

STATE PROTECTION OF THE YOUTH LABOR MARKET IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN IN CONDITIONS OF UNCERTAINTY

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Abstract. *The development of the labour market of the Republic of Kazakhstan is described by instability among certain age groups, an increasing imbalance between the demand for labour and its supply. The current processes in the Republic of Kazakhstan prioritise the provision of youth employment both at the national and regional levels. Attracting young people to the sphere of productive labour is complicated by the imperfection of state regulation mechanisms. The scientific originality was determined by the fact that the growth of the labour force competitiveness and its adaptive potential necessitates advanced methodologies and techniques for assessing structural and dynamic shifts in the labour market, the integration of its individual segments into the existing socio-economic space,*

as well as the development of methodological foundations for forecasting these processes. The labour market is a system of social relations, including legal provisions and institutions that ensure the proper reproduction and effective use of labour, the quantity and quality of which are appropriately rewarded. The methodological framework of the study included general scientific and special methods of cognition. The use of systematic and integrated research approaches allowed determining the specific features of the youth labour market as an object of state regulation and justifying the need for the development of a comprehensive mechanism for its state regulation. The increased need for the state to implement measures aimed at preventing the growth of youth unemployment leads to revising and changing the methods of the youth labour market state regulation.

Keywords: *labour market, youth employment, living standard, social policy, economy.*

Introduction

In the scientific field, the concept of labour market is mainly considered as a system of social relations, within which employers and employees buy and sell labour. “The labour market is an area in which commodity-monetary and social relations regarding the buying and selling labour are developed and implemented” (Cheng et al., 2020). The labour market as a mechanism for the reproduction of labour potential, which is a combination of market, corporate, state, and interstate regulation (Koksharov et al., 2021; Zub and Shulika, 2018). Thus, the study defined the labour market as a system of social relations within buying and selling “labour force”. The authors of the study considered the labour market as a sphere of demand development for labour and its supply and also determined the possibility of its interpretation as a mechanism that ensures the coordination of prices and working conditions between employers and employees (Mokona et al., 2020; Kachynska et al., 2021). A distinctive feature of the labour market is that it covers not only the sphere of “labour force” turnover, but also the sphere of production where the employee works. The resulting relations affect important socio-economic issues, and therefore require special attention from the state (Shah et al., 2020; Polukarov et al., 2021).

In the scientific papers, the state regulation of the labour market is also defined differently (Yip et al., 2020). When considering the state regulation of the labour market, the scientist focused on the protection of hired labour, which includes the possibility of employment, retraining, professional skills realisation, and professional growth, professional skills recreation, earning money, ensuring safety, and labour protection (Sighaldehy et al., 2020). For such protection, the state must predominantly establish basic social guarantees by law, introduce a mechanism for their implementation and functions for providing social support (Wade-Bohleber et al., 2020). The population’s social protection is not a new concept, it has a historical background. The first social protection mechanisms were created in Germany at the end of the 19th century when the state allocated considerable funds for various social programmes for the population (Andersson, 2020). Quite significant are the studies on the development of youth policy, research on the issues of youth

employment and its primary employment (Karabchuk, 2020). However, despite the European orientation of the Republic of Kazakhstan and economic reform, the labour market and amendments in legislative acts, scientific research on ensuring effective state regulation does not keep up with the real needs and is not always satisfactory (Mamun et al., 2020). Therefore, a more substantial study of the youth labour market state regulation is now relevant in order to improve it in accordance with modern requirements (Paciello and Pioppi, 2020; Sukhonos et al., 2021).

When defining the youth labour market as an object of state regulation, it is necessary to refer to the interpretation of terms “state regulation” and “labour market” (Wesseling, 2021). State regulation of the economy is the influence of the state on the socio-economic development of the country (Assmann et al., 2020; Pankratova, 2021). State regulation is determined as a set of state measures aimed at managing economic entities in the area necessary to achieve the state authorities’ objectives and for management (Lindemann and Gangl, 2020). Such definitions indicate the importance of the complexity and unity of state regulation (Denny-Smith et al., 2021).

Definitions of state regulation have certain advantages and disadvantages, each of the definitions interprets the essence and purpose of state regulation differently (Minh et al., 2020). It is more precise to define state regulation as a set of tools, levers, and methods of influencing the processes and phenomena used by the authorities to streamline the system of socio-economic relations and its development (Offiong et al., 2020).

Materials and Methods

The methodological framework of the study included general scientific and special methods of cognition. The use of systematic and integrated research approaches allowed determining the specific features of the youth labour market as an object of state regulation and justifying the need for the development of a comprehensive mechanism for its state regulation (Salud-Payumo et al., 2020). The authors used the method of analysis and synthesis to identify the content of the terms “youth”, “youth labour market”, “state regulation mechanism of the youth labour market”. The authors also used the abstraction method to assess the state and trends in the development of the youth labour market. When summarising the above, the state regulation of the youth labour market should be considered as a system of means of state influence to ensure youth employment (Shibuya et al., 2020). In turn, the youth labour market regulation is a complex system of measures that cover not only the sphere of employment, but also all elements of the economic system of society.

When considering the youth labour market as an object of state regulation, it is necessary to determine the essence of the term “youth” and its inherent features (Unt and Täht, 2020). The analysis of the term “youth” demonstrates discrepancies in its interpretation by various scientists in terms of the age qualification and the features of this category. For example, an American sociologist refers to young people in the age category from 7-8 to 23 years, defines the boundaries depending on the gender, so for girls it is the age from 13 to 19, for boys – from 14 to 20 years. Definitions of “youth” differ not only

by age, but also by the general understanding of the concept of youth. Youth is defined as a special social group aged from 14 to 28 years, which, to be involved in productive social work during the initial social development, is legislatively provided with additional benefits and guarantees for employment, occupational training, and labour activity in comparison with other employees. Other scientists refer to youth as people under the age of 30 who have not started independent work and have not created their family. Thus, young people differ from other employees both in age and in the specific features of their status in labour relations; in the legal aspect, the lower age limit of young people coincides with the age from which employment is allowed (15-16 years), and the upper age limit is 27-30 years. By this time, the biological development of the organism, the establishment of professional interests, initial professional training for the majority of young people who start their career, and the term of the established additional guarantees for young workers end.

Results and Discussion

In total, the age limits of young people in the world range from 13 to 35 years. According to the UN General Assembly, young people are aged from 17 to 25 years. The UN defines youth as people in the period of life between the end of childhood and the beginning of labour activity. The World Health Organization considers a person to be young up to 44 years old. Sociologists in the United States determine the age of young people in the range from 12 to 24 years while dividing the period of youth into “adolescence” aged from 12 to 18 years and “young adults” – from 19 to 24 years. The ILO Convention “On the Minimum Age” sets the maximum age of a person who is hired, not lower than the age at the end of compulsory school education, but not less than 15 years. In Europe as a whole, people from 15 to 30 years old are considered to be youth. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, according to the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On National Youth Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan”, young people are citizens aged from 14 to 35 years.

The “youth” category includes a socio-demographic group that is in a state of social maturity and is going through a period of adaptation to the surrounding world and future changes. During this period, a person goes through an important stage of family and social socialisation, the personality development, learning, assimilation of values, norms, attitudes, patterns of behaviour adopted in this society. Youth is the future potential of the state, therefore, the primary task of the state is to provide support and assistance to young people in their professional development. Young people are less competitive in the labour market, so they need additional protection during their professional development. An important component of state social support is the existing unemployment benefit and compensation for young people. The state guarantees the payment to the unemployed, even during periods of their temporary disability. The state also pays scholarships during the training period, as well as during retraining in employment services. Young people are given the opportunity to take part in paid community service. They can also expect to be reimbursed for expenses related to voluntary relocation at the request of the employment service.

Proceeding from the fact that young people are one of the most considerable components of the national labour market, its environment depends on development and establishment of youth. A problematic aspect of the effective functioning of the youth labour market is the imbalance between the supply of labour and the demand for it. The labour market is developed on a national scale under the influence of economic, political, social, demographic, territorial, sectoral, and other factors, acquiring the characteristics of a single national market. In general, the national youth labour market consists of similar markets that are developed at the regional level. Regional youth labour markets are described by a specific development orientation of productive forces and specialisation of the region. Studying the youth labour market of the Atyrau region, the authors of the paper identified several factors that affect its functioning and should be considered when developing the state regulation mechanism for the youth labour market (Table 1).

Table 1. Influencing factors on the youth labour market in the Atyrau region

Factors	Inherent features
Demographics	The number of the working-age population; a large proportion of young people located in the region; the age structure of the population dominated by young people; population migration from the region and from other regions; the geographical location along with less developed regions
Economic	Developed economy; diversified industrial sphere; investment attractiveness of the region; favourable reputation of the region; favourable business environment; the presence of underdeveloped business areas
Social and labour	Availability of qualified labour force; availability of cheap labour; developed infrastructure; favourable living conditions in the region
Educational	Developed educational sphere; high level of professional education; a considerable number of educational institutions (schools, vocational schools, and universities)
Institutional	A developed system of local authorities; availability of regional employment centres; availability of the centre for occupational and technical education of the state employment service; the developed structure of public organisations, namely youth organisations

They are divided into five groups according to demographic, economic, socio-labour, educational, and institutional features. Each group of factors has its impact on the state and development of the youth labour market in the Atyrau region. In particular, considering the population of the Atyrau region (over 600 thousand people) and the proportion of young people in the age structure of the population (35%), a high level of competition in the labour market among young people is determined. Economic factors have a great influence on the regional youth labour market. The economic development of the region, investment attractiveness, additional business opportunities in the region determine the general and additional need for qualified labour. The education level of the population has an extremely large impact on the state of the regional youth labour market. The developed infrastructure affects the attractiveness of the region, and therefore affects the population. The Atyrau region is an industrial region of the Republic of Kazakhstan and is described by a capacious labour market, developed infrastructure, which contributes to the family creation, the birth of children, attracts young people.

Institutional factors generally have a positive impact on the development of the youth labour market in the Atyrau region. Annually, local authorities create and implement new programmes and plans to promote youth employment. The Atyrau Employment Service has enough methods and measures to ensure the employment of young people. To summarise, the authors can state that the factors that affect the labour market of young people in the Atyrau region have both positive and negative effects. The regional labour market has its distinctive features in accordance with the specifics of the region. One of the important subsystems of the labour market is the regional youth labour market. At the regional level, the youth labour market covers a separate category of people whose establishment and development are influenced by the inherent features of a certain region.

Young people can be divided into groups according to different characteristics. By age: from 14 to 18 years – underage youth; from 18 to 25 years – students receiving professional education; from 25 to 30 years – working youth; from 30 to 35 years – socially mature youth. Depending on the age, young people undergo various stages of development and establishment in the labour market. Reaching the age of 14, young people are in a state of professional knowledge development and self-determination, receive secondary, general, or special education. Upon reaching the age of majority (18 years), young people mainly study in vocational schools or higher education institutions. People aged 25-30 years strive for self-development, are vigorously involved in labour activities, are interested in the prospects of work and career growth. Socially mature young people aged 30-35 years are mainly concerned about family and household issues, but have already developed principles and certain positions, strive for prosperity and stability.

The difficulties and obstacles that young people face during their job search prevent them from realising their labour potential, regardless of what status they are in. The economically active population consists of young people who provide the supply of labour in the labour market. The economically active youth include the officially employed and the unemployed. The economically inactive population are the people who cannot be qualified as “employed” or “unemployed”. This category includes unemployed youth who belong to the following social groups: schoolchildren, students of vocational schools, university students, military personnel, women on maternity leave, young people who do not work and do not have the status of an unemployed person. In search of a first job, young people face the issue of employers’ refusal. The most common argument for refusing to provide the first job is the lack of work experience.

The employment service can organise assistance to employment and youth employment in several areas: 1) youth education; 2) support for youth education; 3) changing the procedure for recruiting young people for open job opportunities; 4) quotas for young people; 5) development of entrepreneurial activity; 6) attracting young people to paid community service; 7) organisation of job fairs; 8) creation of special youth organisations; 9) creation of a legislative framework on youth policy. The competitive advantages of young people in the labour market comprise three components: demographic, educational and professional, and personal and social.

In modern conditions, the labour market cannot ensure the full and effective use of the labour force of young people. Therefore, due to lack of competitiveness, the demand

for young labour among employers is insignificant, and due to the low level of wages, a considerable part of young people become unemployed or are employed in the shadow sector of the economy. Shadow employment of young people is mainly carried out in the trade areas or in casual earnings from private individuals. In modern conditions, the number of young people forced to leave the official labour market for the shadow one is gradually increasing. The pension reform may increase the motivation of young people for official employment. The complexity of the self-fulfilment of young people in the labour market is conditioned by certain features of their social status and labour behaviour. Young people are prevented from finding a job by a high educational level, which is combined with the demand for high wages, increased expectations regarding employment, the prestige of the place of work and working conditions, the stability of economic and social ties. Currently, there is a growing trend in the number of unemployed young people with higher education. This leads to the loss of the qualifications of young specialists.

The problem of youth unemployment leads to a decrease in the standard of living, the spread of so-called “dependence” by other family members, shadow employment, an increase in labour migration and generally in the criminal situation. A number of issues of the youth labour market are associated with the presence of such categories of young people in it: 1) dismissed from military service or alternative service; 2) young people under the age of 19 – distinguished by the lack of professional education; 3) representatives who did not use the right to occupy the first workplace at the time. These categories of young people cannot compete with the experienced labour force of older generations, which results in a considerable part of young people entering the unregulated labour market. The career guidance of youth contributes to the conscientious professional choice, shortens the distance between the profession in demand and the youth, provides interaction and a combination of the individual’s interests and the needs of the employer.

To summarise, the authors noted that young people are a specific group, differing in the level of education and professional training, value orientations, social and economic activity. Therefore, when developing a state regulation mechanism for the youth labour market, it is necessary to consider the inherent features of various age groups of young people and factors influencing the youth labour market in the region. The priority areas of state regulation should be professional orientation, education, and employment of young people. State regulation of the youth labour market is a complex mechanism that affects the comprehensive development and establishment of young people, as well as the socio-economic state of the country’s economy in general. The mechanism of state regulation of the youth labour market includes a set of elements used by the state to influence the object of regulation.

Considering the distinctive and essential features of the mechanisms that the state uses to exercise regulatory influence on the youth labour market, it is important, from the standpoint of methodology, to define the term “mechanism of state regulation”. In the scientific literature, along with the term “mechanism of state regulation”, the term “mechanism of state administration” is quite often found, the definitions of which

are quite difficult to distinguish. When interpreting the essence of the mechanism of state administration, it is noted that this concept should be considered as the consistent administration performed by public authorities using appropriate methods and means, which is based on the fundamental principles of administration and is aimed at achieving the set objective. The literature provides a definition of the term “the mechanism of state regulation”, which is very similar to the definition of the mechanism of state administration. This term means the course of actions of the regulation subject, based on the general functions and principles, providing with the help of forms, methods, and means the effective functioning of the state regulation system to achieve a certain goal and resolve contradictions.

According to the authors of this study, the opinion of other authors is debatable, as they believe that the mechanism of state regulation is a set of bodies and institutions that manage the society, or methods and tools that are used to perform actions to ensure the operation of the system. Upon revealing the essence of the mechanism of state regulation, it is necessary to proceed from the fact that regulation (Latin *regulare* – subordination) is a process, which means that the mechanism of state regulation is the means of its implementation. Therefore, a set of bodies and institutions or tools and methods is not a mechanism. Bodies and institutions (meaning state ones) are the subjects of regulation, and tools and methods are the means with which the regulatory process is performed. In self-regulating systems, such as the market, the feedback mechanism (the reverse influence of the object on external stimuli) streamlines the internal structure, information, and energy passing through the system.

Proceeding from the above, the state regulation mechanism for the youth labour market is a targeted influence of the state on the participants of social and labour relations on the development and placement of youth labour resources using principles, functions, forms, methods, and tools that ensure the socio-economic development of youth and promote its employment. Based on the fact that the state regulation of the youth labour market is a single integrated system, and the functioning mechanism of this system should also be unified. Thus, it is necessary to consider an integral state regulation mechanism, which includes a number of structural elements. The purpose of the state regulation of youth labour market is the development and allocation of youth labour resources, promoting their self-development and employment. In general, the youth labour market performs several functions, namely, mediation, informational, stimulating, organisational and economic, social.

Conclusions

1. The mechanism of state regulation of the youth labour market should functionally ensure the performance, in particular, of the following functions:
 - organisational – makes provision for the combination of efforts of interested parties for the youth's employment, planning certain activities and monitoring their implementation;

- legal – legislative regulation of youth employment issues and guaranteeing employment at the first workplace, regulatory support for the youth's protection in the labour market;
 - economic – covers financial support for measures to promote youth employment, encouraging youth to develop entrepreneurship and self-employment, encouraging employers to hire youth, providing tax benefits, applying financial sanctions for refusing to hire young people.
2. In the course of the study, the authors considered the concept of social protection of citizens. The study determined that social protection should provide citizens with assistance in meeting basic needs, for example, in food and housing. The study analysed the need for young people's social protection since the level and growth rates of youth unemployment are very high.
 3. An important component of state social support is the existing unemployment benefit and compensation for young people. Citizens who have registered with the employment service have the right to be consulted on the choice of the activity field, other employment issues, as well as occupational training. The authors identified the main areas of social assistance, such as youth education, youth training support, changing the procedure for recruiting young people for open vacancies, quotas for young people, developing entrepreneurship, attracting young people to paid community service, organising job fairs, creating special youth organisations, creating a legislative framework on youth policy.
 4. The components of the state regulation mechanism of the youth labour market are the subjects and objects of state regulation, principles, priorities, criteria, methods, means, and tools of regulation. All the components of this mechanism are multilevel, that is, they have central, regional, and basic levels. Therefore, the effectiveness of the state regulation mechanism of the youth labour market directly depends on the coordination of action at all levels of government.

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