

## Evaluation of the Labor Impact of the National Program of Direct Support to the Poorest - JUNTOS in Peru

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### Abstract

*The objective of this research is to estimate the labor impact of the National Program of direct support to the poorest JUNTOS in Peru for the year 2021. The methodology used is the Propensity Score Matching (PSM) through the nearest neighbor method; the database of the National Household Survey ENAHO 2021 is used as a source of information. The results of the logit model indicate that poverty, unsatisfied basic needs and education do influence the probability of participation in the Juntos Social Program and are statistically significant at a 1% level; the expected signs of the coefficients of the logit model are correct. On the other hand, the effect of the Juntos Social Program on the length of the working day is negative for the year 2021; it is found that the value of the average treatment effect in the treated population (ATT) is -1.167, which is highly significant at a 1% level. This indicates that participation in the Juntos Social Program is associated with an average reduction of 1.167 hours per week in working hours. This suggests that the economic transfer provided by the program is not sufficient to replace the workday, which implies that beneficiaries must continue to participate in the labor field.*

**Keywords:** *Impact evaluation, Propensity Score Matching, Labor impact, Social program Juntos.*

### Introduction

According to Fabian et al. (2021), the Conditional Cash Transfer Program “Juntos” is a national program of direct support to the poorest, which is part of the social policy to fight poverty. In Peru, the aforementioned program began in 2005, aiming to contribute to poverty reduction and thereby break the intergenerational transmission of extreme poverty, through the direct transfer of cash to encourage access to health services, nutrition and education of beneficiary families (Almeida et al., 2017). (Almeida et al., 2017). In Latin America we have Mexico as pioneers with the “Progresá” program initiated in 1997, then in Brazil the “Bolsa Escola” program based on municipal pilots and extended nationwide in 2001 (SITEAL, 2018). JUNTOS places conditions on households to grant the money, these requirements are related to nutrition, health and education of children and adolescents who are part of the family structure, as well as pregnant mothers (Perova and Vakis, 2009).

The basic neoclassical single-period labor supply model (Blundell and MaCurdy, 1999) in which a person decides between two goods, one a consumption good and the other leisure time, both of which provide welfare. On the other hand, as Moffitt (2002) mentions, the perspectives for social programs are a little more complex than what a traditional neoclassical model suggests, since welfare programs can be conditional or unconditional monetary, with financial transfers, fiscal benefits, among others. On the other hand, most social programs are aimed at people with low income, i.e. future beneficiaries are chosen and can be part of the program if they meet the main requirement of having low income. In Peru, the closest research is that carried out by Fernández and Saldarriaga (2014), who investigate how the proximity of the payment date of the social program together negatively affects the female labor supply.

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According to Diaz and Saldarriaga (2014), they mention that the program has had no effect on neonatal health, but there is some assurance that there is an improvement in the prenatal care of pregnant mothers. However, there is no improvement in the health of newborns. In addition, the JUNTOS program had a positive impact on conditionalities, spending on food, education and nutritional status; however, it has had no impact on learning or child labor (Sanchez and Rodriguez, 2016). Regarding the antecedents that analyze the impact on labor supply, among them: (Galiani and Gertler, 2012) for the case of Mexico, they report that the “70 y más” program is aimed at adults over 70 years old living in rural areas, the beneficiaries receive 90 dollars every two months, in addition to participating in workshops and social activities and estimate that the proportion of beneficiaries who are working was reduced by 18% as a result of being a beneficiary of the program.

In addition, the hours destined to work for payment are reduced by 37% and are replaced by hours of unpaid family work; (Bando et al., 2014) also for Mexico analyze the effect of the Older Adults program on the welfare of the beneficiary population and find that the generic depression scale decreases by 12% and the number of beneficiaries performing paid work decreases by 12% and consumption expenditure increased by 23%; On the other hand, (Edmonds, 2006) and (Carvalho, 2012) analyze the case of South Africa and Brazil, respectively, these authors find that, in general, child labor hours are significantly reduced in poor families that have at least one elderly member who receives an unconditional cash transfer.

Likewise, (Sienaret, 2008) for South Africa corroborates the findings found by other authors, a cash transfer for older adults is associated with a drop in labor force participation, many beneficiaries opted to stop working. For the case of Peru (Torres and Salinas, 2016) evaluate the impact of the Pension 65 Program on the hours worked in the main occupation of older adults and find a positive and heterogeneous impact for urban and rural areas, but not statistically robust. On the other hand, Arpasi (2024), in his research work carried out the evaluation of the Pension 65 social program in relation to the labor impact applying the Propensity score matching methodology, the results show that the beneficiaries of this program reduced their working hours by 3,248 hours per week, as well as the results show that the coefficients of poverty, years of education, unsatisfied basic needs (households with overcrowded housing and households with housing without sanitary services) are statistically significant at a level of 1%.

Mata and Hernández (2015) evaluate the impact of the conditional cash transfer program for secondary schools, Avancemos, in Costa Rica. Using economic economics and quasi-experimental methodologies, they find a positive impact on dropout and reinsertion, specifically between 10% and 16% of students. For his part, Perez (2015) conducted a study on the impact of the Special Debt Relief Program (PED) on the poor, revealing that beneficiaries and controls were mostly poor, with some falling below the poverty line. The study found positive and statistically significant results for the participants, showing a 15.5% reduction in basic unsatisfied needs and improvements due to the social program. For Behrman et al. (2007) they evaluate the impact of the Oportunidades Program (formerly PROGRESA) on children aged 9 to 15 years and 15 to 21 years after 5.5 years. The results on schooling and labor outcomes in younger children lead to a delay in work and an increase in work in older girls, as well as a shift from agricultural to non-agricultural employment.

From the point of view of Daher (2015), Social programs are public policies developed by the State to eradicate poverty or strengthen the essential capabilities of a specific population. They address specific problems or needs through the implementation of social programs, resources and organized actions. Pardo (2003) Social programs are public policies developed by the State to eradicate poverty or strengthen the essential capabilities of a specific population. They address specific problems or needs through the implementation of social programs, resources and organized actions. On the other hand, Gertler and Galiani (2016) focus on impact evaluation of programs and policies, in which changes in the well-being of individuals, attributed to a specific program or policy, are measured, and is a tool to manage policies and help the public monitor the results of social programs.

## Materials and Methods

According to Ravallion (2007), he proposed a quasi-experimental method to identify the treatment group (treated) expressed by  $T_i=1$  and the untreated group (control) expressed by  $T_i=0$ , which has similar characteristics but does not receive conditional cash transfers, in this quasi-experimental design the treatment and control groups are not equal to each other, so the purpose is to eliminate or minimize the selection bias, which is the result of the random selection of households. To solve this problem, we use the PSM to correct the observable differences between the treatment and control group, a search will be made for each household in the sample of the group being treated in relation to the most similar households in the sample of the comparison group (Inquilla, 2020).

### *Population*

The purpose of the National Program of Direct Support to the Poorest (JUNTOS) is to “implement direct transfers for the benefit of the poorest families of the population, both rural and urban. The Program will provide the beneficiary families, with their participation and voluntary commitment, with health and education benefits aimed at ensuring preventive health care for mothers and children and schooling without dropout”; therefore, the study population will be families in the different regions of Peru who are in poverty and extreme poverty and have school-age children, whether in urban or rural areas. The present research work has as its geographical location all of Peru, made up of its 25 regions, specifically those that are part of the Juntos Program, which belongs to the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS).

### *Sample*

The sample is composed of families that are in and out of the program, as well as families that met the conditions to be in the program. To evaluate the labor impact, data from the National Household Survey (ENAH) for the year 2021 were used; the sample considered by the ENAH is probabilistic. For this period, a sample of 1,688 participating families (treated) of the JUNTOS program and 27,837 non-participating families (control) of the JUNTOS program were taken; this sample was combined with a sample of 29,525 participating and non-participating families.

**Table 1.** Used Modules

Code and module	Description of the file used	Description of the information to be obtained
1 - Housing and Household Characteristics	enaho01-2021-100.dta	UBN = Unsatisfied Basic Needs
2 - Characteristics of Household Members	enaho01-2021-200.dta	- Age - Sex
3 - Education	enaho01-2021-300.dta	Years of education
5 - Income and employment	enaho01a-2021-500.dta	Working hours per week
34 - Social Programs (Household Members)	enaho01-2021-700b.dta	If families are part of the Juntos program
37 - Summaries (Calculated Variables)	sumaria-2021.dta	If the beneficiaries are included in poverty condition

Source: Prepared by the authors based on ENAH - 2021

### *Sampling Type and Procedure*

The sampling design is performed by probability sampling, this method allows to determine the probability that each element of the population has to be chosen in the sample, likewise the ENAH uses a probability

sample (Calatayud, 2017), so it works in a sample of 29,525 families, the sampling unit is comprised of both urban and rural areas.

### *Variables Used*

The method for estimating the influence of poverty, unsatisfied basic needs and education on the probability of participation in the JUNTOS social program for the year 2021 will be carried out using a Logit model.

$$\Pr(\text{Juntos} = 1 | \mathbf{X}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Poverty} + \beta_2 \text{Unsatisfied Basic Needs} + \beta_3 \text{Education}$$

Where:

$\Pr(\text{Juntos} = 1 | \mathbf{X})$  : It is the probability of being part of the JUNTOS program

Poverty : the surveyed families in what condition are.

UBN : Which of the surveyed families have unmet needs.

Education : what level of education does the head of household have?

Vasquez (2002), the Logit model is a function that takes values between zero and one for all real numbers  $z$ . The model represents the standardized normal cumulative distribution function by:

$$f(z) = \int_{-\infty}^z \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp(-t^2/2) dt$$

The method to identify the impact parameter of weekly working hours of the JUNTOS program participants for the year 2021 will be done by the Propensity Score Matching (PSM) methodology through Nearest Neighbor Matching, which will allow obtaining the impact parameter of weekly working hours performed by the JUNTOS program participants.

$$ATT = E(Y1 - Y0 | \mathbf{X}, J = 1) = E(J | \mathbf{X}, J = 1)$$

Where:

**J:** This is the binary variable (dummy), which shows those who are part of the program together (treated=1) and those who are not part of the program (control=0)

**ATT:** Calculates the average income of people who are part of the program.

**X:** It shows those variables that affect the probability of being part of the program together such as poverty, unsatisfied basic needs and education.

Propensity score matching estimates are made using weighted estimates in which people who are not part of the program, but are closer to those who are part of the program, receive the highest weighting (Ravallion, 2007).

## **Results and Discussion**

Table 2 shows the variation in weekly working hours (hours) between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the Juntos Program. The average number of working hours in the treatment group is 34.63, while in the control group it is 36.22, with a difference of 1.59. Using the statistical test  $t=-3.65$ , the null hypothesis

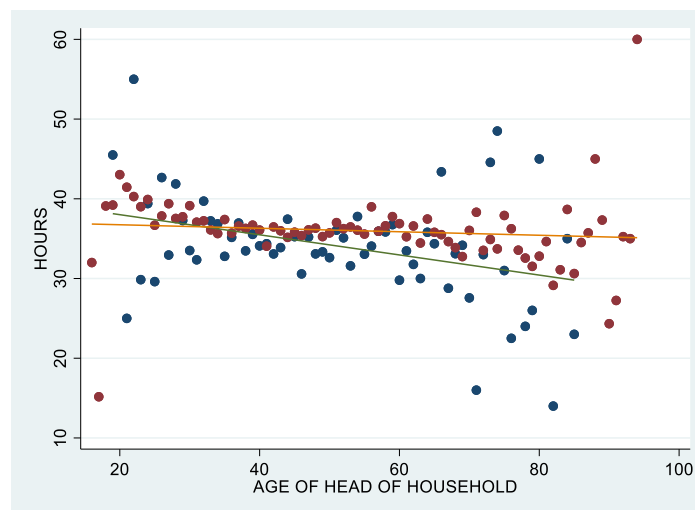
(Ho) is rejected at a significance level of 1%, i.e., there are significant differences in working hours between both groups (treatment and control).

**Table 2.** Group of Household's Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries of the Juntos Program

Control and treatment group	Observations	Difference in working hours (hours / week)	Standard error
Control (T=0)	27,837	36.22	0.105
Treatment (T=1)	1,688	34.63	0.399
Difference (ATE)		1.59	0.437
Ho: Difference =0      t=3.65      prob=0.0			

Source: Prepared by the authors based on ENAHO - 2021

Figure 1 shows a significant relationship between working hours per week and the age of the head of household. The results suggest that families that have benefited from the Juntos Social Program, on average, work fewer hours compared to those that have not received this benefit.



**Figure 1.** Relationship Between Working Hours/Week and Age of the Head of Household

#### *Probability of Participating in the Juntos Social Program - Score Equation*

To characterize the model of the probability of participating in the Juntos social program, we first tried and estimated several specifications of the logit model combining variables referring to poverty, age, household size and sex; however, many of them were not statistically significant. Finally, a logit model was estimated with a statistically robust result (Table 3). Indeed, the coefficients for poverty, age of the household head, education level of the household head, and unsatisfied basic needs (UBN\_3 and UBN\_4) are statistically significant at a level of 1%.

The signs of the coefficients of the estimated logit model are consistent with theoretical expectations. The results of the model indicate that people belonging to poor households have a higher probability of participating in the Juntos Program. However, when the head of household is older and has more years of education, a decrease in the probability of participation in the program is observed. In terms of unsatisfied basic needs, it is found that households lacking sanitation services have a higher probability of participating in the Juntos Program. On the contrary, when the household has children attending school, there is a lower probability of participation in the Juntos Social Program.

**Table 3.** Probability of Beneficiaries to Participate in the Juntos Program - 2021

Identified variables	Coefficients	Marginal effects
Poverty	0.4409***	0.0203
Age of Head of Household	-0.0123***	-0.0205
Education of Head of Household	-0.3457***	-0.0141
UBN_3	0.4029***	0.0194
UBN_4	-1.6119***	-0.0346
_CONS	-0.5575	
Sample size	29,521	
Likelihood Ratio (LR)	970.44***	
Pseudo R2	0.0750	
Prediction percentage		
Log Likelihood	-5981.08	

Level of significance: 10%, 5% and 1%, respectively. \*, \*\*, \*\*\*

#### *Interpretation of Marginal Effects*

The marginal effect of the Poverty variable is positive and statistically significant at 95% confidence. This indicates that an increase in the level of poverty increases the probability of participation in the Juntos Program by 2.03 percentage points.

The years of education of the head of household also show a negative marginal effect, significant at 95%. An increase in the years of education of the head of household reduces the probability of participation in the Juntos Program by 1.41 percentage points.

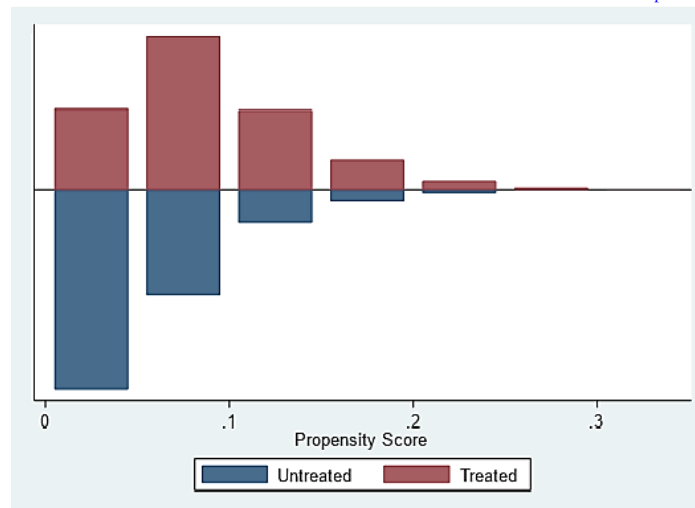
The variable NBI\_3, which represents households with dwellings without toilets, presents a positive marginal effect, significant at 95%. This indicates that households without toilets have a 1.94 percentage point higher probability of participating in the Juntos Program.

Finally, the variable NBI\_4, which represents households with children who do not attend school, shows a negative marginal effect and significant at 95%. This indicates that households with children attending school have a 3.46 percentage point lower probability of participating in the Juntos Program.

#### *Identify The Impact Parameter in Terms of Weekly Work Hours of The JUNTOS Program Participants By 2021*

##### *Propensity Score Matching Assumptions*

Figure 2 illustrates how the Propensity Score Matching method requires two assumptions to be satisfied: Conditional Independence (CIS) and Common Support. SIC involves achieving a balance between the characteristics of individuals prior to treatment, ensuring that those with the same propensity score have similar distributions between the treatment and control groups, thus eliminating selection bias. On the other hand, Common Support ensures that untreated individuals are comparable within a specific region. In this study, the Common Support region was selected, spanning the range [0.0063, 0.3319].



**Figure 2.** Propensity Score Distribution of Treatment and Non-Treatment Groups

Finally, the results showing the contribution to the reduced bias in the assumptions of conditional independence and common support are presented by comparing the means between the treatment and control groups according to the variables of the model of participation in the Juntos Program (see Table 4). It is observed that all variables contribute significantly to the reduction of bias in the Propensity Score balance through the matching process. These variables allow for an effective balance between the treatment group and the counterfactual. Therefore, it is concluded that the participation model is suitable for estimating the labor impact of the Juntos Program, since it satisfies both the conditional independence condition and the common support condition.

**Table 4.** Balance After Matching for the Juntos Program

Variables identified	Average		% bias	t
	Participants (Treated)	Non-participants (Control)		
Poverty	0.381	0.372	1.9	0.51
Age of Head of Household	45.975	45.956	0.2	0.04
Education of head of household	4.572	4.604	-1.6	-0.53
UBN_3	0.1279	0.1225	1.9	0.47
UBN_4	0.0047	0.0050	-0.3	-0.13

Source: Prepared by the authors based on ENAHO - 2021

#### *Evaluation of the Labor Impact of the Juntos Social Program*

Table 5 below shows the estimated effect of the Juntos social program on the length of the working day. It is found that the value of the average treatment effect in the treated population (ATT) is -1.167, which is highly significant at the 1% level. This indicates that participation in the Juntos Social Program is associated with an average reduction of 1.167 hours per week in working hours. This suggests that the economic transfer provided by the program is not sufficient to replace the workday, which implies that beneficiaries must continue to participate in the labor field.

**Table 5.** Nearest Neighbor Method and ATT Estimation

Number of beneficiaries	Number of non-beneficiaries	ATT	Std. Err.
1687	19154	-1.167	0.447
t=-2.612		prob=0.10	

Source: Prepared by the authors based on ENAHO - 2021

The results shown in point 3.1 indicate that people belonging to poor households have a higher probability of participating in the Juntos Program. However, when the head of household is older and has more years of education, there is a decrease in the probability of participating in the program. In terms of unsatisfied basic needs, it is found that households lacking sanitation services have a higher probability of participating in the Juntos Program. On the contrary, when the household has children attending school, a lower probability of participation in the Juntos Social Program is evidenced. For his part, Pérez (2015) in his research on the impact of Public Policy of the Special Uprooted Program (PED) concludes that the beneficiaries of the Program and the controls are mostly poor and a portion of them are below the poverty value range. An evaluation of Costa Rica's Avancemos social program was also carried out; this program was evaluated taking into account the challenge faced by the country in the universalization of high-level secondary education. In addition, the available empirical evidence suggests an inverse relationship between education and poverty, which implies that an increase in years of schooling decreases the probability of being below the poverty line (Mata and Hernández, 2015)

On the other hand, in section 3.2, we estimate the effect of the Juntos social program on the length of the working day. It is found that the value of the Treatment (ATT) is -1.167, which is highly significant at a 1% level. This indicates that participation in the Juntos social program is associated with an average reduction of 1.167 hours per week in the workday. For their part, (Edmonds, 2006) and (Carvalho, 2012) analyze the case of South Africa and Brazil, respectively, these authors find that, in general, child labor hours are significantly reduced in poor families that have at least one older adult member receiving an unconditional transfer. Also (Sienaret, 2008) for South Africa corroborates the findings found by other authors, a cash transfer for older adults is associated with a drop in labor force participation, many beneficiaries opting to stop working. For the case of Peru (Torres and Salinas, 2016) evaluate the impact of the Pension 65 program on the hours worked in the main occupation of older adults and find a positive and heterogeneous impact for urban and rural areas, but not statistically robust.

According to Galiani and Gertler (2012) for the case of Mexico, they report that the “70 y más” program is aimed at adults over 70 years old living in rural areas, beneficiaries receive \$90 every two months, in addition to participating in workshops and social activities and estimate that the proportion of beneficiaries who are working was reduced by 18% as a result of being a beneficiary of the program. (Bando et al., 2014) also for Mexico analyze the effect Senior Adults program on the welfare of the beneficiary population and find that the generic depression scale decreases by 12% and the number of beneficiaries performing paid work decreases by 12% and consumption expenditure increased by 23%.

## Conclusions

Poverty, unsatisfied basic needs and education do influence the probability of participation in the Juntos Social Program in the year 2021. According to the results obtained, people belonging to households in poverty have a higher probability of participating in the Juntos Program. However, when the head of household is older and has more years of education, there is a decrease in the probability of participating in the program. In terms of unsatisfied basic needs, it is found that households lacking sanitation services have a higher probability of participating in the Juntos Program. On the contrary, when the household has children attending school, there is a lower probability of participation in the Juntos Social Program.

The effect of the Juntos Social Program on the length of the working day is negative for the year 2021. The value of the average treatment effect on the treated population (ATT) is found to be -1.167, which is highly



significant at the 1% level. This indicates that participation in the Juntos Social Program is associated with an average reduction of 1.167 hours per week in working hours. This suggests that the economic transfer provided by the program is not sufficient to replace the workday, which implies that beneficiaries must continue to participate in the labor field.

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