Minimum wage for young professionals in Arequipa

Remuneración mínima en jóvenes profesionales de Arequipa

Fiorella Marjorie Gonzales-Rodríguez
https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1668-6039
u21319493@utp.edu.pe
Universidad Tecnológica del Perú
Arequipa-Perú

Maritza Juana Ayma-Purhuaya
https://orcid.org/0009-0006-0139-3792
u21319492@utp.edu.pe
Universidad Tecnológica del Perú
Arequipa-Perú

Rafael Romero-Carazas
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8909-7782
c28089@utp.edu.pe
Universidad Tecnológica del Perú
Arequipa-Perú

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Abstract

This research analyzes the perspectives of young professionals in Arequipa on the Minimum Living Wage (MLW) for the year 2025. A qualitative methodology with a phenomenological-hermeneutic design and a descriptive approach was used. The sample consisted of young professionals from Arequipa, with ten accounting graduates selected by convenience. Data collection was conducted through interviews, using a structured guide as an instrument. An inductive method was applied for the analysis using Atlas.ti software. The results reveal that the MLW negatively impacts young people's professional lives, as it is insufficient to cover expenses related to their professional development. Furthermore, it affects their social lives by limiting their participation in recreational and cultural activities. On a personal level, the MLW restricts the development of short- and long-term goals and projects. It is concluded that the MLW is perceived as insufficient by young professionals, preventing them from meeting their personal, social, and economic development needs. This situation limits their employment opportunities, their overall well-being, and their future prospects, highlighting a disconnect between their aspirations and the economic reality they face. This study contributes to the field of public and government accounting, providing data and analysis that can inform the design of fairer and more sustainable salary policies.

Keywords: salary increase, labor, professional, social, personal.

Resumen

La presente investigación analiza la perspectiva de los jóvenes profesionales de Arequipa sobre la Remuneración Mínima Vital (RMV) durante el año 2025. Para ello, se empleó una metodología cualitativa con un diseño fenomenológico-hermenéutico y un enfoque descriptivo. La población estuvo conformada por jóvenes profesionales de Arequipa, seleccionándose por conveniencia a diez titulados en contabilidad como participantes. La recolección de datos se realizó mediante entrevistas, utilizando una guía estructurada como instrumento. Para el análisis se aplicó un método inductivo y se utilizó el software Atlas.ti. Los resultados revelan que la RMV impacta negativamente en el ámbito profesional de los jóvenes, ya que resulta insuficiente para cubrir los gastos relacionados con su desarrollo profesional. Además, afecta su vida social al limitar su participación en actividades recreativas y culturales. En el plano personal, la RMV restringe la proyección de metas y proyectos a corto y largo plazo. Se concluye que la RMV es percibida como insuficiente por los jóvenes profesionales, impidiéndoles satisfacer sus necesidades de desarrollo personal, social y económico. Esta situación limita sus oportunidades laborales, su bienestar integral y su proyección futura, evidenciando una desconexión entre sus aspiraciones y la realidad económica que enfrentan. Este estudio contribuye al campo de la contabilidad pública y gubernamental, proporcionando datos y análisis que pueden fundamentar el diseño de políticas salariales más justas y sostenibles.

Palabras clave: incremento, laboral, profesional, social, personal.

Introduction

The minimum vital wage represents the minimum amount of money that a worker needs to cover basic needs and live with dignity, thereby ensuring the respect and realization of fundamental rights. In this regard, the International Labour Organization (OIT, 2014) states that the minimum wage must guarantee a decent standard of living for both workers and their families. Complementarily, Barford et al. (2025) emphasize that the Minimum Living Wage (MLW) constitutes a fair payment for work performed, contributing to global market stability and being distributed equitably, all while respecting human rights.

In line with this, Fazio & Reggiani (2023) argue that an adequate minimum wage improves employees' perceptions of the wage scale, fostering greater tolerance toward existing inequalities. However, the problem arises at the international level due to the non-compliance with this minimum compensation, as well as the imbalances between wage levels and economic reality, factors exacerbated by inflation, unemployment, inequality, and poverty.

In this context, the present study aims to explain the perspective of young professionals on the MLW in Arequipa during the year 2025. According to Barford et al. (2025) and Badaoui & Walsh (2022), many employers fail to comply with the payment of the MLW. On the other hand, Arabzadeh et al. (2024) indicate a decrease in hiring due to a lack of labor competitiveness. In contrast, Gmeiner & Gmeiner (2023) report that some employers evade the minimum wage, arguing that workers receive additional income from tips. Furthermore, it has been evidenced that the increase in the minimum wage depends on external factors such as inflation, unemployment, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Engbom & Moser, 2022; Sánchez et al., 2024).

In Peru, a significant challenge arises related to the need to increase the minimum wage so that workers can better cover their daily expenses. However, this increase could incentivize informal work, reduce employment opportunities, and impact business performance. Díaz & Cabral (2005) warn that the increase in the minimum wage primarily affected small businesses, which were already struggling to survive in a highly competitive market. Meanwhile, Sriyana (2025) proposed strategies to alleviate poverty in Indonesia, demonstrating that the poverty rate is related to the minimum wage and that the policy of increasing the MLW has effectively reduced poverty over the last decade.

In other contexts, Cho & Yang (2023), after analyzing 7,500 companies in South Korea, concluded that the MLW helps reduce gender gaps, especially in low-performance environments. Similarly, studies in Slovenia by Laporšek et al. (2021) and Caldana et al. (2024) have shown that the MLW decreased wage inequality, particularly benefiting women and young workers. However, Backhaus & Müller (2023) point out that the MLW does not focus on the sectors most affected by poverty or extreme poverty. Additionally, Grünberger et al. (2022) and García & Tarasonis (2023), using EUROMOD, a simulation model, demonstrated that increasing the MLW improved quality of life and reduced poverty in 21 European countries.

For instance, in Spain, Arranz & García (2025) reported that the increase in the MLW promoted wage policies that contributed to reducing poverty in the most vulnerable sectors. Barford et al. (2025) also indicate that the MLW favors the sustainable development of the population. Similarly, De Paz et al. (2024) found an inverse relationship between the MLW and levels of poverty and inequality, concluding that an increase in the MLW decreases both phenomena. Finally, Coviello et al. (2022) note that increasing the MLW generates greater commitment and productivity among employees, which in turn allows employers to reduce turnover rates.

Moreover, Bai et al. (2024) indicate that the increase in MLW has contributed to improving the physical health of workers in China. Complementarily, Neumark (2024) highlights that this increase also yields mental health benefits, resulting in a reduction in suicide cases. In line with these findings, Akanni et al. (2024) and Hafner & Lochner (2022) report similar positive effects on the mental health of employees in the UK and Germany.

On another note, in Canada, Bai & Veall (2025) indicate that the increase in the MLW helped reduce alcohol consumption among men with lower educational levels. In this regard, Kim (2021) recommends that workers be enrolled in health insurance plans to protect their labor rights related to the MLW.

Regarding structural monetary policies, Wu et al. (2025) note that these have improved the MLW, observing that micro and small enterprises (MSEs) offer a per capita wage 8.76% higher than that of large companies. However, Schaitberger (2024) argues that the increase in the MLW does not necessarily have a positive impact on social spending, highlighting the existence of significant structural barriers, particularly in the social domain.

From a historical perspective, in Mesopotamia, payments were made in silos of wheat, while in Egypt, compensation was provided in kind. In ancient Rome, slaves were not considered workers but property. Subsequently, under the mandate of Emperor Diocletian, an edict was issued setting wages in response to rising prices, aiming to curb inflation and regulate the value of labor (D'Avenel, 1913; OIT, 1997; Parias, 1965).

During the Middle Ages, a drastic population reduction initially led to a 4% increase in wages, followed by a sustained 14% increase over 75 years due to transformations in consumption and production patterns (Giancola, 2010). In the Modern Age, automation reduced jobs and wages (Gómez, 2012; Jha et al., 2023), leading to protests and destruction of machinery, events that preceded the proclamation of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (Casanova, 2023). In the United States, systems of wage incentives were introduced (Blayney, 2017; Gómez, 2012).

With the advent of the Second Industrial Revolution, New Zealand established the first minimum wage in 1894 (Neumark & Wascher, 2008). However, methods for setting the minimum wage vary among countries, and its proper application is fundamental to reducing inequality and improving worker welfare (Bispinck et al., 2020; Escobar, 2014).

In Peru, the Political Constitution guarantees a fair remuneration that ensures the well-being of the worker and their family (Constitución Política del Perú, 1993, Art. 24). Theoretically, Smith (1983) argues that the value of a good is based on the amount of labor invested. Concurrently, Friedman (1993), from the perspective of natural price theory, posits that wages are determined by the supply and demand for labor, advocating for non-intervention by the state. Complementarily, Mill's wage fund theory, cited by Bernanke & Frank (2007), explains that wages adjust according to available capital and the number of workers, regulated by the market.

From a critical viewpoint, Marx (1946) asserts that wages represent the value of labor power and are essential for the worker's subsistence. Meer & West (2016) emphasize that the effects of minimum remuneration vary according to regional market characteristics and its elasticity. Ethically, Beltrán (1970) and Pope John Paul II (1981) argue that wages must guarantee justice, family dignity, and overall well-being. From a sociological perspective, De la Garza (2002) highlights that wage labor is crucial for material reproduction, although it exhibits profound inequalities among workers. Finally, the theory of emotional wages posits that non-economic compensations, such as recognition or a positive work environment, influence motivation and productivity, strengthening the bond with the company (Gonzáles, 1999; Montalvo et al., 2023).

In Peru, the MLW is supported by a normative framework that includes the Political Constitution, specific laws, and supreme decrees. Firstly, the Constitution guarantees in Article 24 the right of every worker to receive fair and sufficient remuneration for a dignified life, and in Article 58, it establishes that the state must guide economic development and promote decent employment (Constitución Política del Perú, 1993).

Additionally, the determination of the MLW is carried out through supreme decrees issued by the Executive Branch, considering factors such as inflation and economic growth. The most recent, Supreme Decree No. 006-2024-TR, established the minimum remuneration at S/ 1,130.00 starting in January 2025 (MTPE, 2024). Furthermore, Law No. 27711 (2002) stipulates that the review of the minimum wage must be conducted in the National Council for Labor and Employment Promotion, fostering dialogue between the state, employers, and

workers. Complementarily, Law No. 29381 (2009) assigns the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion the responsibility of coordinating wage policy and proposing adjustments to the MLW.

Considering all the above, this study aims to explore how the MLW influences the life projects of young professionals, serving as an example to understand how, throughout history, the minimum wage has undergone various changes based on social phenomenology.

Methodology

This research is framed within a qualitative approach, as it derives objectives, questions, and hypotheses from a central idea grounded in a thorough literature review. This allows for the construction of a solid theoretical framework and facilitates the identification of categories and subcategories for analysis (Ñaupas et al., 2018). In terms of scope, it is descriptive, as Hernández et al. (2014) indicate that this type of study aims to detail the characteristics, properties, or profiles of specific phenomena, collecting information on concepts either in isolation or together.

On the other hand, the adopted methodological design is phenomenological-hermeneutic, which enables the interpretation of the experiences lived by participants, recognizing meanings from a collectively constructed perspective. The study population consists of all individuals within the geographical area of Arequipa where the research is conducted. In this case, it comprises young professionals in the field of accounting, aged between 25 and 35 years, who reside and work in the city of Arequipa.

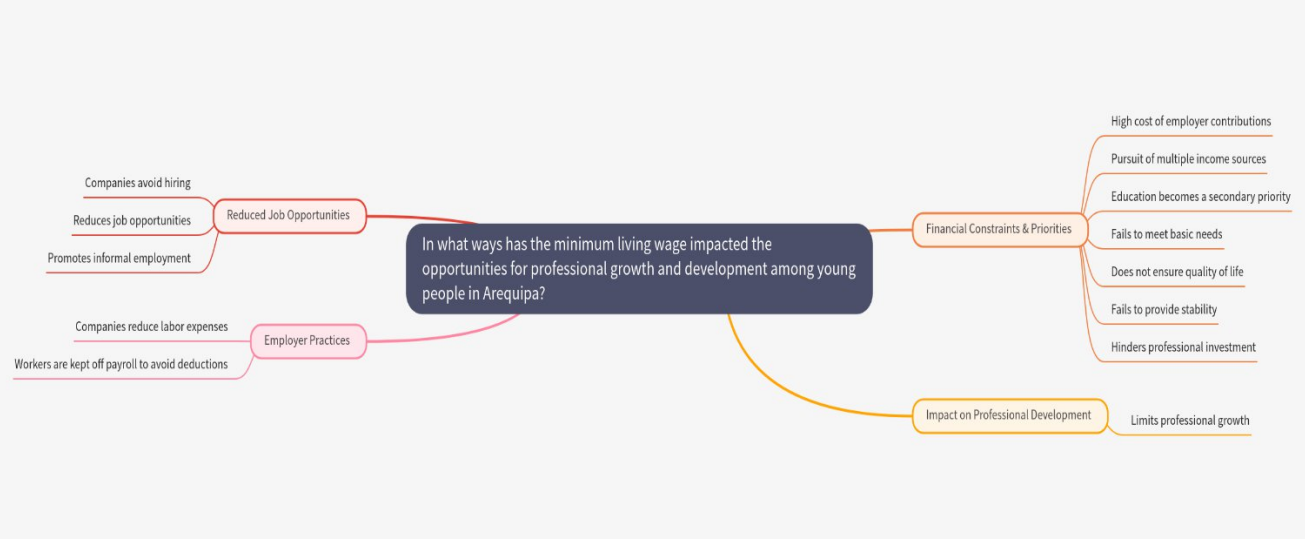
The analysis of the obtained information was qualitative and interpretative, complemented by theoretical references, national regulations, and the use of the Atlas.ti software. This tool facilitated the organization, coding, and classification of data, allowing for the construction of categories and subcategories based on the collected narratives. Additionally, methodological triangulation ensured greater depth and robustness in the findings.

Finally, regarding ethical aspects, academic principles were adhered to by respecting the authorship of all sources used through proper citation, following the guidelines established by the journal.

Results

Figure 1

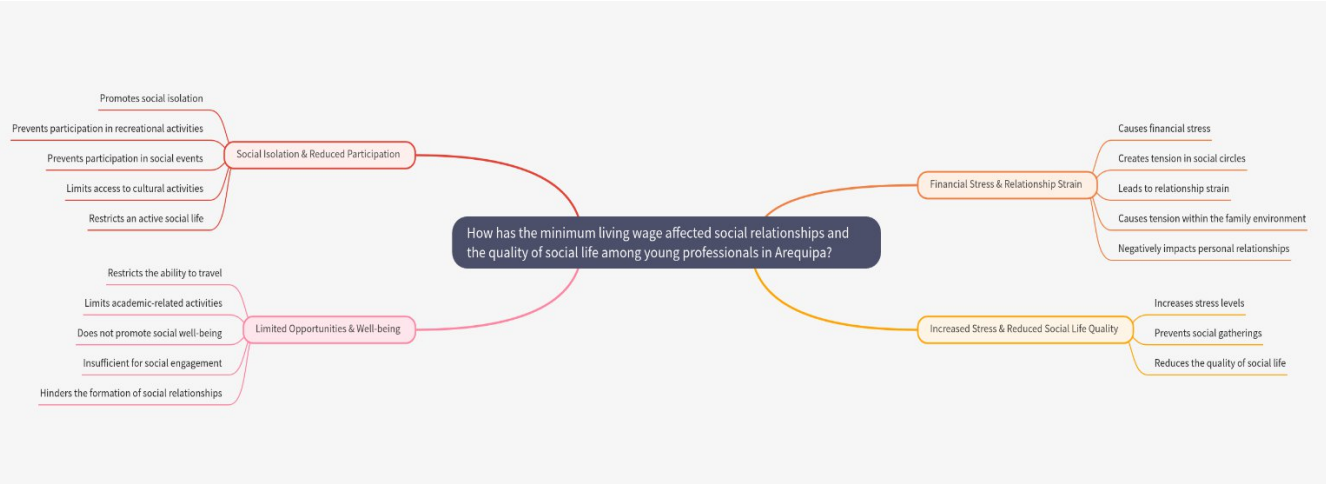
Perspective of the MLW in the professional realm



Regarding the first question about how the MLW influences the professional realm, the responses revealed several aspects. On one hand, companies face high costs in contributions, leading them to reduce hiring and decrease labor costs. On the other hand, participants indicated that the MLW is insufficient, prompting them to seek additional income and relegating education to a secondary priority, thus limiting their professional growth in specializations, master's programs, and other advanced studies.

Furthermore, it was highlighted that the MLW does not cover basic needs, does not guarantee an adequate quality of life, and does not provide economic stability. This hinders investment in professional development and, in some cases, leads workers to avoid formal employment to evade deductions, which reduces formal job opportunities and fosters the existence of informal jobs.

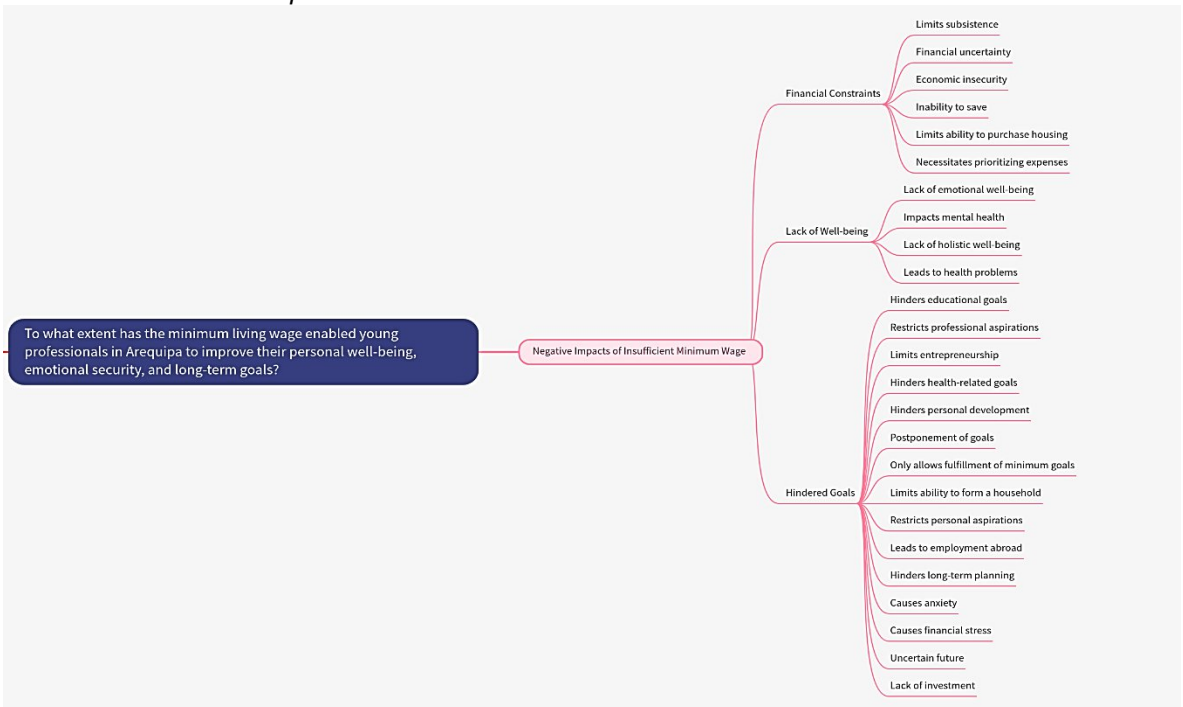
Figure 2
Perspective of the MLW in the social realm



In relation to the second question regarding how the MLW affects the social realm, responses indicated that young professionals face economic constraints that generate a certain level of isolation. This situation prevents them from participating in recreational activities and traveling, as constant concern about their financial situation limits their possibilities.

Additionally, it was evident that there is tension in their social circle due to frequent rejections of invitations to social gatherings. Likewise, relationships with partners and family are affected, as the inability to assume extra expenses leads to conflicts and limits the development of personal bonds. Consequently, these young individuals experience a lower quality of social life, as they cannot enjoy various activities such as dining out, going to the movies, strolling, or visiting the pool or sauna, among others.

Figure 3
Perspective of the MLW in the personal realm

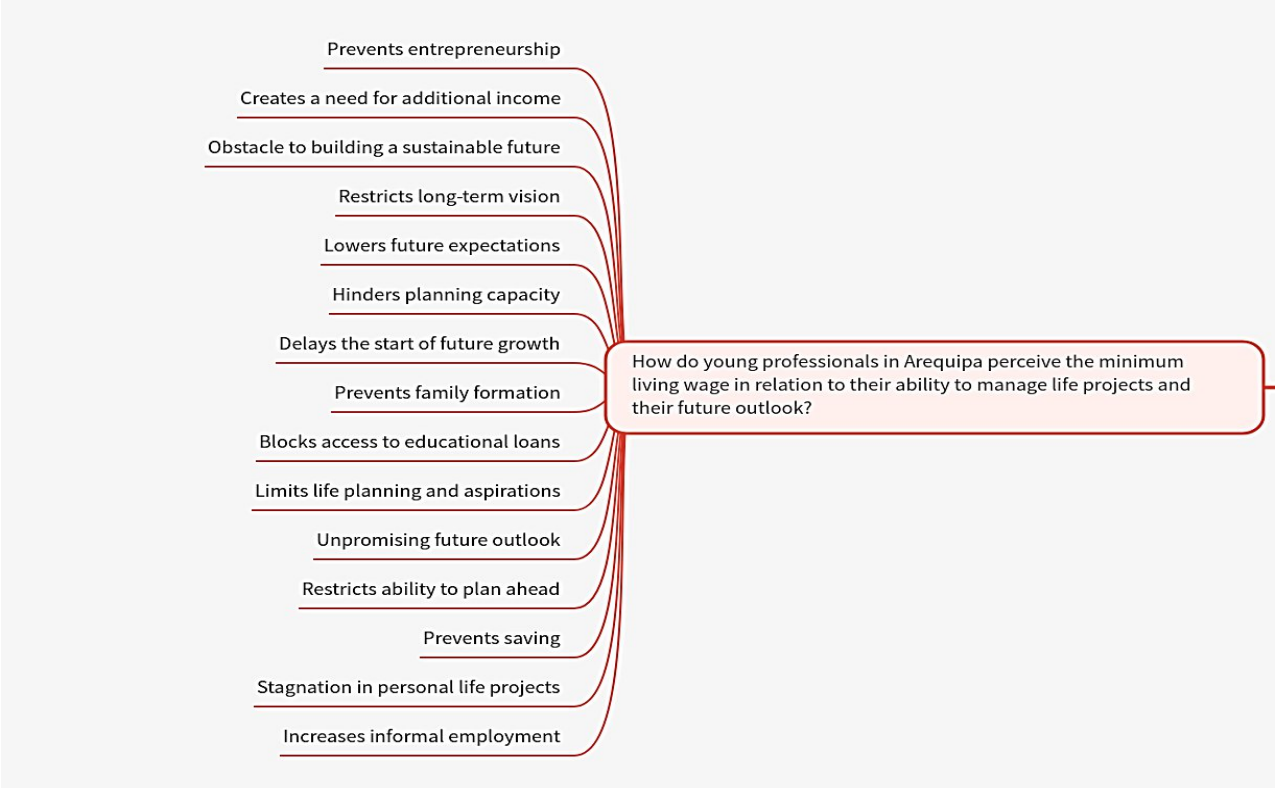


Regarding the third question about how the MLW affects the personal realm, the responses indicated that young professionals face various difficulties in achieving their personal goals, as the MLW is insufficient to guarantee their well-being. In some cases, this economic insufficiency even contributes to the development of illnesses and adversely affects their mental health due to financial insecurity, which limits the fulfillment of both short-term and long-term objectives.

These goals include forming a household and achieving economic independence, which are postponed or hindered. Additionally, the MLW restricts their opportunities to undertake entrepreneurial ventures and complicates the continuation of their academic training, such as specializations, master's degrees, doctorates, and other courses. For some young people, this situation generates anxiety and confines their subsistence to basic needs, thereby preventing them from achieving adequate emotional well-being.

In summary, financial precariousness affects their quality of life and obstructs the realization of long-term goals, in addition to generating uncertainty that complicates access to health services and timely care.

Figure 4
Perspective of the MLW



In relation to the fourth question regarding how young people perceive the MLW, the responses revealed various opinions. Firstly, they indicated that the MLW does not facilitate access to educational loans or enable them to start a family, significantly limiting their life projects. Moreover, they perceive a bleak future due to the difficulty of long-term planning and the impossibility of saving, which leads to stagnation in their personal and professional goals.

They also mentioned that the insufficiency of the MLW increases labor informality, as many professionals are forced to accept informal jobs. The MLW does not support entrepreneurial initiatives, creating the need to seek additional income. By itself, this remuneration becomes an obstacle to building a solid future, as it limits vision and reduces short-term expectations, complicating planning.

However, some young individuals consider that the MLW could serve as a starting point for future growth. Overall, it is concluded that the MLW restricts both personal and professional aspirations, as well as social relationships with their peers.

Figure 5
Word cloud of the MLW



In terms of the word cloud, the most prominent terms in this research are "salary," "minimum," and "youth," reflecting the main focus of the study: understanding and explaining how the MLW affects young professionals.

In the professional realm, words such as "labor," "professional," "training," "specializations," "companies," "growth," "basic," "quality," "life," "stability," and "invest" appear. From these, it can be inferred that the hermeneutic research reveals that the MLW only covers basic needs and does not guarantee an adequate quality of life. Furthermore, it limits investment and growth in the labor sphere, as it complicates access to advanced training.

On the other hand, in the social realm, terms such as "isolation," "activities," "recreational," "economic," "cultural," "family," "circle," and "stress" stand out. These words suggest that the MLW generates isolation among young professionals, affecting their participation in work, personal, and family activities.

In the personal realm, words like "affects," "goals," "expenses," "limits," "savings," "invest," and "plan" are observed, indicating that the MLW negatively impacts the personal goals of young individuals. Monthly expenses to cover basic needs restrict their capacity for savings, investment, and planning.

Overall, young professionals perceive the MLW as an impediment to their training and professional development, limiting their personal and labor growth. This situation generates stress and a sense of stagnation, also affecting their social relationships and overall well-being.

Table 1
Co-occurrence of words related to the MLW

Perspective		Negative Sentiment Gr=67	Neutral Sentiment Gr=26	Positive Sentiment Gr=1	Total Sentiment Gr=94
Affects personal relationships	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Impact on mental health	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
High cost of contributions	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Search for diverse incomes	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Beginning of future growth	Gr=1	0	0	1	1
Fulfillment of minimal goals	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Hinders long-term goals	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Hinders educational goals	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Hinders health goals	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Hinders personal goals	Gr=1	1	0	0	1

Jobs in other countries	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Informal jobs	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Companies avoid hiring	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Companies reduce labor costs	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Establishing social relationships	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Economic stress	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Short expectations	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Lack of job opportunities	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Uncertain future	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Unpromising future	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Generates isolation	Gr=2	2	0	0	2
Generates anxiety	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Generates illnesses	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Generates stress	Gr=2	2	0	0	2
Financial uncertainty	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Increases informality	Gr=0	1	0	0	1
Economic insecurity	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Emotional insecurity	Gr=2	2	0	0	2
Insufficient for social activities	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Education in the background	Gr=2	2	0	0	2
Limits academic activities	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Limits cultural activities	Gr=2	1	1	0	2
Limits personal aspirations	Gr=1	1	1	0	2
Limits professional aspirations	Gr=1	1	1	0	2
Limits professional growth	Gr=3	2	1	0	3
Limits starting a business	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Limits forming a household	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Limits planning capacity	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Limits home buying	Gr=2	0	2	0	2
Limits subsistence	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Limits life projects	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Limits active social life	Gr=1	0	1	0	1

Limits future vision	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Financial limitations	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Limits quality of life	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Less social quality of life	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Need for additional income	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
No savings	Gr=2	2	0	0	2
No emotional well-being	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
No overall well-being	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Does not cover basic needs	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Does not guarantee quality of life	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Does not generate social well-being	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Does not ensure stability	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
No investment	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Does not allow recreational activities	Gr=2	2	0	0	2
Does not allow social activities	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Does not allow educational loans	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Does not allow saving	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Does not allow entrepreneurship	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Does not allow independence	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Does not allow professional investment	Gr=3	3	0	0	3
Does not allow planning	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Does not allow social gatherings	Gr=2	1	1	0	2
Does not allow having a family	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Does not allow travel	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
No payroll to avoid deductions	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
No financial security	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Not sufficient for personal well-being	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Obstacle to building a future	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Postpones goals	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Economic concern	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Prioritizing expenses	Gr=1	0	1	0	1
Stagnated life projects	Gr=1	0	1	0	1

Reduces job opportunities	Gr=2	2	0	0	2
Economic restriction	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Tension with partner	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Tension in family sphere	Gr=1	1	0	0	1
Tension in social circle	Gr=1	1	0	0	1

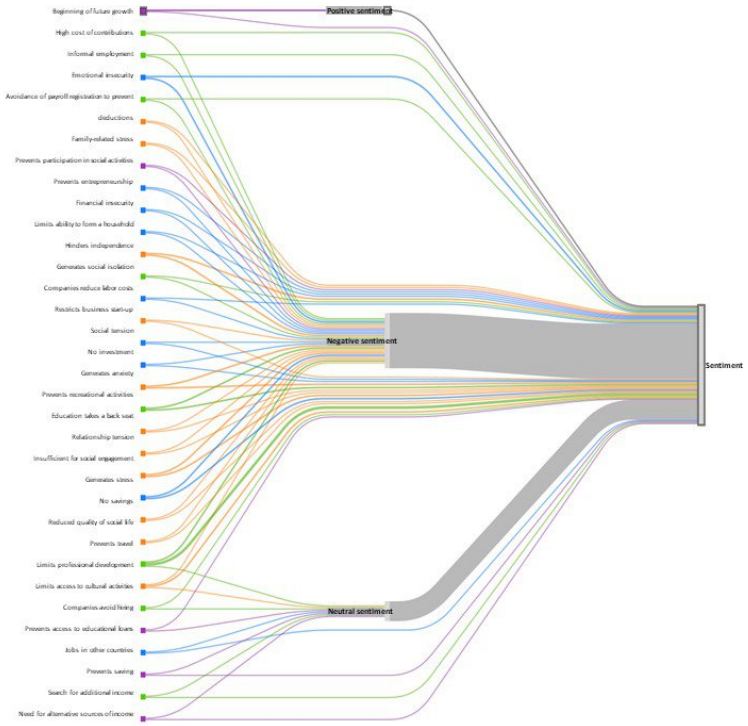
In terms of the co-occurrence of words related to MLW, up to five terms per coding were identified. Initially, a co-occurrence with positive sentiment was detected, although only one participant mentioned that the MLW represents the beginning of future growth.

On the other hand, with neutral sentiment, expressions emerged such as "search for diverse incomes," "jobs in other countries," "companies avoid hiring," "short expectations," "financial uncertainty," "limits cultural activities," "limits personal and professional aspirations," "limits professional growth," "limits planning capacity," "limits home buying," "limits life projects," "limits active social life," "limits future vision," "need for additional income," "does not generate stability," "does not allow educational loans," "does not allow saving," "does not allow planning," "does not allow social gatherings," "not sufficient for personal well-being," "obstacle to building a future," "economic concern," "prioritizing expenses," and "stagnated life projects."

In summary, it can be stated that the predominant sentiment in the co-occurrence of words among young professionals regarding the MLW is negative. This is because they consider that the remuneration is insufficient to cover all the basic needs necessary for achieving personal, social, and, above all, professional growth. Currently, continuing academic studies is essential for accessing better job opportunities, which the MLW significantly limits.

Figure 6

Co-occurrence of MLW sentiment



Regarding the co-occurrence of sentiments, as shown in Figure 6, young professionals express various perceptions about the MLW. In terms of positive sentiment, only one participant indicated that the MLW represents the beginning of future growth, highlighting that the professional gains valuable work experience in their current job, which can be leveraged in future positions due to the practical knowledge imparted by their superiors.

In relation to neutral sentiment, perceptions emerged that the MLW limits professional growth and cultural activities, does not allow for savings, and that companies restrict hiring. Additionally, the lack of job opportunities motivates the search for employment in other countries and the need for additional income, as the remuneration is insufficient.

Finally, the negative sentiment expressed by young professionals regarding the MLW includes multiple aspects: it limits the initiation of businesses, generates economic insecurity, is inadequate for social and recreational activities, causes tension in family and romantic relationships, and leads companies to reduce labor costs. It also generates emotional insecurity, limits the formation of a household, diminishes social quality of life, and relegates education to a secondary concern. Furthermore, many young individuals avoid formal employment to evade deductions, indicating that the MLW does not facilitate entrepreneurship, and the high cost of contributions adversely affects companies, leading to isolation, stress, anxiety, and limitations on travel, savings, investment, independence, and participation in social activities.

Discussion

From the perspective of young professionals, it was identified that companies face high costs associated with social benefits, leading them to reduce hiring. Young individuals express that the MLW is insufficient, prompting them to seek additional income. Moreover, education is relegated, as this salary limitation hinders professional growth, affecting access to specializations, master's degrees, and other advanced studies. Indeed, the MLW does not cover basic needs, does not guarantee an adequate quality of life or stability, nor does it allow for investment in professional development. In some cases, workers avoid formal employment to sidestep deductions, reducing formal job opportunities and fostering informality. However, Samoliuk et al. (2021) note that, from a professional perspective, the MLW can drive companies to modernize, invest in training, and reorganize to be more competitive, thereby improving labor productivity. Conversely, Schaitberger (2024) argues that increasing the MLW does not significantly contribute to social spending.

In the social realm, young professionals report economic restrictions that generate isolation, preventing them from participating in recreational activities or traveling due to constant financial concern. This situation creates tension in their social circles, as they often decline invitations to gatherings with friends. Relationships with partners and family are also affected, as they cannot afford extra expenses, deteriorating personal relationships and decreasing social quality of life. The MLW limits participation in activities such as dining out, going to the movies, leisure walks, or visiting pools and saunas, among others. Additionally, it restricts academic activities and does not promote social well-being. In contrast, Card & Krueger (1992) argue that increases in minimum wage have contributed to reducing wage inequality and improving the economic well-being of low-income workers. From an ethical perspective, Beltrán (1970) and Pope John Paul II (1981) assert that wages must ensure justice, family dignity, and overall well-being. De la Garza (2002), from a sociological standpoint, emphasizes that wage labor is fundamental for material reproduction, although it reveals deep inequalities among workers. Finally, the theory of emotional salary posits that non-economic compensations, such as recognition and a good work environment, positively influence motivation and productivity, strengthening the bond with the company (Montalvo et al., 2023).

Regarding the personal realm, young professionals face difficulties in achieving their goals, as the MLW is insufficient for their well-being. Occasionally, this inadequacy leads to mental health issues such as anxiety and stress, in addition to hindering savings and investment. Financial insecurity limits the fulfillment of short- and long-term objectives, such as forming a household or achieving independence, and complicates entrepreneurship and continued education, including specializations, master's programs, and doctoral studies. This situation generates economic stress, limits home purchases, and forces prioritization of expenses, leading many to accept jobs due to a lack of opportunities, settling for limited positions and an uncertain future. This adversely affects the overall well-being and emotional security of young professionals, postponing their goals. In this regard, it has been shown that low wages generate job dissatisfaction, while adequate income improves motivation, establishing a bidirectional relationship (Díaz & Cabral, 2005; Rosen, 1986). Furthermore, the marginal productivity theory posits that wages should correspond to the value generated by the additional worker, while the efficiency wage theory relates income to productivity (Gonzales et al., 2022).

Ultimately, from the general perspective of young individuals, the MLW does not allow access to educational loans or the formation of a family, limits life projects, and creates a bleak future, as it restricts the ability to plan and save. This results in stagnation in their goals and an increase in informality, as many professionals

accept informal jobs. The MLW does not encourage entrepreneurship, leading to the necessity of seeking additional income. By itself, it represents a barrier to building a solid future, limiting vision and reducing short-term expectations. Nevertheless, some consider it a potential starting point for future growth. Overall, the prevailing perception is negative, as the MLW only covers basic needs and limits both personal and professional aspirations, as well as social relationships among peers. In contrast, the Political Constitution of Peru guarantees a fair remuneration that ensures the well-being of workers and their families (artículo 24, 1993), an ideal that is not reflected in the current perception of young individuals. From the income theory perspective, Smith (1983) argues that the value of a good is based on the amount of labor invested, thus wages should cover basic needs and reflect the dignity of work.

Conclusions

The perception of the MLW by young professionals was predominantly negative, as they consider it insufficient to cover essential needs related to their professional development, such as training, specializations, or postgraduate studies. This limitation not only hinders their academic growth but also restricts their job opportunities.

In the social realm, the MLW barely suffices to cover basic expenses such as food, housing, and transportation, without allowing participation in recreational or cultural activities, which can lead to feelings of isolation. Moreover, the inability to access a full social life directly affects their overall well-being.

On a personal level, low remuneration complicates savings, investment, and the planning of important goals, such as purchasing a home or starting a business. It does not facilitate the possibility of forming a family or improving quality of life, which generates frustration, stress, and anxiety. Thus, the MLW emerges as a significant obstacle to the integral development of young professionals.

In conclusion, this situation highlights a clear disconnect between the aspirations of this group and the real economic conditions they face. Therefore, it is essential to review and adjust the Minimum Vital Remuneration to ensure more equitable and sustainable opportunities that promote personal, social, and professional growth in line with the expectations of young workers.

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AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION:

1. Conceptualization: Fiorella Marjorie Gonzales-Rodríguez
2. Data curation: Fiorella Marjorie Gonzales-Rodríguez

3. Formal analysis: Rafael Romero-Carazas
4. Funding acquisition: Maritza Juana Ayma-Purhuaya
5. Research: Maritza Juana Ayma-Purhuaya
6. Methodology: Rafael Romero-Carazas
7. Project management: Maritza Juana Ayma-Purhuaya
8. Resources: Fiorella Marjorie Gonzales-Rodríguez
9. Software: Fiorella Marjorie Gonzales-Rodríguez
10. Supervision: Rafael Romero-Carazas
11. Validation: Maritza Juana Ayma-Purhuaya
12. Visualization: Maritza Juana Ayma-Purhuaya
13. Writing – original draft: Fiorella Marjorie Gonzales-Rodríguez
14. Writing – proofreading and editing: Rafael Romero-Carazas