PASOS
Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural
www.pasosonline.org

Vol. 23 N.º 1. Págs. 25-40. enero-marzo 2025
https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2025.23.002

Job quality in the tourism industry

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Abstract: In many countries and regions, tourism activity is viewed as a means of increasing income and employment for local people. Research confirms that tourism development boosts employment. However, studies have neglected the quality of jobs. Job quality is a concern for policy makers and is considered a determinant of individual well-being. The quality of jobs in tourism is generally perceived to be low. Most evidence with respect to tourism job quality disregards job quality in specific tourism activities, non-tourism activities, several tourism occupations, and non-tourism occupations. These aspects are analysed using employment data from the European Union and two large databases on job characteristics (ONET) and working conditions (European Working Conditions Survey). The results indicate that job quality is low in accommodation and food and beverage service activities, but not in travel agency and tour operator services. With regard to occupations, job quality is low in most tourism occupations.

Keywords: Job quality; tourism development; employment; work.

Calidad del empleo en el sector turístico

Resumen: En muchos territorios la actividad turística es considerada un medio para aumentar los ingresos y el empleo de la población. Asimismo, las investigaciones apoyan esta creencia. Sin embargo, los estudios han descuidado la calidad de los puestos de trabajo, la cual preocupa a los responsables políticos y se considera un factor determinante del bienestar individual. En general, se considera que la calidad de los puestos de trabajo en el sector turístico es baja. No obstante, la mayoría de los datos sobre esta no tiene en cuenta la calidad del empleo en actividades turísticas específicas, en actividades no turísticas, en las diferentes ocupaciones turísticas y en ocupaciones no turísticas. En este estudio, estos aspectos se analizan utilizando datos de empleo de la Unión Europea y dos grandes bases de datos sobre características de los puestos de trabajo (ONET) y las condiciones de trabajo (Encuesta Europea sobre las Condiciones de Trabajo). Los resultados indican que la calidad del empleo es baja en las actividades de alojamiento y servicios de comidas y bebidas, pero no en los servicios de agencias de viajes y operadores turísticos. En cuanto a las ocupaciones, la calidad del empleo es baja en la mayoría de las ocupaciones turísticas.

Palabras clave: calidad del empleo; desarrollo turístico; empleo; trabajo.

1. Introduction

Tourism development is widely recognized as a driver of employment. Indeed, this link between tourism and employment growth has been demonstrated in various studies (Lara de Vicente & López-Guzmán Guzmán, 2004; Uysal et al., 2016), and institutions such as the World Tourism Organization laud the employment driven by tourism activities. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council Tourism, tourism supported 1 in 11 jobs in the entire world economy in 2021; furthermore, tourism is expected to create 126 million new jobs between 2022 and 2032 (WTTC, 2022).

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Cite: Melián González, S. (2025). Job quality in the tourism industry. *PASOS. Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural, 23*(1), 25-40. https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2025.23.002

Tourism development plans typically consider the positive impact of tourism growth on the number of jobs, but the quality of these jobs is overlooked in these plans (Kronenberg & Fuchs, 2021). According to the OECD, labor market performance should be assessed in terms of increasing both the number and quality of jobs and improving the quality of existing jobs (OECD, 2014). Indeed, the creation of quality jobs has been an important objective of the European Union's employment strategy since 2000 (European Commission, 2003). In turn, the International Labor Organization and the Sustainable Development Goals have recognized the issue of job quality under the name of decent work (Gammarano, 2020).

Concerns about the quality of tourism jobs have been raised. A general agreement about the meaning of job quality is lacking, but most studies assume that job quality is related to a set of work- and employment-related factors that have a positive and direct impact on the well-being of employees (Stefana et al., 2021). In this sense, tourism jobs are frequently considered as low-skilled, temporary, low paid, with extended working hours, and limited opportunities for career development (Marrero-Rodríguez et al., 2020).

In addressing the issue of the low quality of jobs in tourism, Baum (2019: 47) underscores the difficulty of "generaliz[ing] about job characteristics, working conditions and job quality within the industry." Despite the widespread belief that tourism is associated with low-quality employment, overwhelming evidence of the quality of jobs in tourism is lacking. Most of the studies are characterized by the following issues: they do not compare the characteristics of tourism jobs to the ones of other economic activities; they do not distinguish between different tourism activities or tourism occupations; they chiefly cover subjective and limited number of job quality indicators; and they use small sample sizes and/or samples based on one or two tourism occupations. Against this background, this study attempts to answer the question about the extent to which the quality of jobs in tourism is low, using employment data from the European Union and from two large databases on job characteristics (ONET) and working conditions (European Working Conditions Survey).

Several factors underlie the importance of obtaining more definitive findings on the quality of tourism jobs. Baum et al. (2016) mention the lack of academic research on the topic of tourism workforce and emphasize the importance of advancing in this aspect of tourism. Among several research directions, these authors suggest the investigation of the dominant discourses of work (e.g., stigmas such as the low qualification of tourism jobs and poor working conditions) and how evidence of tourism employment perpetuates or challenges them. Furthermore, job quality is considered a key element of people's quality of life (Biagi, et al., 2020), which affects national and regional economic competitiveness (Siebern-Thomas, 2005).

2. Job quality

Terms such as job quality (JQ hereafter), employment quality, and quality in work are typically used interchangeably in the literature (Stefana et al., 2021). Despite the recognized importance for society of having jobs characterized by an appropriate level of quality, a general agreement about the meaning of JQ is lacking (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011; Stefana et al., 2021).

A widespread view about JQ is one in which JQ is deemed to reflect the dimensions of the jobs that have a clear and direct impact on the well-being of workers (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2011; Guidetti, Pedrini, & Zamparini, 2021; Stefana et al., 2021). These job dimensions can be measured through objective and subjective indicators (Guidetti, Pedrini, & Zamparini, 2021). Objective JQ indicators relate to job aspects that do not involve workers' evaluation (e.g., pay, working hours, or type of labor contract), whereas subjective JQ indicators focus on workers' perceptions and preferences (Belardi, Knox, & Wright, 2021).

Other authors (Díaz-Chao et al., 2016; Ficapal-Cusí et al., 2018) propose that JQ refers to the well-being that employees express and feel in their jobs. In this regard, Díaz-Chao et al. (2016) define JQ as an overall state of satisfaction with different aspects of the job and its environment. Muñoz de Bustillo et al. (2011) contend that job satisfaction is a related measure of JQ, but not a suitable measure of it. Among other reasons, these authors and others (Sirgy et al., 2001; Santero-Sánchez et al., 2015) acknowledge job satisfaction as a consequence of different worker evaluations, which include JQ. In addition, studies that base JQ on measures of employee satisfaction raise concerns about differences with job satisfaction studies. For example, Ficapal-Cusí et al. (2018) rely on several worker satisfaction indicators (e.g., satisfaction with superiors' assessment, satisfaction with opportunities for promotion) that are usually included in job satisfaction studies (Judge & Klinger, 2008). In this regard, no difference exists between JQ based on worker satisfaction and the traditional measures of job satisfaction.

The general agreement about JQ is that it is a multidimensional construct (Stefana et al., 2021). However, a definitive list of JQ dimensions is lacking. Handel (2005) proposes pay, job security, promotional opportunities, job variety/interest, job autonomy, stress, workload, physical effort, danger, management–employee relationships, and co-worker relationships as the dimensions of JQ. Holman (2013) mentions different job factors that belong to five job dimensions: work organization (e.g., job discretion), wages (e.g., high pay), security and flexibility (e.g., permanent contracts), skills and development (e.g., skill use), and engagement (e.g., consultation opportunities). Kalleberg (2011) argues that economists tend to highlight the economic compensation of jobs. In addition to this factor, sociologists tend to focus on the control and autonomy that jobs allow to workers, and psychologists consider these job characteristics and other features. Kalleberg (2011) suggests the following dimensions: control over work content and intrinsic rewards; work intensity; earnings and fringe benefits; job security; and opportunities for advancement. Based on several social sciences disciplines relevant to JQ, Muñoz de Bustillo et al. (2011) identify 21 possible dimensions. They suggest decomposing JQ into two broad areas of employment quality and work quality. Employment quality refers to aspects of the employment relation, such as the employment contract, remuneration and working hours, and career development. Work quality pertains to the work itself and the conditions under which it transpires: autonomy, intensity, social environment, and physical environment, among others. In their review, Stefana et al. (2021) indicate that the number of JQ dimensions is highly variable, from two to 22; thus, they classify these dimensions into six umbrella categories: control (i.e., degree of autonomy that workers have); economic (i.e., compensation and security); ergonomic (i.e., working conditions and environment); complexity (i.e., skill requirements); social (i.e., relationships with others); and work–life balance (i.e., possibility to balance work and life commitments). They further contend that the most frequent JQ dimensions belong to the categories of control, economic, and complexity. Guidetti, Pedrini, and Zamparini (2021) identify similar JQ dimensions: pay and other economic incentives, career development opportunities, discretion, training and participation skills, job security, work intensity, social conditions of work, and work–life balance.

Although JQ studies include varied sets of dimensions, the following components are frequently included: skill requirements, pay, working hours, part-time work, job stability, social environment, work–family balance, autonomy, and career advancement.

3. Job quality in tourism

According to Choy (1995), the tourism industry is often criticized for creating service jobs that are demeaning. More than two decades later, this criticism remains (Baum et al., 2016; Robinson et al., 2019). More specifically, employment in the tourism industry is widely associated with low wages, monotonous tasks, low job security, and low status positions (Baum, 2015, 2019). In principle, JQ in tourism is expected to be low.

In this study, we used the Web of Science and Scopus databases for identifying relevant articles about JQ in tourism. For both databases, we utilized the keywords “job quality” or “employment quality” together with the terms “tourism” or “hospitality.” In all search categories, Web of Science produced 32 articles. Eighteen of these articles did not address the JQ topic, but they tackled related factors (e.g., gender wage gap, sustainable rural tourism, corporate social responsibility, labor market flexibility, employee satisfaction, company productivity, or sustainability); in addition, the articles were not focused on the tourism sector (e.g., international labor migration, journalism, gig economy, and education). Two articles were conference proceedings about tourism undergraduates’ employment, which were unavailable on the Internet. In the case of Scopus, the search was limited to exploring titles, abstracts, and keywords, resulting in 11 documents. Five articles did not address JQ. One article was focused on job satisfaction, and the others analyzed factors other than JQ (i.e., tourism size and structure, sustainable rural tourism, corporate social responsibility, and employment opportunities). Overall, 13 studies were analyzed (see Table 1).

Four studies directly assessed the tourism JQ, considering the JQ in other industries. Choy (1995) compared JQ in tourism with JQ in business services and JQ in all industries. The results indicated that hotels had a higher proportion of managers but a much lower proportion of professional/technical positions. Furthermore, hotel and eating/drinking places were dominated by a high proportion of service occupations, which are usually perceived as low-skill jobs. In the case of wages, the ones in the air transportation industry are among the highest. Hotel average wages are low but higher than the ones in other service industries. Wages in eating/drinking places are among the lowest in all industries. Regarding other indicators and in comparison to workers in other industries, tourism workers are more

likely to work weekends, work rotating shifts, and work a variable schedule each week. Based on the Canadian General Social Survey, the results of Chen and Mehdi's (2019) study revealed that compared to overall scores, JQ in the hospitality industry was worse on 16 of 23 subjective JQ indicators (only one indicator was objective). These subjective JQ indicators include advancement prospects, irregular working schedule, taking time for personal matters, opportunities for participation, paid formal training, on-the-job training, formal job performance evaluation, covered by union or collective agreement, pension plan, paid sick leave, paid vacation leave, disability insurance, supplemental medical care, compensation, social benefits, and mean hourly earnings. Piasna (2020), based on subjective JQ indicators about working time, found that hospitality and other industries were characterized by high rates of part-time work and employer-driven workplace flexibility. No differences regarding long working hours were identified. Finally, Dolcet, Porto, and Garcia (2022) compared JQ in tourism with the JQ of all employees and with JQ in the trade sector. These authors elaborated a JQ index and found that tourism JQ in Uruguay is relatively lower than JQ for the entire economy and even worse than for the trade sector. Regarding certain tourism activities, JQ in hotels and travel agencies is above the whole and trade sector JQ, respectively. However, in restaurants and entertainment activities JQ is inferior. However, the study does not provide results considering the different JQ dimensions.

Two studies indirectly considered some aspects of JQ in other industries. In their research, Guégnard and Mériot (2008) adopted a qualitative approach to their analysis of housekeepers in French hotels. Nevertheless, these authors also provided some secondary data that compare either hotel or housekeeper job characteristics with global data. The hotel industry was deemed to be distinctive in the facets of union membership, employee education level, part-time contracts, and low wages. Weaver (2009) conducted face-to-face interviews with tourism graduates, in which some respondents provided answers about job characteristics in other industries. For example, an interviewee said "I was paid more as a receptionist in an architect's firm" (Weaver, 2009: 584). Weaver's (2009) results were mixed regarding the different JQ dimensions and with the nuances caused by the adoption of qualitative analysis (e.g., the general sense was that work in the tourism industry lacked prestige, but the participants also indicated that working in the tourism industry had positive attributes).

In four studies, tourism JQ was regarded as low, but these studies lacked an assessment of the occurrences in other industries. Knox et al. (2015) conducted personal interviews to analyze the JQ of room attendants. Their conclusion is that the job quality is poor and that workers vary in their perceptions of JQ. Ariza-Montes et al. (2021) assessed the JQ of cruise workers and found that working time was the worst dimension. The authors further noted that crew and staff personnel experienced poor working conditions that were included in their measure of JQ (e.g., work intensity and salaries). They also identified several differences between officers and crew/staff employees (e.g., salaries, social environment, and work intensity). Belardi, Knox, and Wright (2021) revealed that objectively, the JQ of chefs was mostly low (e.g., low pay), but some workers' perceptions were positive. Life stages associated with age, career, and family could explain these discordant subjective perceptions. Lloyd and Payne (2021) conclude that in the case of the café activity, the sector exerts common pressures on organizations, thereby affecting JQ pay and working time. However, national institutions (e.g., unions) and regulations (e.g., part-time work legislation) can also shape these JQ facets.

Table 1: Research about tourism job quality

	Data / Sample	Dimensions	Measures	Comparison to Other Industries or Occupations	Results
Choy (1995)	Secondary data of three sectors of the tourism industry in Hawaii: air transportation, hotels/lodging, and eating / drinking; survey of residents	Occupational distribution (proxy of skills), pay, working hours, work schedule, opportunities for advancement for local residents, job satisfaction	Objective and subjective	Comparison of the objective JQ measures in the tourism industry to the ones in other service industries and in all industries	Different JQ dimensions (e.g., wages, skills, working time) are worse in hotels/lodging and eating/drinking places than in other sectors of the tourism industry.

Guégnard and Mériot (2008)	76 interviews with managers, middle management, and floor staff of eight hotels and sector representatives, unions, main hotel chains, and training organizations	Social bargaining, work schedule, workload, labor contract, wage, outsourcing, training, and promotion	Subjective	Some comparisons based on secondary data	Low JQ is identified in several dimensions in the hotel industry, such as union membership, education level, part-time contracts, and wages.
Weaver (2009)	21 New Zealand tourism graduates' perceptions through semi-structured interviews	Pay, job status, job content, job security, and opportunities for advancement and promotion	Subjective	No	Mixed results are found regarding different JQ dimensions.
Santero-Sánchez et al. (2015)	Secondary data of hotels and similar establishments' employees in Spain	Income, full-time and part-time work (proxy of working hours and work–life balance), job security, professional category (proxy of skills and training)	Objective	No	Based on a JQ index, the findings indicate that women hold lower JQ jobs than men.
Knox et al. (2015)	76 interviews with room attendants, hotel managers, the directors of a TWA, the industry's employer representative group and the trade union	Work organization, skills and training, progression opportunities, and pay and benefits	Subjective	No	The JQ of room attendants is low, and it varies among workers.
Chen and Mehdi (2019)	10,680 workers from the Canadian General Social Survey	Prospects, work intensity, working time, skills and discretion, social environment, income and benefits	Subjective, except one indicator (mean hourly earnings)	Yes	The hospitality industry is worse on 16 of 23 subjective JQ indicators.
Piasna (2020)	52,236 workers from the European Working Conditions Survey	Work intensity and working time	Subjective	Yes	Hospitality is characterized by high rates of part-time work and employer-driven workplace flexibility.
García-Rodríguez, Armas-Cruz, and González-de-la-Rosa (2020)	458 hotel employees	Lifelong learning and professional development; work, family, and personal life balance; intrinsic employment quality; income; stability and security; working environment; working conditions; and social dialogue	Subjective	No	A JQ index is elaborated.

Guidetti, Pedrini, and Zamparini (2021)	407 seasonal workers mostly from the hotels, bars, and restaurants of the tourism industry in Rimini	Employee satisfaction with remuneration, career opportunities, and job stability Extrinsic qualities of the job: skill matching, access to on-the-job training, and evaluation between the skills required and possessed Intrinsic qualities of the job: self-fulfillment, meaningfulness, and social support Work–life balance based on the degree of time flexibility enjoyed by seasonal workers	Subjective	No	Based on a JQ index, JQ is found to be low and varies according to worker and job characteristics.
Ariza-Montes et al. (2021)	353 cruise workers	Physical environment, work intensity, working time, social environment, skills and discretion, job security, possibilities of career advancement, and earnings	Subjective	No	The work environment of crew and staff personnel is characterized by poor working conditions. The worst dimension is working time.
Belardi, Knox, and Wright (2021)	Interviews with 21 chefs and five restaurant managers	Work organization, skills and training, progression opportunities, pay and benefits, working time, and job security	Subjective	No	The objective JQ is low, but some workers' perceptions are positive.
Lloyd and Payne (2021)	100 interviews with workers from the café industry	Pay and working time	Subjective and objective	No	Low quality is influenced by industry characteristics and institutional factors.
Dolcet, Porto, and Garcia (2022)	Workers from hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and entertainment, cultural, and sport services in Uruguay	Employment conditions, earnings, hours worked, occupational safety, and social security coverage	Objective	Yes	Based on a JQ index, tourism JQ is found to be relatively low. JQ in hotels and travel agencies is higher, but it is lower in restaurants and entertainment activities.

The other studies aimed to elaborate JQ indexes. Santero-Sánchez et al. (2015) developed a JQ index and found that on average, women hold lower quality jobs than men and that this gap decreases in high-qualified jobs. Webster et al. (2015) and García-Rodríguez, Armas-Cruz, and González-de-la-Rosa (2020) drew on the decent work construct to elaborate an index of decent work. Their indexes included JQ dimensions frequently mentioned in JQ research (e.g., working hours, work, family and personal life balance, and job security). Finally, Guidetti, Pedrini, and Zamparini (2021) developed a JQ index based on a sample of seasonal workers of the tourism industry. They assert that although JQ is low, the workers' perceptions of JQ vary according to the characteristics of both workers (e.g., age) and the job (e.g., front-line positions).

4. Research objetive

Tourism JQ was analyzed in a few studies by considering JQ outside the tourism industry. Only one of these studies (Choy, 1995) included both objective and subjective JQ measures and differentiated tourism activities. This issue is an important one because tourism involves various types of economic activities that prevent JQ generalizations (Baum, 2019). This study was conducted in Hawaii more than 25 years ago.

The objective of the current research is to assess tourism JQ based on both objective and subjective indicators, taking into account JQ in non-tourism activities, JQ in different tourism activities, and JQ of specific tourism occupations.

5. Methodology

Objective and subjective JQ indicators (Table 2 and Table 3) were collected from three sources, namely Eurostat (Eurostat-Labour Force Survey and Eurostat-Labour cost structure), the 6th European

Working Conditions Survey (EWCS-15 hereafter), and the ONET database. These indicators belong to the JQ dimensions of pay, long working hours, part-time work, job stability, and skill requirements. The objective indicator of employment by occupation of the latter dimension is based on the occupation classification system ISCO-08. In the case of subjective JQ indicators, according to the data categorization provided by ONET, two aspects of the dimension of skill requirements are considered. On the one hand, the aspect of education, experience, and training refers to general levels of required education and experience, and to training provided by employers. On the other hand, the aspect of cross-functional skills pertains to a broad range of specific skills that facilitate performance across jobs. JQ subjective indicators were provided in different scales. Except for three subjective JQ indicators based on dichotomous answer scales, all the indicators were standardized to a scale ranging from 0 to 1.

Data from Eurostat include the EU-27 countries and correspond to the three latest years available. Data from the EWCS-15 include 35 European countries. For this study, these data were collected between December 2014 and April 2015. The ONET database relies on U.S. information, and it is continuously updated. For this study, the database was downloaded in January 2023.

Table 2: Objective indicators of job quality

Dimension	Indicator	Content	Unit	Source
Skill requirements	Employment by occupation	Workers	%	Eurostat-Labour Force Survey
	Training to improve worker skills paid for or provided by the employer over the past 12 months	Workers	%	EWCS-15
Pay	Wages and salaries	Wages and salaries per employee in full-time equivalents	Euros	Eurostat-Labour Force Survey
	Net monthly earnings	Net monthly earnings of full-time workers	Euros	EWCS-15
	Payments based on individual performance	Workers	%	EWCS-15
	Payments based on team/department performance	Workers	%	EWCS-15
	Payments based on the overall performance of the company	Workers	%	EWCS-15
	Advantages of other nature (e.g., medical services, access to shops)	Workers	%	EWCS-15
Working hours	Weekly hours	Average number of usual weekly hours of work in the main job by full-time employees	Hours	Eurostat-Labour Force Survey EWCS-15
	Number of times working more than 10 hours a day	Times a month working more than 10 hours a day	Days	EWCS-15
	Days per week usually worked	Average number of days per week usually worked in the main job by full-time employees	Days	
	Rest time between working days	Workers who in the past month at least once have had less than 11 hours between working days	%	EWCS-15
Part-time work	Part-time employees	Part-time employees	%	Eurostat-Labour Force Survey EWCS-15
Job stability	Temporary employees	Temporary employees	%	Eurostat-Labour Force Survey
	Seniority in the current company	Average number of years in the company	Years	EWCS-15

Table 3: Subjective indicators of job quality

Dimension	Indicator	Content	Source
Skill requirements: education, experience, and training	Required level of education	Twelve categories about the level of education required to perform a job	ONET
	Related work experience	Eleven categories about the amount of related work experience required to get hired for the job	ONET
	On-site or in-plant training	Nine categories about the on-site or in-plant training required	ONET
	On-the-Job training	Nine categories about the on-the-job training required	ONET
Skill requirements: cross-functional skills	Complex problem-solving skills	Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions	ONET
	Resource management skills: time management, management of financial resources, management of material resources, and management of personnel resources	Developed capacities used for efficiently allocating resources	ONET
	Social skills: social perceptiveness, coordination, persuasion, negotiation, instructing, and service orientation	Developed capacities used for working with people to achieve goals	ONET
	Systems skills: judgment and decision making, systems analysis, and systems evaluation	Developed capacities used for understanding, monitoring, and improving socio-technical systems	ONET
	Technical skills: operations analysis, technology design, equipment selection, installation, programming, operations monitoring, operation and control, equipment maintenance, troubleshooting and repairing, and quality control analysis	Developed capacities used for designing, setting up, operating, and correcting malfunctions involving the application of machines or technological systems	ONET
Job stability	Job loss	Losing one's job in the next six months	EWCS-15
	Working conditions	Occupations that satisfy this work value offer job security and good working conditions.	ONET
Social environment	Support	Occupations that satisfy this work value offer supportive management that stands behind employees.	ONET
	Respect of the boss	The boss respects workers as individuals.	EWCS-15
	Workplace support	Employees are appreciated when they have done a good job.	EWCS-15
Work–family balance	Work–family balance	Working hours fit with family or social commitments outside work.	EWCS-15
Autonomy	Independence	Occupations that satisfy this work value allow employees to work on their own and make decisions.	ONET
	Order of tasks	Possibility to choose or change the order of tasks	EWCS-15
	Methods of work	Possibility to choose or change the methods of work	EWCS-15
	Speed or rate of work	Possibility to choose or change the speed or rate of work	EWCS-15
Career advancement	Advancement and prestige	Occupations that satisfy this work value offer advancement and potential for leadership, and they are often considered prestigious.	ONET
	Prospects for career advancement	The job offers good prospects for career advancement.	EWCS-15

Eurostat and the EWCS-15 provide data according to different economic activities based on the NACE Rev.2 classification. Thus, these data were used in this study for analyzing tourism activities versus non-tourism activities and verifying the differences among diverse tourism activities. Some of NACE Rev.2 activities are widely considered to be tourism activities (e.g., accommodation), whereas others also rely on other types of consumers (e.g., passenger transport). Among the economic activities considered as representative of the tourism industry are accommodation; food and beverage service activities; and travel agency, tour operator, and related activities. Employment in these activities represents approximately 84.1% of the total employment in tourism (Eurostat, 2022). In the current study, the results were calculated considering the most specific level provided for these tourism activities. Eurostat indicators for the travel agency, tour operator service, and related activities were excluded because their data were provided at a level covering non-tourism economic activities.

The ONET database provides data for 875 occupations. Thus, these data were used in this study for analyzing tourism occupations versus non-tourism occupations and for identifying the differences among various tourism occupations. Based on the ISCO-8 system, the ONET occupations were grouped into accommodation activities; food and beverage service activities; travel agency, tour operator, and related activities; and non-tourism activities. This step was undertaken using the tool developed by Belloni and Tijdens (2019). The tourism occupations are listed in Table 4.

The EWCS-15 and the ONET database provide non-aggregated data. Hence, in this study, statistically significant differences were determined through ANOVA and the χ^2 test. Eurostat data were provided in an aggregated form, such that the differences based on these data would be observed.

Table 4: Tourism occupations according to the three economic tourism activities

Tourism Activities	ISCO-08 Occupations[1]		
	Major Group 5 consisting of service and sales workers	Major Group 9 comprising elementary occupations	Other major groups
Accommodation	Beauticians and related workers; cleaning and housekeeping supervisors in offices, hotels, and other establishments; companions and valets; personal service workers not classified elsewhere	Cleaners and helpers in offices, hotels, and other establishments; elementary workers not classified elsewhere	Hotel managers, bookmakers, croupiers, and related gaming workers; hotel receptionists
Food and beverage service activities	Cooks, waiters, bartenders, street food salespersons, and food service counter attendants	Fast-food preparers, kitchen helpers	Restaurant managers; chefs; bakers; pastry cooks and confectionery makers; food and beverage tasters and graders; motorcycle drivers
Travel agency, tour operator service, and related activities	Travel guides, cashiers, and ticket clerks		Retail and wholesale trade managers; conference and event planners; travel consultants and clerks

6. Results

6.1 Results based on objective JQ indicators

Table 5 shows the results. Accommodation and food service activities were overrepresented by occupations belonging to the ISCO-08 major group of service and sales workers. More than half of the workers engaged in accommodation and food service activities belonged to this group; however, globally, less than 17% of the workers belonged to this group. According to the complexity and range of tasks performed in occupations, ISCO-08 attaches a skill level to each major group. The skill level ranges from 1 to 4. Service and sales workers have a skill level of 2. According to the ILO1, the knowledge and skills required in all occupations at Skill Level 2 are generally obtained through the completion of the first stage of secondary education (ISCED Level 2), and some occupations require the completion of the second stage of secondary education (ISCED Level 3)2. The other predominant occupations in these tourism activities are the ones included in the major group of elementary occupations (i.e., more than 16% versus less than 9% in global terms). This group also has a skill level of 2. More than 70% of the workers performing accommodation and food service activities belong to the major groups of service and sales workers and elementary occupations. Workers in both groups constitute less than 25% of the global workforce.

Table 5: Results of the objective JQ indicators

Dimension	Indicator	Results
Skill requirements	Employment by occupation (ISCO-08)	Higher proportion of low-qualified occupations in accommodation and food service activities
	Training to improve worker skills paid for or provided by the employer over the past 12 months	Accommodation and particularly food and beverage service activities are those that less provide or pay training to their employees. Travel agency and tour operator activities are similar to non-tourism activities.
Pay	Wages and salaries	Lower in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities
	Net monthly earnings	Lower in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities. Travel agency and tour operator activities are similar to non-tourism activities.
	Payments based on individual performance	Less frequent in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities; slightly higher in travel agency and tour operator activities
	Payments based on team/department performance	Less frequent in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities; higher in travel agency and tour operator activities
	Payments based on the overall performance of the company	Less frequent in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities. Higher in travel agency and tour operator activities
	Advantages of other nature (e.g., medical services, access to shops, and so on)	Less frequent in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities. Higher in travel agency and tour operator activities.
Working hours	Weekly hours	Higher in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities. No differences for travel agency and tour operator activities
	Times working more than 10 hours a day	Higher in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities. No differences for travel agency and tour operator activities
	Days per week usually worked	Higher in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities. No differences for travel agency and tour operator activities
	Less rest between working days	Higher in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities. Travel agency and tour operator activities are similar to non-tourism activities
Part-time work	Part-time employees	Higher in accommodation and food service activities
Job stability	Temporary employees	Higher in accommodation and food service activities
	Seniority in the current company	Lower in accommodation, food and beverage service, and travel agency and tour operator activities

Accommodation and particularly food and service activities are the activities least likely to provide or pay for training for their employees ($\chi^2 = 354.64$; $p < .001$). Similarly, wages and salaries in full-time equivalents are lower in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities. In the case of full-time workers, the medians of net monthly earnings in accommodation (€934.59) and food and beverage service activities (€800) are below those of travel agency and tour operator activities (€1,054.56) and non-tourism activities (€1,100). Workers engaged in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities receive lower payments based on their individual performance ($\chi^2 = 27.33$; $p < .001$); the performance of the team, group, or department ($\chi^2 = 17.05$; $p < .001$); the overall performance of their companies ($\chi^2 = 46.44$; $p < .001$); and advantages of other nature such as medical service and access to shops ($\chi^2 = 91.09$; $p < .001$). Furthermore, compared to employees undertaking non-tourism activities, workers involved in travel agency and tour operator activities receive higher payments in the aforementioned forms.

According to Eurostat, the numbers of typical working hours per week for full-time workers in 2019, 2020, and 2021 were 40.90, 40.60, and 40.50, respectively. Full-time workers engaged in accommodation and food service activities have a higher number of usual weekly hours in these years: 44.00 (2019); 43.30 (2020); and 42.80 (2021). The EWCS-15 data are consistent with this finding (F = 108.99; p < .001); the data also show that workers in travel agency and tour operator activities do not work as many hours, but they work a similar number of hours as workers engaged in non-tourism activities. In addition, full-time workers involved in both accommodation and food and service activities work more hours per week (F = 108.99; p < .001); more times a month work more than 10 hours a day (F = 50.1; p < .001); and those that work more days per week (F = 146.14; p < .001). Furthermore, workers in these activities more frequently rest less than 10 hours between days in the past month (χ^2 = 209.65; p < .001). In these working time indicators, the results for workers undertaking travel agency and tour operator activities are similar to those engaged in non-tourism activities.

Temporary and part-time employment are respectively higher in accommodation and food service activities. Furthermore, employees involved in the three tourism activities have a lower average seniority in their organizations (F = 117.38; p < .001): accommodation, 8.09 years; food and service activities, 7.21 years; travel agency and tour operator activities, 8.69 years; non-tourism activities, 11.91 years; and all economic activities, 11.68 years.

6.2 Results based on subjective indicators

Table 6 shows the results. The EWCS-15 indicators are calculated for the different tourism and non-tourism activities. ONET indicators consider specific tourism occupations compared to non-tourism occupations. To test whether the expected low JQ of the tourism industry includes all tourism occupations, two types of occupations were considered: tourism occupations included in the ISCO-08 major Groups 5 and 9 and other tourism occupations included in other occupational groups (refer to Table 1).

With regard to the JQ dimension of skill requirements, ONET provides different indicators. Among the indicators that globally reflect the skill requirements for occupations are the requisite level of education, related work experience, on-site or in-plant training, and on-the-job training. Concerning non-tourism occupations, tourism occupations in professional Groups 5 and 9 require less education, work experience, on-site training, and on-the-job training. Tourism occupations in other professional groups merely entail less education, although this difference is significant at p < .10. These occupations require more experience and on-the-job training than tourism occupations in professional Groups 5 and 9.

The other indicators of skill requirements refer to 25 skills that are relevant for job performance. Compared to non-tourism occupations, tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9 entail a lower level of 19 skills. These occupations simply require one skill at a higher level: service orientation. The other five skills for which no significant differences occur are management of financial resources, social perceptiveness, persuasion, negotiation, and coordination.

Tourism occupations in other groups do not require lower levels of any of the 25 skills than non-tourism occupations. On the contrary, these tourism occupations entail a higher level of the skills of coordination and management of financial resources. Compared to tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9, tourism occupations in other groups demand a higher level of nine skills.

Regarding the JQ dimension of working conditions, workers engaged in the three tourism activities perceive a higher probability of losing their jobs. Workers involved in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities report a relatively poor work–life balance, whereas workers in travel agency and tour operator activities do not differ from the ones undertaking non-tourism activities. No differences are found between tourism and non-tourism activities for the indicators of the boss' respect and support at work. From the perspective of tourism occupations, working conditions and support indicators are worse for tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9. Tourism occupations in the other groups are better than the latter, and they do not differ from non-tourism occupations.

Concerning the JQ dimension of autonomy, compared to workers involved in non-tourism activities, workers engaged in food and beverage service activities have less autonomy in the order of tasks, methods of work, and speed or rate of work. Workers in accommodation activities have a slightly lower level of autonomy in the order of tasks and a similar autonomy level in the other two indicators. Workers involved in travel agency and tour operator activities exhibit a higher level in the three indicators of autonomy. Tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9 have a lower level of independence.

However, this case does not hold for tourism occupations in other groups that have more independence compared to the latter.

Table 6: Results of the subjective JQ indicators

Dimension	Indicator	Results
Working conditions	Job loss	The probability of job loss is higher for workers engaged in accommodation, food and beverage service activities, and travel agency and tour operator activities.
	Respect of the boss	Non-significant differences between tourism activities; non-significant differences with non-tourism activities
	Workplace support	Non-significant differences between tourism activities; non-significant differences with non-tourism activities
	Work–family balance	Work–family balance is worse for workers undertaking both accommodation and food and beverage service activities; the degree of work–family balance in travel agency and tour operator activities is similar to that in non-tourism activities.
	Working conditions	Working conditions are worse for tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9; tourism occupations in the other groups are better than the latter, and they do not differ from non-tourism occupations
	Support	Support is lower for tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9; tourism occupations in the other groups are better than the latter, and they do not differ from non-tourism occupations.
Autonomy	Order of tasks	Autonomy in terms of the order of tasks is lower in food and beverage service activities; slightly lower in accommodation; and higher in travel agency and tour operator activities
	Methods of work	Autonomy in the aspect of work methods is lower in food and beverage service activities; similar in accommodation; and higher in travel agency and tour operator activities.
	Speed or rate of work	Autonomy in terms of the speed of work is lower in food and beverage service activities; similar in accommodation; and higher in travel agency and tour operator activities.
	Independence	Independence is lower for tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9; tourism occupations in the other groups are better than the latter, and they do not differ from non-tourism occupations.
Career advancement	Prospects for career advancement	Such prospects are lower for both accommodation and food and beverage service activities; the ones in travel agency and tour operator activities are higher than the latter.
	Advancement and prestige	The degree of advancement and prestige is lower for tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9; tourism occupations in the other groups are better than the latter, and they do not differ from non-tourism occupations.
Skill requirements: education, experience, and training	Required level of education	The requisite education level is lower for tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9; tourism occupations in other professional groups also require a lower education level at $p < .10$.
	Related work experience	The need for related work experience is lower for tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9; tourism occupations in the other groups require more than the latter, and they do not differ from non-tourism occupations.
	On-site or in-plant training	The need for on-site or in-plant training is lower for tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9; tourism occupations in the other groups do not differ from non-tourism occupations.
	On-the-job training	The need for on-the-job training is lower for tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9; tourism occupations in the other groups require more than the latter, and they do not differ from non-tourism occupations.
Skill requirements: cross-functional skills	25 special skills related to job performance	Tourism occupations from accommodation require an inferior level of 19 skills; tourism occupations involved in food and beverage service activities require an inferior level of 14 skills; tourism occupations in travel agency and tour operator activities do not require a lower level of these skills.

In relation to career advancement, the workers' prospect for career advancement is lower for those engaged in both accommodation and food and beverage service activities. Workers undertaking travel agency and tour operator activities have a better perception than the ones in non-tourism activities. The

degree of advancement and prestige of tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9 is worse than that of non-tourism occupations. Tourism occupations in the other groups do not differ from the latter, and they have more favorable perceptions than those of Groups 5 and 9.

7. Discussion

Objective and subjective indicators reflecting each JQ dimension provide consistent results on JQ in tourism. Objective JQ indicators show that tourism activities are characterized by a disproportionate share of occupations that require low levels of skills, and that employers of accommodation and food and beverage services provide less training to their employees. Subjective JQ indicators reveal a similar but more detailed picture. Tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9 require less education, work experience, and other types of training that occur in organizations. This is not consistent with the idea that tourism employers value more work experience (Marrero-Rodríguez et al., 2020). In turn, these occupations entail a lower level of most of the specific skills that are important for job performance. However, tourism occupations in other groups are equivalent to non-tourism occupations in the skills dimension.

Workers engaged in the three tourism activities have less seniority in their companies, and they also perceive a higher possibility of losing their jobs. Workers in both accommodation and food and beverage services experience the following aspects of long working hours: working hours per week, working more than 10 hours per day, days per week, and less rest between days. Workers in these activities logically perceive the possibility of work–life balance to be worse, and tourism occupations in Groups 5 and 9 are lower in the indicators of working conditions and support.

The results for both workers engaged in travel agency and tour operator activities and for tourism occupations in professional groups other than Groups 5 and 9 indicate that JQ is not necessarily low in the tourism industry. Workers involved in travel agency and tour operator activities are similar to the ones involved in non-tourism activities in terms of the training provided by employers and working time. These also have similar net monthly earnings and even perceive sophisticated compensation in a higher percentage. Additionally, they have equivalent degrees of work–family balance and prospects for career advancement as well as more autonomy. Compared to non-tourism occupations, tourism occupations in professional groups other than Groups 5 and 9 have similar levels of working conditions, support, advancement and prestige, and independence.

8. Conclusions

8.1 Contributions to the literature about tourism

The benefits of the tourism industry to the economic dimension of tourism destinations are underscored in the literature (Uysal et al., 2016). Two common outcomes are job creation and income. Although the impact on employment growth has been demonstrated, the JQ that tourism promotes is an issue that has been ignored in this literature. This study shows that most jobs in the tourism industry are of low quality according to the typical factors used for representing JQ. According to Eurostat (2022), four out of five individuals employed in the tourism industry work in the accommodation and food and beverage service activities. The results indicate that these activities are based on the occupational groups of service and sales workers and elementary occupations (more than 70% of the employment). Jobs in these tourism activities and the tourism occupations in these groups have a lower JQ, either subjectively or objectively.

Furthermore, tourism has the potential to create jobs that are similar to the quality of or of higher quality than those jobs in non-tourism activities: jobs in travel agencies and tour operator activities and jobs of tourism occupations that do not belong to the aforementioned low-quality occupational groups. However, employment in travel agencies and tour operators represents 4% of the employment in the tourism industry (Eurostat, 2022). In turn, tourism occupations in non-low-job quality occupational groups constitute less than 30% of the occupations in accommodation and food and beverage service activities.

The advantages of tourism development for employment in destinations depend on the employment situation. Poor regions with high employment needs must provide jobs for their residents. In these cases, poor regions benefit from employment growth (Vanegas & Croes, 2003). Developed tourist destinations may increase employment rates through tourism growth, but the quality of employment will not necessarily improve. Evidence confirms that tourism activity promotes those tourism occupations characterized by a low JQ: maids, housekeepers, and cleaners, and food service workers (Lacher & Oh, 2012).

8.2 Practical implications

Policy makers should acknowledge that improving the quality of employment in tourism destinations will not be achieved by more tourists consuming more accommodation and food and beverage services. The development of other economic activities is likely to be a better option for achieving quality employment. Some of the factors that reflect JQ can be improved through collective bargaining (e.g., wages and working hours); however, the occupational structure of the tourism industry and some characteristics of its services (e.g., seasonality and low-skilled services) limit the impact of this action.

8.3 Limitations and future research

This study does not distinguish among different types of accommodation and food and beverage services. For example, a tourism destination based on motel-type establishments is not the same as other destinations where five-star and luxury hotels predominate. The latter provide more complex services that demand higher worker qualifications. A more precise representation of different modalities of tourism services could reveal that tourism JQ is not as uniform as this global analysis reveals.

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Notes

[1] ISCO-08 occupations are grouped into 10 major groups: managers; professionals; technicians and associate professionals; clerical support workers; service and sales workers; skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery workers; craft and related trades workers; plant and machine operators and assemblers; elementary occupations; and armed forces occupations. https://ilostat.ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/classification-occupation/

[2] ISCED-97 groups ranges from 1 (primary level of education) to 6 (second stage of tertiary education).

Recibido: *05/09/2023*
Reenviado: *08/01/2024*
Aceptado: *21/02/2024*
Sometido a evaluación por pares anónimo