

Post-pandemic social transformation and labor trends in sellers of repowered items in the city of Huancayo, Peru

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic generated significant social transformations in different sectors of society, one of the most important being the labor market. This research establishes the relationship between these transformations and employment trends among repowered item vendors in the city of Huancayo, Peru. Three key dimensions were addressed: destruction, expansion, and modification of employment. The research adopted a quantitative approach, with an exploratory, descriptive, and correlational design. Validated questionnaires were administered to a representative sample of 331 repowered item vendors. The results indicate a significant relationship between social transformation and employment trends, which is reflected in a reconfiguration of employment in this sector. A loss of job opportunities was evident; however, an expansion of employment was also observed through adaptation to new forms of marketing and the growing demand for repowered products. Likewise, changes in labor dynamics were identified, including the use of new sales strategies and the digitization of processes. In conclusion, the pandemic not only negatively affected employment in this sector, but also encouraged resilience and adaptation strategies.

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1. Introduction

Spread throughout Peru and the world between 2020 and 2022, the Coronavirus has considerably increased the number of infections and deaths in people, and has also generated consequences in the health field, causing transformations in people's actions in different spheres such as: political, social, daily life and interpersonal relationships (Marcela et al., 2021); In this context, crises have been generated in science, health, politics and technology, accelerating social transformations (Castles, 2015). The solutions developed to avoid crises generated by the coronavirus have revealed notable forms of transformations in the operation of society, which will be constant in the future (Briceño, 2021; Posso, 2022). Likewise, possibilities for improvement have been shown that should not be ignored, much less underestimated. The economic and financial crisis accompanied by globalization and environmental changes has generated an increase in exclusion, poverty and inequality (De Haas et al., 2020), these variations have motivated a set of actions that can develop innovative solutions where the actors of the transformations are the same people. In particular, the vendors of repowered items at the Sunday fair in the city of Huancayo, upon returning to their Sunday activities, which were postponed due to the pandemic period for a period of two years, show different conduct and behaviors, a product of their fears, needs and aspirations, which have generated another type of relationship between them (Rodríguez, 1989). By virtue of this, we intend to answer the

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following problem: How are post-pandemic social transformations related to labor trends in vendors of repowered items - Huancayo? Which can be identified by guiding the activities leading to the research with the aim of establishing the relationship between post-pandemic social transformations through the exploration, review, and analysis of bibliographical theories that address post-pandemic social transformations and labor trends. It will also make it possible to understand and understand the new ways of acting in society in a post-pandemic period, and in particular, among vendors of repowered items in the city of Huancayo.

Pacheco-Romero (2020) identified that the changes that people have to live during the pandemic period are related to the way of living, thinking and acting where self-care is prioritized, which is why all activities are carried out with a distance from other people, also established that the interaction between people is carried out in a different way being more selective and specific based on the identification of levels of violence or domestic violence due to the state of stress that people present in a pandemic confinement. The economic and social consequences of human immobility under Covid - 19 according to Barrutia et al. (2021) analyzed from the Peruvian Government were detrimental because by establishing specific norms for social distancing and isolation it initially allowed to mitigate infections, but in a process of flexibility of social isolation measures they generated a growing trend showing low levels of recovery in informal employment which have generated a decrease rate, in relation to the social elements, people adopted different forms and behaviors than the period before mandatory social isolation where social distancing predominates, likewise social relations are transformed in relation to individual freedom and the achievement of the common good, since many people have been left without a job and are aggrieved in collectives generating uncertainty about their future. The pandemic of the COVID-19 and his impact economic, social and health according to Sarmiento (2021) generated very important elements that impede the free action of people and workers for the adequate development of their daily activities. These are accompanied by depression, guilt, hopelessness, anxiety, stigma, loneliness, boredom, worry, frustration, anger, confusion, fear, and stress, which has generated a negative psychological impact. For Molina (2020) he addressed how to critically evaluate social science theories related to the social and cultural transformation resulting from COVID-19, noting that the disruption of social relations, as well as of actors and institutions, has led to the development of strategies and behaviors to avoid being affected by the measures implemented by the governments of Brazil and Ecuador. This situation has generated a structural crisis that worsens people's living conditions due to the scarcity and difficult access to essential resources, which has led the population to take rapid measures to meet unmet basic needs.

2. Literature review

2.1. Structural equation model

Structural models are fundamental tools in scientific research and across diverse disciplines, as they allow the analysis and representation of complex relationships between observable and latent variables. These models are widely used in statistics, psychology, social sciences, and economics, as they facilitate understanding of underlying patterns in data. Through techniques such as Structural Equation Analysis (SEM), theoretical hypotheses can be validated by estimating causal relationships between multiple variables simultaneously (Byrne, 2016). Structural equation analysis combines elements of factor analysis and regression models, providing a robust framework for assessing the validity and reliability of theoretical constructs. This approach allows researchers to examine how latent variables influence observed variables and how these relationships fit into pre-established theoretical models. Furthermore, structural models allow for comparisons between different groups, assessment of mediating and moderating effects, and detection of complex data structures that would not be evident with traditional statistical methods (Kline, 2020). Today, structural models have evolved with the development of specialized software such as AMOS, LISREL, and Mplus, which facilitate the implementation of these models with large volumes of data. The application of SEM has expanded to multiple fields, such as education, business administration, and medicine, allowing for a better understanding of complex phenomena and evidence-based decision-making (Schumacker & Lomax, 2020). As technology advances, these models will continue to play a crucial role in scientific research and data analysis.

2.1. The concept of social transformation

According to Falleti (2014), social transformation is conceptualized within the Social Sciences as a set of causes and factors that make possible the change of a group of individuals in this case of a society, the transformation requires the adaptation of the elements to the context allowing its validity. According to UNESCO (2021) social transformations are considered as changes within the population from some type of social, economic, political, cultural influence, generating diverse behaviors and values, likewise these are influenced within the process of inclusion and exclusion, as well as social innovation on the part of the most vulnerable elements of a society. (Rodríguez, 1989)The program for the management of social transformations allows the development of initiatives aimed at identifying capacities and links of knowledge of the Social Sciences, becoming a starting point for the identification of very important aspects developed by elements of the population that modify their actions and consequently the interrelation with their peers.

Humans shape structures through their relationships with one another, generating codes; these social structures, flexibly generated by people, tend to become increasingly complex as individuals and groups have unique characteristics (Rodríguez, 1989). The changes that develop within them cause emerging qualities, thus modifying the speed of social transformation. Social transformation includes processes through which members of civil society as a whole act, which demonstrates collective action and the elements that allow for the construction of the society in which they live, which shares with continuing generations the development of activities in an associated manner and which generate better conditions for common well-being (Mendoza, 2020). Social transformation comprises two factors, the first raises a perspective on the role played by development and improvement of living conditions of the members of society, and the second establishes that social transformation arises from the attitude developed by the members of society in order to solve their internal problems (Mendoza, 2020). The presence of globalization, financial and economic crises, and environmental changes are generating significant transformations in society, resulting in increased exclusion, inequality, and exclusion stemming from the denial of fundamental rights. These changes require solutions that are in line with reality and that consider respect for universal human values such as non-discrimination, non-violence, gender equality, and human dignity. All elements of civil society must be involved in the development of social transformations. Social Transformation constitutes the achievement of the objectives of certain social groups considered to be of a high level, since from this they guide the consumer behavior of the population and direct their needs towards the acquisition of specific goods and services to satisfy their needs. The aforementioned elements allow us to clearly and precisely understand that Social Transformation is closely related to specific variables that motivate its creation and change; this relationship can be identified based on two alternative and mutually exclusive models.

2.2. Destruction of employment

Job destruction refers to the massive loss of jobs due to economic, technological, or crisis factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, health restrictions and lockdowns caused a collapse in multiple productive sectors, resulting in widespread layoffs and a significant reduction in job opportunities (ILO, 2021). This phenomenon affected workers unequally, with a greater impact on those with informal jobs or in sectors with a low capacity to adapt to teleworking. According to studies by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OCDE, 2020), the health crisis accelerated the precariousness of employment, increasing the vulnerability of certain groups, such as young people, women, and low-skilled workers. From a structural perspective, the job losses caused by COVID-19 not only responded to a temporary crisis but also highlighted and deepened pre-existing trends in the labor market. Automation, digitalization, and the reconfiguration of global value chains accelerated, generating a permanent transformation in the demand for skills and the stability of traditional jobs (Chernoff, 2021). In this sense, the pandemic not only reduced the number of available jobs but also reconfigured their nature, favoring the growth of remote work and highly digitalized jobs, while displacing workers from sectors with a lower capacity to adapt to new technologies (Bank, 2021).

2.3. Modification of employment

COVID-19 employment modification refers to the structural and organizational changes in the labor market resulting from the pandemic, including the accelerated adoption of remote work, the digitalization of processes, and the flexibility of working conditions. According to the International Labor Organization (OIT, 2021), the health crisis forced millions of companies to reconfigure their operating models, resulting in increased demand for digital skills and the transformation of traditional employment dynamics. Furthermore, World Bank studies (2021) indicate that the pandemic drove automation in various sectors, reducing the need for manual labor and widening the gap between workers with technological skills and those in less-skilled jobs. These changes not only altered the structure of employment in the short term, but also established long-term trends that will redefine the future of work.

2.4. Communicative practices

For Rocha (2022) communicative practices are defined as the expressions emanating from people to communicate and relate to others, enabling them to understand their ideas, thoughts, or needs; therefore, it must be assumed that these practices are elements of the production and reproduction of ideas that seek to share perspectives, intentions, and differences. Communication practices play a fundamental role in the functioning of organizations, as they facilitate interaction between members and contribute to the construction of a coherent organizational culture. According to Fairhurst & Connaughton (2014), communication in an organizational context not only involves the exchange of information but also shapes relationships of power, identity, and cooperation among employees. This perspective suggests that communication practices in an organization are closely linked to its structure and shared values, which can influence decision-making and task coordination (Keyton, 2017). In this sense, effective communication within an organization is associated with higher levels of group cohesion, trust, and commitment—essential factors for achieving collective goals (Mumby, 2013). Furthermore, communication practices are also crucial in conflict management and adaptation to changes in work environments. Open and transparent communication helps employees feel valued and reduces resistance to organizational transformations (Tourish, 2013). According to Clampitt (2016) An effective communication strategy for change management must include leaders' ability to listen and respond to employees' concerns, fostering an environment of constant, two-way dialogue. In this context, internal

communication is not only instrumental in coordinating activities and meeting goals, but also in reinforcing a positive organizational climate that fosters team well-being and motivation (Shockley-Zalabak, 2015). Valencia and Magallanes (2011) establish that communicative practices are considered elements through which cultural dynamics are shared, becoming the main element of interaction for the transmission of ideas between people and groups. Likewise, within the fields of Social and Human Sciences, they are the main element of change, since they generate forms of organization and evaluation of conduct and behavior.

2.5. *Post-pandemic*

The COVID-19 pandemic has generated significant changes in the workplace, directly affecting human resource management and work practices in organizations around the world. According to Bal & Ece (2023), remote work emerged as a key strategy for maintaining operational continuity, forcing companies to implement digital communication and collaboration technologies on a large scale. This accelerated transformation to teleworking not only modified work environments but also posed new challenges in terms of productivity management, employee well-being, and the development of digital skills (Morales & Morales, 2024). Adapting to this "new normal" has required human resources departments to reconsider their strategies and policies to ensure employee engagement and satisfaction in a rapidly changing context. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the importance of mental and emotional well-being at work, an aspect that gained relevance as employees experienced higher levels of stress and burnout due to isolation and lack of face-to-face interaction (Trogakos et al., 2020). Organizations have responded to these demands by adapting their HR policies to include wellness programs, psychological support, and activities that promote work-life balance. As Wang et al. (2020), this transition towards a more humanistic approach to human resource management marks a significant shift in the role of HR, which now focuses on supporting both the performance and overall health of employees in times of uncertainty. According to Hurtado (2021) the post-pandemic is considered the decline of a disease that has spread across continents and countries. Pandemics cross borders and generate a number of unexpected cases that persist over time. The post-pandemic is considered a new period with a different reality based on the expressions acquired by society during the pandemic. The post-pandemic is considered the culminating period of a pandemic, generating both harm and benefits to the population. In the health field, it allows for the redefinition of sectoral and multidisciplinary aspects through which coordination, collaboration, and communication mechanisms are built to address the pandemic; in the social sphere, new forms of communication and interaction between elements of a society are established.

2.6. *Sellers of refurbished items*

The refurbished goods market has gained popularity in recent years, driven by growing concerns about sustainability and the circular economy. Refurbishing, which includes activities such as repair, reconditioning, and repurposing products, allows for extending the lifespan of goods and reducing waste, aspects that are attractive to both consumers and businesses (Bocken et al., 2016). This trend responds to a growing demand for sustainable products that reduce environmental impact by minimizing the consumption of new resources and emissions associated with manufacturing. Sellers of refurbished goods have found a niche in the market by offering secondhand products at lower prices, which is advantageous for consumers on a budget and for those looking to reduce their ecological footprint (Hazen et al., 2016). Furthermore, the repowering process is also related to the perception of added value in products, since sellers not only resell used items, but also improve or update them, which increases their attractiveness and functionality in the market (Ferrer & Kenan-Flagler, 2006). According to Abbey & Meloy (2017), consumers are willing to pay a premium for refurbished items when they perceive them to meet high standards of quality and durability. However, the success of this strategy depends on sellers implementing quality control practices and ensuring that refurbished products offer a user experience comparable to that of new products. This suggests that, for sellers, the refurbished goods market not only represents an economic opportunity, but also a challenge in terms of quality management and customer satisfaction. According to the Constitutional Court ruling dated September 25, 2009, the association of vendors of various repowered and other items at the Sunday fair in the province of Huancayo is recognized as a group of people formally recognized for the development of activities through the repair, reconditioning, manufacturing, and adaptation and improvement of items for sale. It also recognizes this activity as an economic practice that allows for the well-being of a specific group of the population.

Based on the literary review on the variables that are the subject of this study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- post-pandemic social transformations and employment trends among refurbished vendors in Huancayo.
- post-pandemic social transformations and job losses among refurbished vendors in Huancayo.
- post-pandemic social transformations and the expansion of employment among refurbished goods vendors in Huancayo.
- post-pandemic social transformations and changes in employment among refurbished goods vendors – Huancayo.

3. Materials and methods

The research was developed according to the scientific method, and an inductive character (Schettini, 2017), the level was correlational-transsectional where the information that was collected related to the analysis units was at a single moment through the application of the data collection instrument called the Social Transformation Questionnaire in Sellers of Repowered Items made up of 29 items or questions which were previously validated based on the judgment of experts, which allowed the verification of the previously raised hypotheses. Considering that the study developed was quantitative, the analysis units were made up of vendors of repowered items at the Sunday fair in Huancayo, Peru. This population consisted of 2,545 people. This information was obtained from the register of members of the association of vendors of repowered items. Likewise, the sample considered for data collection was 331 vendors from this association.

4. Results

4.1. Analysis of the measurement model

The research model was developed from the dimensions of the variable labor trends made up of job destruction (DE), job expansion (EE) and job modification (ME) from which the relationships and consequently the hypotheses were established. The conceptual model based on the hypotheses is presented in Fig. 1 as follows.

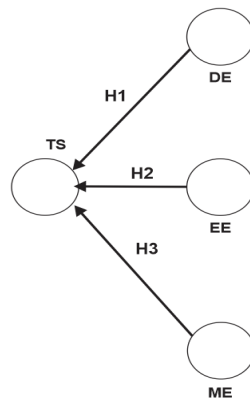


Fig. 1. Conceptual model

The analysis model presented below takes as reference the validity and reliability of the measurement scale used. Convergent validity was calculated from the average variance extracted (AVE), which is greater than 0.611; likewise, the factor loadings of the different constructs are above the value of 0.642. For the discriminant validity of the construct, the criteria established by Fornell-Lareker were used, who considered that the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) must be higher than the rest of the correlations with the construct. For the reliability of the instrument, internal consistency was calculated based on Cronbach's Alpha (between 0.692 - 0.787) and composite reliability was also taken (between 0.823 and 0.881).

Table 1

Results of the measurement model analysis

Variables	Alpha of Cronbach	Reliability composed	Range of loadsfactorials	Variance extractedaver- age (BIRD)	Validity discriminat- ing
OF	0.801	0.823	0.786 – 0.892	0.611	0.794
EE	0.788	0.881	0.751 – 0.893	0.626	0.802
ME	0.743	0.830	0.687 – 0.802	0.682	0.834
TS	0.692	0.873	0.622 – 0.918	0.728	0.748

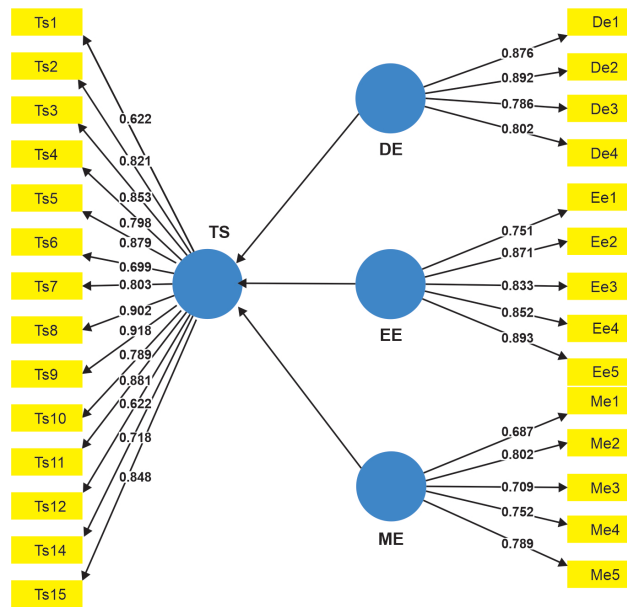


Fig. 2. Results for the hypothetical model with structural equations

4.2. Analysis of the structural model

After verifying the reliability of the measurement model and its validity, the relationships between the different constructs were estimated. To test both the general and specific hypotheses, the path coefficients and their significance levels were examined. From 5,000 subsamples for the bootstrapping calculation, the statistical significance value for one of the path coefficients was obtained. Fig. 3 shows the estimated trajectory from the PLS analysis.

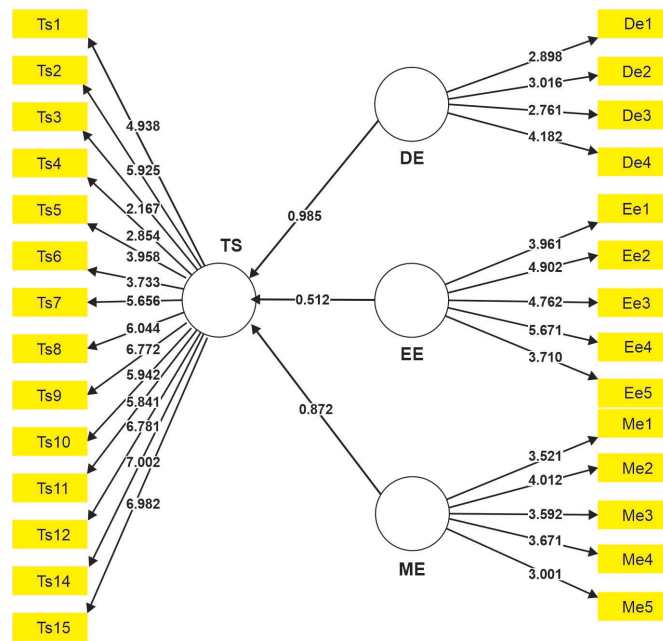


Fig. 3. post-pandemic social transformation and labor trends

4.3 Confirmatory model

A confirmatory model is a statistical approach used to verify whether data accurately reflect a predefined theoretical structure. Unlike exploratory models, which seek to identify relationships between variables, confirmatory models are based on a specific

hypothesis about how the variables should be related, and their objective is to confirm whether the observed data support that structure.

Table 2
Confirmatory model

	Reliability		variance extracted	Discriminant validity			
	Cronbach Al-pha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)	TS	OF	EE	ME
Social transformation	0.856	0.887	0.902	0.905			
Destruction of employment	0.745	0.801	0.921	0.908	0.912		
Employment expansion	0.877	0.905	0.918	0.944	0.952	0.968	
Job Modification	0.903	0.971	0.941	0.961	0.967	0.982	0.992
Reference values	>0.7	>0.7	>0.5				

Table 2 shows the validation of the model, demonstrating its reliability and validity through analysis of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. According to the data collected and the defined criteria, the internal consistency of the model is appropriate, (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1995) since in all cases the Cronbach's alpha value exceeds the threshold of 0.7, reflecting a high level of coherence among the items analyzed. Construct validity is assessed by discriminant validity and convergent validity, according to the guidelines established by Cepeda-Carrión & Roldán-Salgueiro (2004). Convergent validity is analyzed through the AVE coefficient (Average Variance Extracted), which determines the proportion of variance explained by the indicators compared to the total variance. According to the criteria of Hair et al. (2017), to ensure that the construct adequately explains the variance of its indicators, this coefficient must exceed the threshold of 0.50. In summary, the results indicate that the model meets high standards of reliability and validity, which supports its theoretical and practical soundness. In this research, the AVE coefficient values exceed the threshold of 0.50, which validates adequate convergent validity in line with the criteria established by Fornell & Larcker (1981), this suggests that the constructs evaluated explain a significant proportion of the variance of their indicators, ensuring their relevance and coherence within the model.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the square roots of the AVE values, which were compared with the correlations between the latent variables, following the approach proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). This procedure ensures that each construct is conceptually distinct and that its indicators are more closely associated with it than with other constructs within the model. Discriminant validity thus improves the accuracy of the model by clearly distinguishing the different factors analyzed.

In this context, the results of the analysis of the model used in the study are detailed in Table 2, which presents the items evaluated and the values obtained. These metrics support the model's structure and validate its ability to accurately measure the variables and relationships proposed in the study's theoretical framework. Thus, the results offer solid empirical evidence supporting both the convergent and discriminant validity of the model.

Table 3
Results of the structural model analysis

Hypothesis	Simple average	Standard Deviation	Path Beta	t Student	p value	Decision
H1 : OF→ TS	-0.125	0.092	-0.271	2.142	0.012	H1 is accepted
H2 : EE→ TS	-0.156	0.089	-0.251	2.021	0.041	H2 is accepted
H3 : ME→ TS	-0.161	0.094	-0.182	2.345	0.028	H3 is accepted

Regarding post-pandemic social transformations and job destruction, Table 3 shows that the p_value obtained is 0.012, which indicates that the specific research hypothesis 1 is accepted, under which the relationship between both variables is determined.

Regarding post-pandemic social transformations and employment expansion, Table 2 shows that the p_value obtained is 0.041, which indicates that the specific research hypothesis 2 is accepted, under which the relationship between both variables is determined.

Regarding post-pandemic social transformations and employment modification, Table 2 shows that the p_value obtained is 0.028, which indicates that the specific research hypothesis 3 is accepted, under which the relationship between both variables is determined.

Likewise, it can be determined that the 3 relationships corresponding to the dimensions of labor trends are related to social transformation by having a value lower than $p < 0.05$, with which the general hypothesis is consequently accepted.

5. Discussion

After obtaining the results, a discussion is presented regarding the theories and background in order to establish the relationship between social transformation and labor trends in the sellers of repowered items – Huancayo.

COVID-19 has had a direct impact on informal jobs, as these are the lowest-paid and least productive. According to Mendoza (2020), this type of employment lacks social protection mechanisms, making them vulnerable during a pandemic. The social transformation has forced workers with informal jobs to develop specific measures to survive during a period of confinement, avoiding activities that involve human contact and, consequently, are more prone to contracting the virus.

Regarding the relationship between post-pandemic social transformations and job losses among refurbished sellers, the research results show a significant positive relationship ($p = 0.012$; path = -0.271); this result is consistent with that reported by Barrutia et al., (2021) who consider that social transformation generates different forms of group and individual behavior within economic and labor activities, such as disorder and negative change, since it modifies or destroys the network of contacts and relationships built over time.

Another important element is that presented by Rodríguez (1989) who considers that the analysis of people's work behavior as a result of the pandemic has often been vulnerable, given the fragility of their activities, such as reselling secondhand goods, which are negatively influenced. This element provides valuable information on survival trends and informal work modalities.

Regarding the relationship between post-pandemic social transformations and the expansion of employment in sellers of repowered items, the results of the research show a significant positive relationship ($p = 0.041$; path = -0.251); the results are consistent with what Rocha (2022), who considers that the process of adaptation of people according to the individual and collective work environment allows for the development of capacities.

Regarding the relationship between post-pandemic social transformations and changes in employment among sellers of refurbished items, the results of the research show a significant positive relationship ($p = 0.028$; path = -0.182); the results obtained are consistent with those presented by Falleti (2014) who establishes that jobs could be affected in different ways in relation to the contexts and situations such as salary trends or income according to the work activity carried out; in sectors such as repowered or reused articles, the change in dedication of the people who work has implications since people who carry out these activities full-time have greater perfection in the products offered. The elements of the labor economy generally tend to vary constantly, according to Barrutia et al. (2021) In a post-pandemic context where health conditions prevail for acceptance, specific strategies are required that allow the development of creative ideas among people who carry out survival activities with the use or employment of second-hand or repowered resources.

Authors should discuss the results and their interpretation from the perspective of previous studies and the working hypotheses. The findings and their implications should be discussed in the broadest possible context. Future research directions may also be highlighted.

6. Conclusions

- The pandemic has had a significant impact on employment, as COVID-19 had a significant impact on refurbished vendors in Huancayo, demonstrating job losses due to lockdowns and health restrictions, which limited job opportunities and affected the economic stability of this sector.
- It is concluded that the expansion of employment and adaptation in the market for refurbished items experienced an expansion in employment thanks to the adaptation of sellers to new forms of marketing, including digital strategies and new sales methods that responded to the growing demand for reused products.
- A transformation in work dynamics was evident as changes were identified in the way salespeople work, such as the implementation of technologies, product diversification, and the incorporation of innovative practices to improve competitiveness in the post-pandemic market
- post-pandemic social transformations are closely linked to the destruction, expansion, and modification of employment in this sector, demonstrating the resilience and adaptability of informal workers in the face of global crises.

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