups perceptions of both obstacles and difficulties (items BS1 to BS3) and

positively valued supports (items BS4 to BS6). The grouping of these opposite indicators could be due to the fact that participants who experience greater barriers also report that they do not feel linguistic barriers, given that the same language is shared despite the differences that may exist, causing moderate correlations between both groups of items... This factor correlates to a greater extent with Factor 3 Equity and Discrimination ($r=0.639$), which is consistent since barriers and support deficits could be linked to situations of inequality and discrimination.

- **Factor 2 *Validation Process:***

The items in this factor focus on the various processes, activities, and procedures required to validate personal development or other aspects of the process of validating the academic credentials and experience of immigrants in the new context. The interrelationships between these items reflect relatively integrated perceptions about the difficulty of “reestablishing” professionally after migration. This factor is strongly associated with Factor 1 Barriers and Support ($r=0.562$) and with Factor 3 Equity/Discrimination ($r=0.596$). These connections make sense since the perceived impediments or supports could impact the success of the credentials and competencies validation process and the socio-occupational dimension.

- **Factor 3 *Equity and Discrimination:***

The items in this factor converge around beliefs and experiences of fair treatment, equal opportunities, and situations of discrimination due to immigrant status. They represent an underlying source of variance associated with the degree to which participants feel they are treated equitably and inclusively in the host society. This factor is strongly related to Factor 1 Barriers/Support ($r=0.639$) and to Factor 2 Validation Process ($r=0.596$). These connections reflect that perceiving barriers and support deficits could foster beliefs of inequity, while a process of validation of credentials and competencies would be linked to a greater perception of fair treatment. From the point of view of the responses, the perception is negative, that is, a moderate to strong feeling of inequality and discrimination is perceived.

- **Factor 4 *Socio-labor Integration:***

The items in this factor cover perceptions of support and institutional and integration with the social and labor environment, as well as job opportunities and possibilities for entrepreneurship and work. They represent interrelated aspects of the occupational and productive integration of immigrants in the destination society. This factor shows the weakest correlations with the rest, which would indicate a more independent variance substrate based on opinions of the ease/difficulty of entering the labor market and developing sustainable livelihoods.

Inter-factor correlations:

The correlations between factors range from 0.118 to 0.639, indicating moderate to strong relationships between the dimensions of the construct, especially between Factors 1, 2, and 3. This suggests that, although the factors are distinct, they are interrelated, which is consistent with the complex nature of the phenomenon studied.

Model Fit:

The chi-square statistic of the model is significant ($\chi^2 = 1504.179$, $gl = 149$, $p < .001$), which is common in large samples. However, other fit indices such as RMSEA = 0.132 (90% CI [0.125, 0.137]) and TLI = 0.791 indicate a suboptimal fit by conventional criteria (Hu & Bentler, 1999). This suggests that although the factor structure is interpretable and theoretically consistent, and could benefit from further refinements.

In conclusion, the AFE reveals a four-dimensional factor structure that adjusted with the conceptual design of the instrument based on the guidelines used by the IOM, ILO and Ministry of Labor of Peru (2019). The high reliability and clear factorial structure support the validity of the questionnaire to assess Venezuelan migrant professionals' perceptions of competency validation processes in Peru. However, the fit indices suggest that minor modifications could be explored to improve model fit, possibly by refining some items with lower factor loadings. These results suggest that the model and the guidelines used by IOM, ILO and the Peruvian Ministry of Labor, (2019), express and explain the phenomenon studied quite well.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Based on the previous exploratory factorial solution, the next step was the validation of the theoretical structure of the dimensions used by IOM, ILO and the Ministry of Labor of Peru, (2019), to understand the phenomenon of the perception of credential validation by migrants. The model was tested with 4 latent factors and their respective observed indicators, before that different grouping solutions were tested, with a single factor, two factors and 3 factors, all models were discarded given the low acceptable fit values. The best solution found was the original proposal of 4 theoretical latent factors.

In relation to the fit values of the AFC Model, the following values were obtained:

Table 5 AFC Fit Indices. 4-factor model

Index	Values
Chi-Square	$X^2 = 1804.818$, $df = 183$, $p < .001$
Comparative Fit Index. (CFI=	0.825
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.799
Root Mean Squared Error Approximation (RMSEA):	0.129 (90% IC: 0.123 - 0.134, $p < .001$)
Residual of the Standardized Root Mean Square Error (RSRMSE)	0.074
Goodness of fit (GOF)	0.786

Own elaboration

Interpretation of the fit indices.

a) *Chi-Square test*: The significant Chi-Square value ($p < .001$) indicates that the model does not fit the observed data perfectly. However, this test is very sensitive to the sample size, so its interpretation should be considered with caution; given that the sample was 163 participants.

b) *CFI and TLI*: The CFI (0.825) and TLI (0.799) values are slightly below the

commonly accepted threshold of 0.90 for a good fit, suggesting that the model could benefit from further improvements.

c) *RMSEA*: The RMSEA value of 0.129 indicates a not very good fit, values lower than 0.08 are preferred. The width of the confidence interval (0.123 - 0.134) reinforces this interpretation.

d) *SRMR*: The value of 0.074 is close to the acceptable threshold of 0.08, suggesting that the model has a moderate fit in terms of residual standardized differences.

e) *GFI*: The GFI of 0.786 is lower than the ideal value of 0.890, indicating that the model does not provide an adequate fit according to this index.

In relation to the reliability of the model, the calculations indicated that the standardized factor loadings and the coefficients of determination (R^2) shown in Table 5 are significant and present acceptable values, indicating that the items are good indicators of their respective factors. The factor loadings range from 0.094 to 0.846, with most of the loadings being statistically significant ($p < .001$).

Table 6, shows the results of the Factor Loadings corresponding to the SEM (Structural Equations of each factor (dimension):

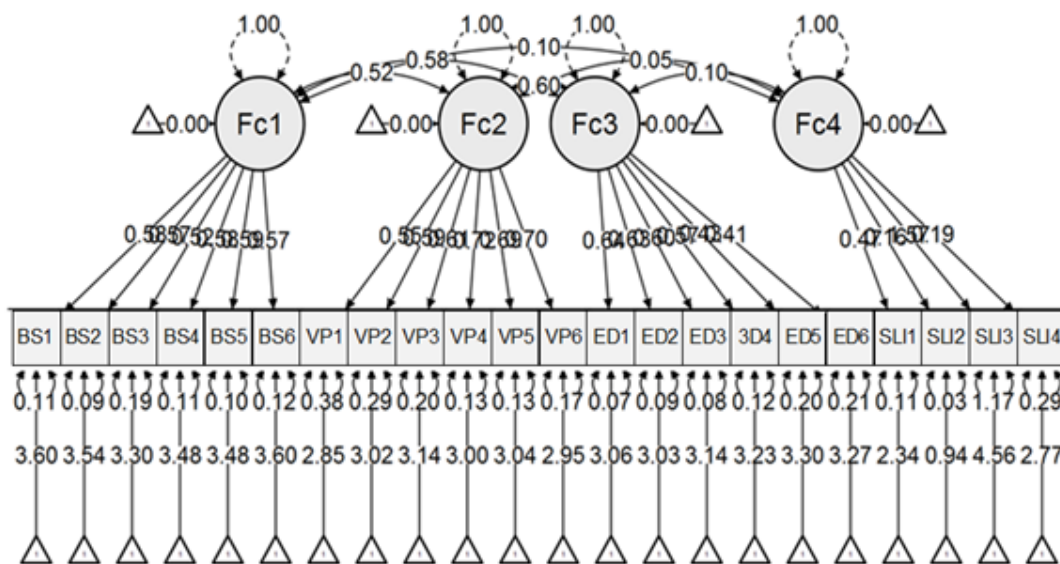
Table 6 Load Factors. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factor	Indicator	Symbol	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower	Superior Upper
Factor 1	BS1	λ_{11}	0.576	0.023	24.933	< .001	0.530	0.621
	BS2	λ_{12}	0.569	0.022	25.697	< .001	0.525	0.612
	BS3	λ_{13}	0.521	0.025	20.616	< .001	0.472	0.571
	BS4	λ_{14}	0.584	0.023	25.296	< .001	0.539	0.629
	BS5	λ_{15}	0.586	0.023	25.596	< .001	0.541	0.631
	BS6	λ_{16}	0.571	0.023	24.665	< .001	0.526	0.617
Factor 2	VP1	λ_{21}	0.548	0.032	16.945	< .001	0.485	0.612
	VP2	λ_{22}	0.593	0.030	19.601	< .001	0.533	0.652
	VP3	λ_{23}	0.614	0.028	22.169	< .001	0.559	0.668
	VP4	λ_{24}	0.722	0.028	26.216	< .001	0.668	0.776
	VP5	λ_{25}	0.693	0.027	25.999	< .001	0.641	0.745
	VP6	λ_{26}	0.704	0.029	24.635	< .001	0.648	0.760
Factor 3	ED1	λ_{31}	0.635	0.023	27.688	< .001	0.590	0.680
	ED2	λ_{32}	0.628	0.023	26.743	< .001	0.582	0.674
	ED3	λ_{33}	0.603	0.022	26.866	< .001	0.559	0.647
	ED4	λ_{34}	0.569	0.023	24.386	< .001	0.523	0.615
	ED5	λ_{35}	0.428	0.024	17.900	< .001	0.381	0.475
	ED6	λ_{36}	0.407	0.024	16.975	< .001	0.360	0.454
Factor 4	SLI1	λ_{41}	0.474	0.023	20.386	< .001	0.429	0.520
	SLI2	λ_{42}	0.165	0.010	17.235	< .001	0.146	0.184
	SLI3	λ_{43}	1.567	0.076	20.658	< .001	1.418	1.716
	SLI4	λ_{44}	0.187	0.026	7.202	< .001	0.136	0.238

Own elaboration

Correlations among the four latent factors ranged from 0.049 to 0.622, supporting the existence of interrelated but conceptually distinguishable domains. The confirmatory factor analysis suggests and provides evidence of validity and usefulness of the multidimensional theoretical model specified to represent both the factorial configuration and the interrelationships among the experiences and perceptions reported by the participating Venezuelan immigrants around different areas of their integration to the new national context (Figure 5):

Figure 5 Model Graph. AFC



Own elaboration from Jasp (2024)

The objective of this study was to analyze the perception of Venezuelan migrant professionals in the validation processes of skills and credentials in the labor market of Peru, in 2023. The results by dimensions of the Validation Process dimension, given the scores close to the midpoint of The scale in most items, suggest a moderate assessment of aspects such as job opportunities and the possibilities of personal development found in the receiving country. The results express a strong association between the factors of Barriers and Support and Equity/Discrimination linked to the incidence of perceived impediments or supports on the success of the validation process of credentials and competencies and the socio-occupational dimension. In the same order, a strong relationship was found between the Barriers/Support Factor with the Validation Process Factor, expressing the negative perception linked to obstacles in the credential validation processes. This agrees with the reports of the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2021) on the difficulties that Venezuelan immigrants face in validating their studies and previous experience, accessing jobs in line with their training, and achieving upward socio-occupational mobility.

In the area of the Barriers and Support dimension, the lowest scores are observed in item BA1, corresponding to perceived cultural and educational barriers. In contrast, items BA2 and BA5 associated with social support and the institutions of the receiving country had higher means, expressing negative perception of the participants. This finding coincides with the results of the study by Boruchowicz, Martinelli, & Parker (2021), who report that Venezuelan professional immigrants constitute a workforce in demand by

Peruvian employers, linked to the relatively high educational level in relation to local workers. However, immigrant professionals face difficulties in validating their academic and experience credentials.

Regarding the Equity and Discrimination dimension, relatively high averages are seen in the perceived equity items and lower averages in the items linked to episodes of discrimination. Again, this agrees with reports where xenophobia and rejection do not usually manifest themselves openly, but certain barriers and systemic inequities towards professional migrants remain. The study by Boruchowicz, Martinelli, & Parker (2021) refers to the increase in unskilled jobs in the cities of Lima and Callao and decreases in the so-called “white collar” jobs, which can potentially constitute an indicator of changes in the labor structure linked to the obstacles to the insertion of migrant specialized professionals, even though this study addresses the universe of workers who live in the aforementioned cities. In reference to the dimension of Socio-Labor Integration, the perception of low levels of government support received stands out. However, the low average in terms of entrepreneurship opportunities would reflect the existing limitations for immigrants to develop their own productive initiatives.

The initial quantitative interpretation is consistent with the configuration of the first factor resulting from the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), where items of barriers and perceptions of support are grouped together. The cohesion between these indicators could originate precisely in the psychological associations between experiencing obstacles of various kinds as well as some particular and individual support in the face of that problem and reality. From the approach of the factorial configuration obtained from the three remaining domains (credential validation processes, equity/discrimination, and socio-labor integration) it corresponds to the predominance of responses inclined towards the unfavorable ranges of the respective scales. This denotes a critical vision of the respondents on these aspects that converge around the latent factors empirically identified and initially proposed. In that order, the study by Blouin (2021) states that even though the Peruvian State has updated immigration regulations, institutionally the approach towards Venezuelan migrants is assigned to the implementation of control mechanisms, which disfavor socio-labor integration.

By statistically unifying the measurements using confirmatory multivariate techniques, the tetra-factorial configuration of the perceptions examined was evident, corresponding to the initially proposed theoretical domains of Barriers/Supports, Validation Process, Equity/Discrimination, and Socio-labor Integration. Both the psychometric robustness and the explanatory usefulness of this multidimensional model were demonstrated with the findings obtained.

Thus, the contrast between barriers and perceived equity deficits in multiple areas, with some sources of support and limited job opportunities, provides an alternative understanding of the main pending challenges to advance the full inclusion and socio-productive integration of Venezuelan migrants who rebuild their lives in Peru. Overcoming these limitations would also contribute to expanding their positive contributions to the communities that host them. This result is consistent with that obtained by Mazza & Villarreal (2024) who, in a study referring to Venezuelan migration to Peru, report that the mainstreaming of the migration phenomenon through political approaches where the nature of the Venezuelan migrant workforce is defamed has a negative impact on the incorporation of a specialized workforce that contributes to national development.

The CFA suggests that the proposed four-factor model can be considered reasonably adequate at the level of interest of the present exploratory study; these fit indices indicate that even though the model based on the guidelines of the IOM, ILO and Ministry of Labor of Peru (2019) expresses the theoretical dimensions in an acceptable manner, it requires additional refinement to improve its fit, and the following recommendations are made: (a) A revision of the model is advisable and possibly modify items with low factor loadings and high residual variances to improve the reliability of the instrument; (b) Thoroughly investigate the possibility of building alternative models or the inclusion of covariances between items to improve model fit; (c) Increasing the sample size could provide more accurate and robust estimates of the model parameters.

Despite the observed limitations, the findings provide valuable insights into the experiences of Venezuelan migrant professionals in Peru and point to key areas for the improvement of labor integration policies and practices. Future studies could benefit from a longitudinal approach and the inclusion of comparative perspectives with other groups of migrants and local professionals.

Conclusions

The objective of this study was to analyze the perception of Venezuelan migrant professionals in the processes of validation of competencies and credentials in the Peruvian labor market, 2023. The study was able to identify important gaps and obstacles in the processes of validation of academic credentials and previous experience in the processes of access to job opportunities according to competencies, in the medium to low levels perceived in the dimension of equity/non-discrimination in comparison with the local population, as well as in the effective possibilities of economic entrepreneurship after migration.

The results indicate that while the overall perception of validation processes and support received is positive, there are areas of considerable variability, especially in the dimension of socio-labor integration. The consistency in the deviation from normality in all dimensions suggested the need to use robust, non-parametric statistical methods in future analyses. The marked negative skewness in most of the items expresses that a subgroup of participants report less favorable experiences, indicating the existence of specific gaps -demographics, profession, institution of graduation, etc- that need to be addressed.

While participants recognize intermediate values of social and state support, structural limitations in other critical domains generate a moderate to critical negative perception of the validation of competencies and credentials in the Peruvian labor market, 2023. The results show the need to facilitate the validation of credentials, guarantee more equity at the labor level, combat systemic barriers that hinder socio-occupational integration, and provide efficient and effective support for entrepreneurship initiatives among Venezuelan professional immigrants.

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