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**Youth employment of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the conditions of modern  
global challenges: priorities and mechanisms**

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## **NORMATIVE REFERENCES**

This thesis makes use of the following regulatory legal documents:

- President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's State of the Nation Address "Economic course of a Just Kazakhstan", dated 01.09.2023;
- President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's State of the Nation Address "A Fair State. One nation. Prosperous society", dated 01.09.2022;
- Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On State Youth Policy”, which defines youth as individuals aged 15 to 35 years dated January 1, 2023; “On amendments and additions to certain legislative Acts of Republic of Kazakhstan on State Youth policy and Social Security”, No.168-VII, December 26, 2022 (;
- The Social Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, No. 224-VII, dated April 20, 2023;
- Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "About education": adopted on July 27, 2007 No. 319-III ZRK (with amendments and additions as of 15.03.2025);
- The Concept of Labor Market Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2024-2029, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No.1050, dated November 29, 2023;
- National Development Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2029, approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 611, dated July 30, 2024.

## SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

SDG	The Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
YouthPOL	Youth Employment Policies
ILO	International Labor Organization
US	United States
IT	Information Technology
OHPO	Chotnicze Hufce Pracy
EU	European Union
SMEs	Medium and Small Enterprises
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
USA	United States of America
CV	Curriculum Vitae
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
OECD	The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
BNS of the ASPR	Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan
OHPE	Organizations of higher and (or) postgraduate education
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
R&D	Research and Development
AI	Artificial Intelligent
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
KazNU	Al-Farabi Kazakh National University
HTTL	Hospitality, Tourism, Leisure, and Travel
RQ	Research Question
WOM	Word of Mouth
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Modelling
CB-SEM	Covariance-based structural equation modelling
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
CR	Composite Reliability
AVE	The Average Variance Extracted
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait Correlations Technique
DV	Discriminant Validity
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
VET	Vocational Education and Training
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
MCI	Monthly calculation index
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

## INTRODUCTION

**Relevance of the research topic.** Under the conditions of globalization, the sphere of socio-labor relations is undergoing significant transformations that require the modernization of mechanisms for regulating labor processes. The reform of socio-labor ties in the context of the introduction of new forms of employment represents a contradictory process, accompanied by the need to seek new approaches to labor resource management, strengthen the system of social protection for workers, and adapt institutional structures to the real needs of the modern labor market. In these circumstances, young people possessing limited work experience and reduced competitiveness often find themselves in a group of structurally unemployed or partially employed individuals. In international practice, youth employment—a vulnerable yet strategically important segment of the working-age population—receives priority attention. In particular, developed countries have achieved high levels of youth engagement in the labor market through the implementation of dual education programs and the establishment of strong links between the training system and the actual needs of the economy[1,2].

Nevertheless, even in highly developed economies, problems persist regarding adapting the younger generation to changing working conditions, which confirms the necessity of continuously improving employment policies in response to new challenges. The professional fulfillment of youth, their successful integration into the labor market, and active participation in economic processes directly affect the current state of employment and the long-term prospects for the sustainable development of the national economy.

Against the global trends outlined above, Kazakhstan is also facing several acute challenges in youth employment. According to 2023 data from the Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the number of young people in 2023 accounted for about 25% of the country's total population, which underscores the importance of creating a stable and effective system to promote their employment and professional fulfillment [3]. The current situation is mainly due to a structural mismatch between the training system and the actual demands of the labor market, as well as the underdevelopment of mechanisms for supporting the employment of young specialists.

In recent years, the country has adopted and implemented strategic government documents and targeted programs to form an effective youth employment policy. Among the most significant initiatives are the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On State Youth Policy,” the State Program for the Development of Productive Employment and Mass Entrepreneurship “Enbek” for 2017–2021, the National Project for Entrepreneurship Development for 2021–2025, the Concept for Labor Market Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2024–2029, as well as the “Youth Practice” program, focused on acquiring initial professional experience by graduates of educational institutions. Moreover, the significance of the present research is further enhanced in light of the priorities for comprehensive support of youth and employment development stated in the Address of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan,

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, to the people of the country, titled “A Fair Kazakhstan: Rule of Law, Economic Growth, and Public Optimism,” dated September 2, 2024, which emphasizes the task of building youth employment policy based on the real needs of the labor market and by the goals of the new economic course of the country [4].

Given the circumstances mentioned above, the necessity of a comprehensive investigation and in-depth development of the theoretical and methodological aspects of youth employment in the context of modern global challenges becomes particularly relevant. A thorough scientific understanding of the processes of professional fulfillment of the younger generation is required, along with the development of practical approaches to state support and the formation of theoretical and methodological foundations ensuring coordinated interaction between the system of professional training and the current demands of the labor market. Referring to international experience in youth employment and considering the socioeconomic characteristics of different countries, several effective practices and mechanisms can be identified that are of interest for adaptation and application in Kazakhstan. Their analysis and comparative assessment justify the appropriateness of implementing relevant measures, considering the national context and sustainable development priorities.

Thus, the relevance of this dissertation research is beyond doubt.

**The degree of problem development.** The issue of youth employment is considered one of the key topics in socio-economic sciences, having received broad coverage in the works of both classical and contemporary researchers. Within the framework of classical economic theory, the issues of employment, unemployment levels, and the influence of wages on the demand and supply of labor formed the basis of the conceptual constructions of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Jean-Baptiste Say, Alfred Marshall, Arthur C. Pigou, George Stigler, and other economists who laid the foundations for the analysis of labor resources under conditions of market self-regulation [5–10]. Representatives of the Keynesian school, including John Maynard Keynes, emphasized the limited capacity of the market for self-regulation and the necessity of state intervention in the sphere of employment. Within the framework of the neoclassical synthesis, the ideas of Keynesians and classical economists were combined in the works of Paul Samuelson, John Hicks, Robert Solow, Lawrence Klein, and others, which contributed to the formation of a balanced approach to labor market regulation taking into account macroeconomic variables [11,12].

A significant contribution to the formation of theoretical approaches to institutional and social aspects of employment was made by Thorstein Veblen, John Kenneth Galbraith, Friedrich von Hayek, Gunnar Myrdal, and Douglass North, who focused on the role of social institutions, structural shifts, norms and constraints in the labor market, as well as the impact of political and economic factors on labor activity and inequality [13, 14–15]. At the same time, Karl Marx presented a comprehensive analysis of the causes of unemployment, its forms (frictional, stagnant, hidden), and its consequences for the dynamics of real wages, poverty levels, and the reproduction processes of the labor force [16].

Contemporary research focuses both on macroeconomic determinants of youth employment, including the impact of monetary policy, inflation levels, and labor market structure (Milton Friedman, Stanley Fischer, Robert Hall, and others) [17,18,19,20], and on the functioning specifics of individual sectors and socio-demographic groups, particularly the tourism and hospitality sector. Foreign authors such as Fajian Liu, Andreas Walmsley, Ady Milman, David Farrugia, and others conduct meta-analyses and empirical studies of graduate employment factors, emphasizing aspects such as professional identity, self-assessment, working conditions, and career expectations [21–26].

Kazakhstani scholars, including Aigul Bekenova, Maiya Gazizova, Zhibek Hussainova, and others, devote significant attention to youth unemployment, institutional and structural constraints, as well as the mismatch between the content of educational programs and the actual needs of the labor market [27–30]. Issues of social perception of youth employment, staff shortages in the tourism sector, and the role of educational initiatives in enhancing the attractiveness of professional fulfillment are examined in the works of domestic researchers and specialized analytical materials [31–37].

Significant attention in the scientific literature is given to the international experience of promoting youth employment. The analysis of governmental and global programs such as “Youth Guarantee” (Poland), “Jóvenes a la obra” (Peru), the guaranteed employment system in the European Union countries, dual education models in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, as well as comprehensive state support measures in Asian countries (South Korea, China, Japan) is presented in the works of Elena Polishchuk, experts from the International Labour Organization, and researchers from national EU agencies [38–43]. The listed studies confirm the effectiveness of institutional tools to reduce youth unemployment, develop professional skills, enhance labor market flexibility, and support entrepreneurship among the young population.

In parallel, a research direction related to the digital transformation of the labor market is developing. The influence of digital platforms, flexible forms of employment, and the phenomenon of the gig economy on the transformation of youth employment models are considered in the works of Mark Graham, Vili Lehdonvirta, Evgenia Gurova, and others [44]. These works highlight both the opportunities and risks of digitalization: employment instability, insufficient social protection, growth of informal employment, and difficulties in career planning in a digital environment, which is particularly relevant for young professionals and graduates.

However, despite the accumulated theoretical and empirical material, there is a limited integration of these directions into a unified conceptual field aimed at solving applied problems in the context of Kazakhstan. In particular, the relationship between the structural characteristics of regional labor markets, systems of vocational education, and measures of active employment policy in the context of modern socio-economic challenges remains insufficiently revealed. Moreover, reproducible models for assessing the effectiveness of state support for youth employment, considering the specifics of such sectors as tourism, the creative economy, and digital services, are lacking.

Thus, a comprehensive theoretical and methodological approach to the study of youth employment is needed, combining classical economic principles, institutional aspects, international practices, and modern digital transformations while considering the Republic of Kazakhstan's national and regional characteristics.

**Research aim and objectives.** This dissertation aims to develop theoretical and methodological approaches for identifying key priorities and improving the mechanisms of youth employment regulation in Kazakhstan under the conditions of modern global challenges.

In accordance with the aim of the study, the following main objectives are proposed:

- to explore theoretical approaches to youth employment within the frameworks of classical, Keynesian, neoclassical, institutional, and digital economic thought;
- to summarize the international experience in promoting youth employment, including EU, Asian, and Latin American programs, as well as dual education models;
- to develop a conceptual model for regulating youth employment under global challenges and socio-economic transformation;
- to analyze the current state of youth employment in Kazakhstan, taking into account territorial specifics and the dynamics of regional labor markets;
- to identify the main problems and barriers to youth employment, including structural, institutional, and educational constraints;
- to assess the significance of employer attractiveness as a factor facilitating the employment of young specialists in Kazakhstan;
- to determine priority directions of state policy in the field of youth employment, considering the long-term objectives of sustainable development and propose effective mechanisms for implementing a new youth employment policy, including digital tools, business partnerships, and vocational education reform;
- to prove effective strategies for increasing the attractiveness of employers in the context of changes in the labor market.

**Subject of the research.** Socio-economic processes of youth employment in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the conditions of modern global challenges.

**Object of the research.** Working-age youth in the labor market of Kazakhstan.

**Research methods.** The theoretical and methodological foundation of the study is based on contemporary scientific approaches to the analysis of youth employment and employer attractiveness, as well as the use of qualitative and quantitative methods. This allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the factors determining youth perception of employer attractiveness in Kazakhstan, considering digitalization processes and the sectoral specifics of the HTTL sector (hospitality, travel, tourism, and leisure). The following methods were employed in the study:

- survey via Webropol platform and use of services of professional marketing company on data collection (respondents' answers were assessed on a five-point Likert scale);
- exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using Principal Axis Factoring with Promax rotation, conducted via SPSS software (version 23.0);



- common Method Bias testing, including Harman’s single-factor test and full collinearity assessment (Full Collinearity VIFs);
- confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with the calculation of Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE);
- Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using WarpPLS 7.0 software (two-stage model assessment and determination of  $R^2$  coefficients);
- regression diagnostics, including checks for multicollinearity (VIF), heteroskedasticity (using LOESS), and outlier exclusion based on Mahalanobis distance.

The application of PLS-SEM made it possible to conduct structural modeling based on survey data from youth employed in the HTTL sector and to identify stable relationships between corporate identity, recruitment strategies, loyalty, and employer attractiveness. The methodology ensured reliable hypothesis testing and scale validity and enabled the assessment of key factors influencing young employees’ intentions to remain with the company and to form a positive perception of the organization.

**Scientific novelty.** The study contributes to developing theoretical and methodological foundations for analyzing youth employment by offering a conceptual rethinking of the factors influencing youth employment in digital transformation and evolving institutional conditions. The scientific novelty of the research is as follows:

- based on the study of foreign and domestic works of scientists, the author has clarified the concept of “effective youth employment”;
- the conceptual model of regulation of youth employment in the conditions of global challenges and socio-economic transformation was developed;
- the main problems and barriers of youth employment were revealed, including dysfunctional effects of interaction between Kazakhstan's education system and the national labor market in priority sectors of the economy, including structural, institutional and educational limitations;
- a model for assessing employer attractiveness in the HTTL sector has been developed, taking into account the influence of corporate identity factors, recruitment strategies, and informal communication channels (WOM) on youth motivation for employment and retention;
- the role of a company’s digital reputation as a determinant of job commitment and informal brand promotion among youth has been empirically confirmed, enabling the reconsidering of HR approaches within the digital economy;
- priority directions of the state policy in the field of youth employment are defined taking into account long-term tasks of sustainable development and technological challenges;
- mechanisms of realization of the new youth employment policy, including digital tools, partnership with business and reform of vocational education were developed.

### **Conclusions to be defended.**

- author's interpretation of the economic category “effective youth employment” as employment that allows young professionals to provide a decent income for

realization of professional and intellectual potential acquired in the process of training, growth and improvement;

- a conceptual model of youth employment, including a set of institutional, economic and social mechanisms for adapting the youth labor market to internal and external transformations;

- a model for assessing employer attractiveness in the HTTL sector, which takes into account the influence of factors of corporate identity, hiring strategies and informal communication channels (WOM) on the motivation of young people for employment and retention to promote the employment of young professionals in Kazakhstan;

- a set of priorities and mechanisms aimed at ensuring sustainable and productive youth employment, including modernization of the vocational education system, institutionalization of platform employment, development of digital and professional competencies, and formation of flexible employment models based on decent work principles;

- “Career constructor” as a fundamental tool for professional development of graduates of vocational and higher education institutions in the conditions of labor market transformation.

**Theoretical significance of the research results.** The research's theoretical significance lies in supplementing and expanding existing scientific literature on developing youth employment under conditions of global transformations in the socio-economic environment. The dissertation presents new scientific provisions that reveal the specifics of youth employment in the context of global digitalization, labor market instability, and growing sustainable development challenges. The results complement existing employment theory by broadening the understanding of mechanisms for engaging youth in productive economic activity. The theoretical conclusions and approaches presented in the study may be used in the educational process for training specialists in the fields of “Economics” and “Management” at universities in the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as in the study of disciplines related to the labor market, employment, and public economic policy.

**Practical significance of the research results.** The research's practical significance lies in the fact that the conducted economic analysis, obtained results, and conclusions can be used in the development and adjustment of state youth employment policy, the formation of socio-economic programs in the field of labor, and forecasting labor market needs in the context of global challenges. The formulated key priorities and mechanisms can be applied in developing employment strategies, job promotion programs, and educational trajectories aimed at increasing the labor activity of the younger generation.

The developed system of decent employment principles and the career modeling toolkit are applicable in forming regional and sectoral employment strategies adapted to the needs of youth and the demands of the digital labor market. The proposed measures can be integrated into implementing state programs, including projects on human capital development, youth entrepreneurship promotion, and the formation of flexible forms of employment. In addition, the research results can serve as a foundation for improving the mechanisms of interaction between the state, business,

and the education system to reduce the structural mismatch between professional training and the actual needs of the economy. The conclusions and proposed mechanisms can be used in developing regulatory legal acts in the field of employment regulation, especially in the context of the institutionalization of platform-based and digital forms of labor.

**Approbation of the research results.** The results of the main provisions of the study have been approved: Dissertation work was prepared in the framework of realization and participation in grant projects:

-AP09260584 “Restructuring of employment of the population of Kazakhstan in conditions of socio-economic tension” (2021-2023);

- AP23488981 “Transformation of labor resources of Kazakhstan against the background of technological challenges: new quality, model, scenarios” (2024-2026).

**Publications.** The main results of the dissertation work have been published in 17 scientific papers. Of these, seven articles have been published in the collections of scientific international practical conferences (2 - foreign, 5 - Kazakhstani), eight articles in publications recommended by the CQASHE of Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the of the Republic of Kazakhstan, two articles in rating journals from the list of Scopus databases (percentile over 35) and Web of Science.

**Structure and Scope of the Dissertation.** The dissertation structure is presented by a list of notations and abbreviations, introduction, three sections, conclusion, list of sources used and appendix. The volume of the dissertation work is 146 pages, which include 26 tables, 12 figures and 148 sources.

# **1 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

## **1.1 Theoretical approaches to youth employment**

The efficiency of economic systems is influenced by the state and dynamics of the labor market as well as by the levels of employment and unemployment. In economic thought the classical foundation for the study of labor and employment was laid by Adam Smith and further developed by D. Ricardo, D. Mill A., Marshall A., Pigou, and others who adhered to the labor value theory and the concept of absolute employment. Smith analyzed the relationship between employment, unemployment and wages [5]. Ricardo considered how labor demand depends on productivity and the market value of the final product [6]. Say emphasized that excessive government interference in employment through direct aid to the unemployed and artificially high wages may contribute to widespread joblessness. In his view government policy should focus on job creation and industrial development [7]. Marshall introduced key ideas about market value entrepreneurship and consumer behavior [8]. Pigou identified causal links between unemployment rates, wage levels, occupational distribution, and labor demand [9]. Stigler demonstrated how labor outflows affect wage growth and how increased labor supply leads to wage declines [10].

J. Perry, M. Feldstein, R. Hall, D. Gilder, A. Laffer, P. Heine, and other recent members of the modern school of classical economics hold the principle of supply and self-regulation of employment and unemployment by the market. Based on this theoretical stance, labor cost is considered the main mechanism for regulating the ratio of demand and supply in the labor market, ensuring their sustainable balance [18]. “Keynesian” approach to the identification of employment is as outlined next: “the inability to ensure full employment, income inequality is considered to be a significant flaw in the economy, the state is the main stimulator of employment; voluntary and involuntary unemployment is recognized; the methods of state regulation of the job market and occupancy include the stimulation of effective demand, monetary, tax, and other instruments” [11].

Representatives of the monetarist school and the traditional concept of employment (M. Friedman, S. Fischer, et al.) adhered to the neoclassical approach to the issues of state regulation of the job market and occupancy with the use of such monetary policy instruments as the discount interest rate, the size of the required reserves of commercial banks in the accounts of the Central Bank “for very limited periods of time”, opposing side of the tax and fiscal intervention policy were of the opinion that the levels of 4% to 5% rate of unemployment should be treated as “normal” because of structural shifts in the job market, including contraction of a variety of occupational fields, inadequate levels of labor qualification, as well as the specific nature of rotational work migration [19, 20].

A representative of the new Austrian school, F. Hayek, noted that excessive state regulation of employment leads to short-term employment. He assigned the government's role in maintaining employment to increase workforce mobility [15].

D. Hicks, P. Samuelson et al. are representatives of the school of neoclassical synthesis propose to ensure the balanced development of the labor market by using both classical and Keynesian methods of state regulation, as well as the method for analysis of unemployment of P. Samuelson and the relationship between the dynamics of employment and wages [12]. The causes of unemployment, the forms of unemployment (fluid, stagnant, hidden), the influence of capital accumulation and the growth of unemployment on the decline in real wages, and poverty were described in the theory of employment and unemployment by K. Marx in the work “Capital” [16]. Supporters of the concept of institutionalism (J. Galbraith, T. Veblen et al.) emphasize the importance of social institutions, the adoption of social programs, and the provision of social guarantees in ensuring employment as a priority and consider structural imbalance as the cause of unemployment [14, 15].

Practical models of the labor market are distinguished in modern economic science. In particular, the liberal model of labor market development (USA) (minimal state regulation of economic processes at the micro level, stimulation of entrepreneurship, partnerships) and the socially oriented model (Sweden, Austria, Germany, Japan) involves state regulation of employment at the micro and macro levels, stimulation of labor mobility, and the use of a flexible employment mechanism for the unemployed, the provision of unemployment benefits. Academic research provides many foreign and local studies devoted to the attractiveness of tourism and hospitality employers for youth and the specifics of the job market functioning in this area of the country. So, within the framework of their study, the Chinese scholars Fajian Liu, Qing He, and Nan Wu performed a recent meta-analysis of 34 research papers to reveal the selection of factors affecting the aspirations of students enrolled in education in the field of hotel and tourism administration. The results indicated that the most significant effect is related to social identity and self-perception, which are closely supported by the educational process and workplace conditions [21].

The mentioned works constitute an essential source of relevant empirical evidence that promotes a deeper insight into the determinants of young people's labor activity in the hotel and tourism sector and helps to consider the features of the country's labor market. A particular attention to the employment of younger people in tourism and hospitality are paid in the studies of such researchers as Andreas Walmsley [22], David Farrugia, Julia Coffey, Rosalind Gill, Megan Sharp, Steven Threadgold [23], Ady Milman [24], Mokhlesur Rahman [25], Adriana Burlea-Schiopoiu, Mara Del Baldo and Samuel Oldowu [26]. They analyzed good and bad points of the employment of young specialists, highlighting the impact of cultural, institutional, social, and economic aspects on the development of their work experience in this area.

A study by Dilrabo Jonbekova, Tatyana Kim, Sulushash Kerimkulova, Alan Ruby, and Jason Sparks explored the job placement of graduates of government scholarship schemes in Kazakhstan's STEM fields. Based on 45 semi-structured round interviews, it has been revealed that despite having definite position advantages in the job market, many students face various challenges. These challenges are caused by complex social, economic, and cultural aspects, inter-generational distinctions, and controversies arising in fellowship programs' legal and regulatory contexts [28].

In the scientific literature, there is also research aimed at examining the problems of unemployment and job placement among the younger population in the country. The work of such authors as Bekenova A. [27], Gazizova M.R., Husainova J.S., Vechkinzova E.A., Sarzhanov D.K. [29], Zhibek Hussainova, Maya Gazizova, Gulzhan Abuova, Zhanibek Zhartai, Gulnur Rayhanova [30], Dosekeeva G.Zh. [31], Sarsenova A.B. [45], etc., have been focusing on significant issues in the field of employment of young people and analyze the institutional, structural, and individual obstacles that limit the access of young people to a steady and effective occupation.

The above publications help form a holistic scientific understanding of the multifaceted employment issues of young people, including in the tourism and hotel sectors. These research center on young professionals' professional skills, attitudes to work, and the development prospects of youth business as an opportunity for professional implementation. In the published on the portal “Qualitative Kazakhstan” by a senior expert of the Kazakhstan Institute of Economic Research Centre, Nazigul Zhanakova pointed out the persistent low proportion of tourism in terms of global tourist flow, one of the reasons for this, in her view, is the lack of staff training in the travel industry. The author underlines that the current training curricula for specialties in tourism do not fully reflect the actual requirements of the branch, which, in turn, lowers the level of appeal of young specialists to attract prospective applicants and weakens the human resource potential of the sector [32].

Further evidence of the urgency of this issue is found in the journal materials of the ANCOR Kazakhstan staffing agency, which discusses the findings of the study of the perception of the employer brand The Talents. The study shows that many young people in Kazakhstan are oriented towards self-actualization, looking at alternative working methods, including opening their businesses or opting for a self-employed job. These findings suggest the necessity of an active employer positioning in the field of tourism and hotel industry, including by way of promoting an effective HR brand and creation of a career development environment, which could help to retain the youth specialists and raise their motivation to work in this industry [33].

Special attention should be drawn to educational institutions' efforts to improve the travel industry's attractiveness and prestige for young professionals. In part, Shokan Ualikhanov University in Kokshetau has an educational study program jointly developed with Woosong University (South Korea). This program involves two diplomas and is based on training highly prepared professionals for the travel and hospitality fields [34]. Therefore, existing studies and efforts show the demand for updated educational programs in compliance with market needs, to consider the aspirations of the younger population for self-realization, and to apply strategies for developing an attractive model of occupancy and professional upgrading in the travel and hospitality fields.

Hence, reviewing key conceptual interpretations of the term “population employment” allows to determine the great diversity in academic explanations, which is typical for many research institutions. This diversity is caused by the nature of an economy's socio-economic growth and reflects the evolution of research thinking in this sphere. The review also sets the frame for further critical estimation of the available

determinations, with due account of contemporary academic findings and practical realities.

As a social and economic concept, employment is a group of labor relations emerging in the job market and representing the essence, rules, and ways of employment of able-bodied people in public production in terms of meeting both private and public needs that provide for obtaining income, which is a condition for the reproduction of the population. Table 1 presents various interpretations of the concept of “employment” proposed by foreign and domestic authors.

Table 1 – Definitions of the concept of “employment”

No.	Author	Definition
1	B.D. Breyev [46]	Providing jobs as a means of livelihood
2	A.A. Nikiforova [47]	The activity of the able-bodied population to create a social product or national income
3	V.V. Radayev [48]	Balance of supply and demand of the able-bodied population in the labor market
4	E.R. Sarukhanov[49]	The social and economic interaction between subjects of working practice in the context of material wealth formation
5	V.S. Bulanov [50]	Ensuring a decent income, health, educational and professional level
6	E.F. Borisov [51]	The result of equilibrium in the job market, providing employees with appropriate jobs
7	N. Gausner, V.N. et al. [52,53]	The need of the population to participate in social production and the formation of a productive force
8	I.S. Maslova [54]	A set of knowledge, interests, behavior of people - representatives of the social and economic block of the development of society and the economic system
9	Raizberg B.A. [55]	The economically relevant income-producing, salary- or profit seeking activities of the public, such as the variety of jobs such as education, defense practice, household, caring for children and the aged, as well as the professional activities conducted by workers, the self-employed, businesspeople, private entrepreneurs, agricultural workers and members of the army
11	M.K. Meldakhanova [56]	Work activity of each person to cover their needs, both individual and societal, resulting in income from work, and providing the balance in quantity and quality between the balance that exists in supply and demand for human resources in the job market
12	B.L. Tatibekov [57]	The work of an individual performing on the job market in line with the defined terms and requirements of a job deal
13	The National Law of the Kazakhstan Republic on “Public Employment” [58]	Activity focused on the fulfillment of personal and social needs, consistent with the law of the country and generating income or wages
Note – compiled by the author		

The review of the available employment assessment methods concludes that they do not differ considerably in the valuation criteria adopted. Considering the exact content of these categories, ultimate goals, and means of security, it would be

legitimate not to oppose these categories, which complement each other in their content. The basic classification of the primary forms of employment is summarized in Figure 1.

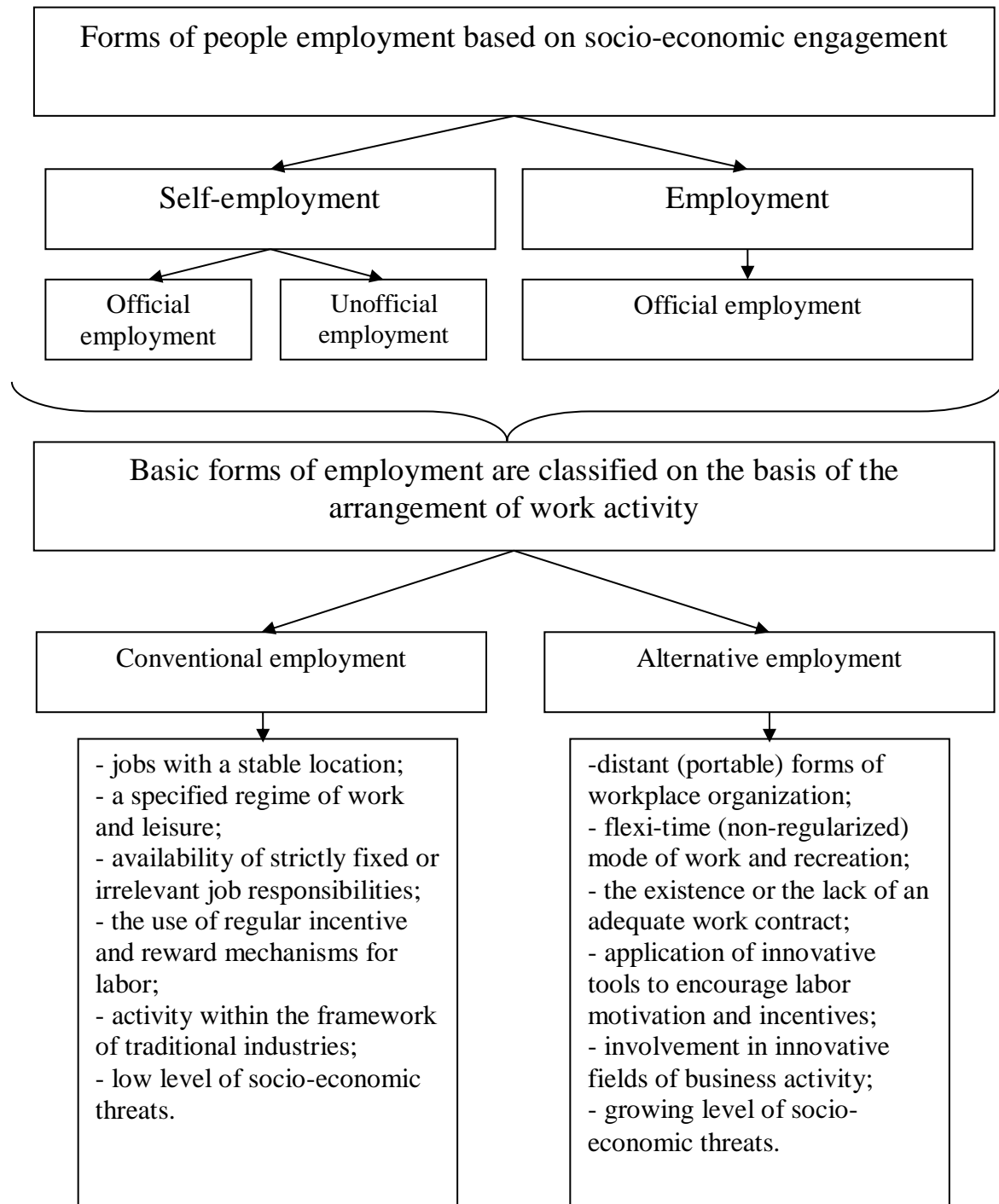


Figure 1 – Types of employment

Note – compiled according to the source [59]

Many authors analyze the categorization of employment types and single out “effective employment” as an indicator of increasing the viability of the national economy. It is not only as a quantitative measure of engagement in the job market, but



also as a qualitative feature reflecting work productivity, correspondence of professional competences to labor market requirements, as well as a contribution to economic growth. The indicators and parameters used to evaluate employment performance are systematically listed in the table below (Table 2).

Table 2 - for effective employment

Subject	Criteria of effective employment
Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- relevancy of the level of labor payments to the performance of job duties;</li> <li>- correspondence of the level of salaries to the amount of the current minimum subsistence rate;</li> <li>- compliance of occupational environment with the requirements of health and safety and workplace standards and ergonomic parameters;</li> <li>- correspondence of the work activity context to the employee's training level and qualifications;</li> <li>- account for the social relevance of the performed labor function in the framework of the actual demands of the labor force market;</li> <li>- compliance with the employees' workload level, the workforce's regulatory requirements, and physiological features.</li> </ul>
Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the effectiveness and performance of a worker's labor activity;</li> <li>- matching the degree of occupational proficiency and expertise with the required labor function;</li> <li>- the employee's contribution to the achievement of the final results of the organization's activities;</li> <li>- maximum compliance of the employee's work with the interests of production;</li> <li>- compliance with the level of the employer's expenses for the compensation of an employee's workload, depending on the scale and nature of the duties and responsibilities carried out in the interests of the production process;</li> <li>- providing conditions conducive to the steady progress of the organization.</li> </ul>
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-growth of national income;</li> <li>-improvement of the well-being of the country's residents;</li> <li>-production of output of products of public concern;</li> <li>-increase of research and technology development rate;</li> <li>-reduction of misbalances and pressure in the job market;</li> <li>-enhancement of workers' occupational skills and qualifications.</li> </ul>
Note – compiled based on sources [60-62]	

The signs of effective employment have been revealed based on the various concepts discussed in the academic research literature. The substance of effective employment is expressed through a complex of entities, measures, and drivers that ensure its support in terms of the efficient use of human labor capacity. Adopting the term “effective employment” to the youth market makes it convenient to identify this type of employment as an economically viable use of young people's work. In this sense, *effective youth employment is employment that allows young professionals to provide a decent income for realization of professional and intellectual potential acquired in the process of training, growth and improvement.* Figure 2 illustrates these sign features visually.

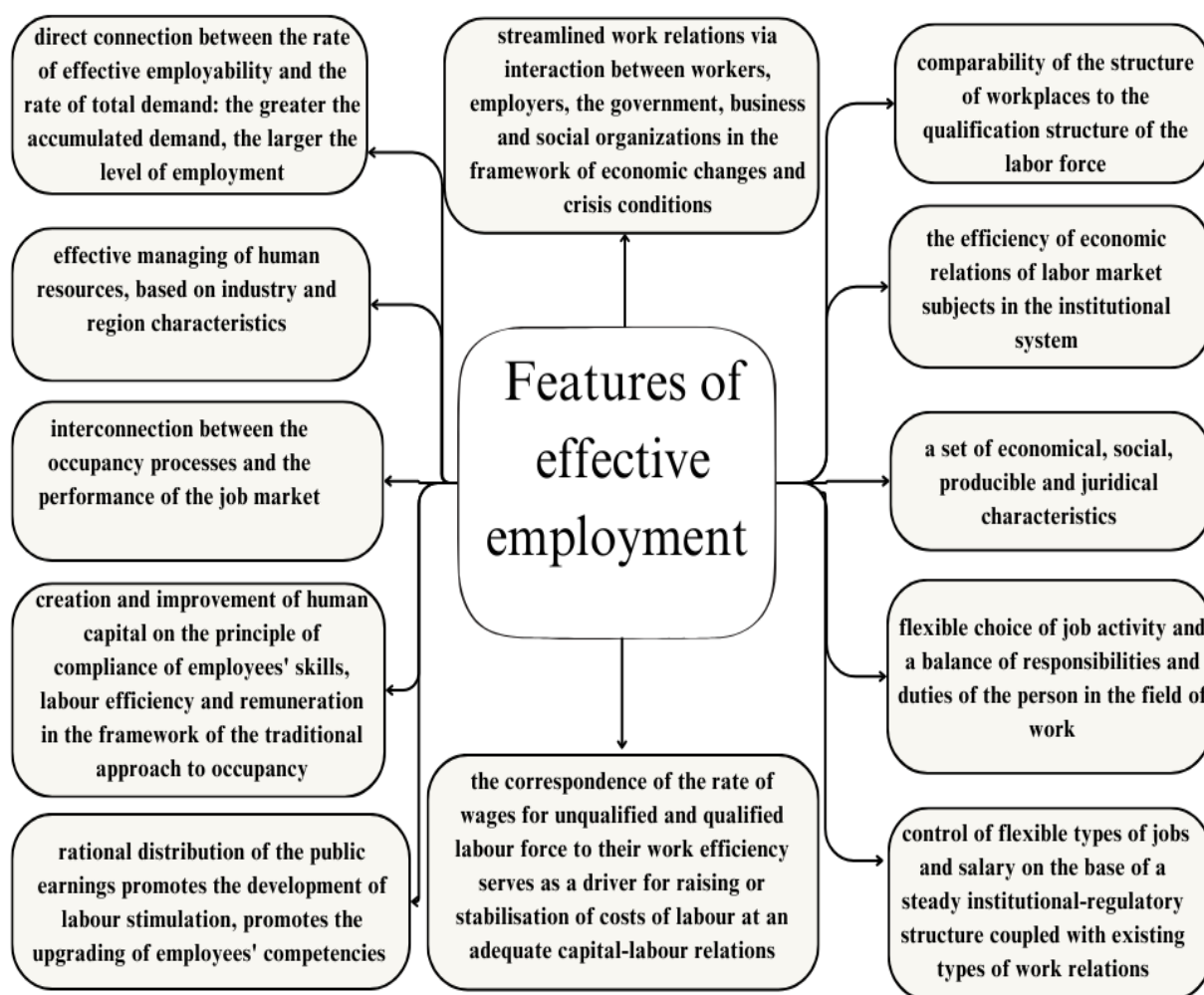


Figure 2 – Features of effective employment

Note – compiled based on sources [62-66]

Effective youth employment provides critical socio-economic benefits, including promoting the institution of the family, solving housing issues, recreation, training, and raising children, which, in turn, may lead to a fall in the number of divorces in the Republic. According to the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan, in 2024, 30,1 thousand divorces (74.4 %) were observed in the cities, while in villages, the number amounted to 10,4 thousand (25.6 %). At any given time, there is a persistent tendency for a steady annual increase in the divorce rate against the backdrop of the relatively unstable marriage rates. Thus, divorce among younger generations remains relatively high and is heavily affected by the financial dimension, which causes a broad range of socio-economic problems typical for young families.

Effective employment of young people is critical for the long-term development of Kazakhstan's national economy. It not only provides economic autonomy for youth, but also forms the foundation for the formation of solid social structures, in specific, the institute of the family. Stable income and steady jobs allow young households to meet the key challenges of their lives, such as acquiring housing, increasing the level

of education, and bringing up their children, which helps to strengthen social security in society. A significant level of youth employment has a positive impact on lowering social strain and avoiding the spread of marginalized trends, such as poverty, joblessness and social isolation. In addition, youth employability is an essential factor in the country's demographic transition: stable conditions encourage an upward trend in the birth rate, enhance family values and contribute to a reduction in the divorce rate. Statistics from the National Statistics Bureau of the Republic of Kazakhstan prove that income insecurity and lack of professional stability are among the most significant contributors to the growing number of divorces among young people.

In terms of the economy, the effective inclusion of young persons in the job market enhances the country's productivity potential, helps to renew and upgrade the economy, promote the implementation of innovations and increase Kazakhstan's competitive edge in the global arena. Young people have high levels of flexibility, mobility and responsiveness to new technologies, which is an asset in the conditions of global digitalization and changing job markets. Further, investments in the growth of human capital through programs to support youth labor leads to an expansion of the tax revenues, a reduced burden on the social safety net and an improvement in the overall well-being of the society. The establishment of youth business support programs fosters the creation of new small and medium-sized businesses, creating new jobs and helping to diversify the economy. Thus, promoting effective youth engagement is not only a public task, but also the most urgent economic issue of Kazakhstan's State policy, which needs a multidimensional approach, and requires the coordination of efforts by the state, business and community.

Employment that meets the career goals and skills of young specialists helps raise labor productivity, encourages economic development, and improves social and regional labor mobility. This decreases the brain drain of qualified workforce from the periphery regions to the large cities. It also has a positive economic impact, as education and training costs are recovered from within the same area, lowering imbalances in regions' development. However, a lack of or poor job quality can lead to several harmful implications, including a declining population, a growing outflow of able-age young adults from villages and towns to large cities and metropolises, an increase in the illegal economy, growing social issues and criminality, reduced retirement security, a loss of intergenerational continuity in production, and decreased motivation to innovate.

Under these circumstances, effective employment of young people is becoming a key factor in securing Kazakhstan's long-term social sustainability and economic security. The presence of jobs corresponding to the qualifications of young professionals facilitates the optimal use of cumulated human capital, enhances innovation and the development of competitive industries in the economy. A particular role in this process is given to the growth of the high-tech sector, processing industry, farming, the logistics and services sectors, where the implementation of young people's potential within the scope of new production and organizational structures is feasible. The support of youth entrepreneurship and the encouragement of start-up eco-systems create new channels for employment and self-fulfillment, making young people less

likely to depend on conventional forms of employment and promoting the economy's diversification.

At the regional scale, effective employment of youth helps to bring urbanization processes into balance, decreasing the depopulation of rural areas and smaller towns. This enhances internal integration of the economy, facilitates the creation of local communities, contributes to the expansion of local infrastructure, the expansion of small and medium-sized businesses, and raises tax receipts to local budgets. In the long term, such process strengthens social cohesion and decreases territorial differences in the living conditions of the populations. Alternatively, if the accessibility of quality jobs continues to be low and there are no dedicated initiatives to support young people's employment, Kazakhstan risks encountering serious difficulties. These may include a decline in the demographic profile, growing internal migration in preference to large cities, growing social tensions and strengthening informal employment, which leads to a narrowing of the tax base and an overall increase in the burden on social funds.

Hence, the state policy in the field of employment of the young should be targeted not only at the numeric increase of workplaces, but also at their qualitative attributes: correspondence to the present-day requirements of the labor market, the level of remuneration, career growth and career development options. Thus, youth effective employment is a systemic prerequisite for stable socio-economic development of Kazakhstan, which demands comprehensive efforts in the spheres of education, labor market, entrepreneurial activity and local policies. Therefore, the state's strategic focus on creating an effective system of youth employment has to be based on a integrated approach, involving the development of a vocational training system, upgrading technical and occupational education, enhancing internship schemes, and supporting youth start-ups and micro-enterprises. Special attention should be paid to the digitalization of the labor market, the establishment of online platforms for job search and skills improvement, and the development of public-private partnership tools to attract investment in youth initiatives. Only a systemic and targeted policy based on an assessment of the needs of the job market and the potential of youth will allow Kazakhstan to form a robust, innovative economy and create a decent future for a new generation of citizens.

## **1.2 International experience in regulating and promoting the employment of the youth generation**

Youth employment is considered among the main determinants of the sustainability of the national economy and the support of the nation's socio-economic stability in the face of current world challenges. Reviewing international institutional frameworks for managing young people's employment in other countries will help formulate reasonable guidelines to promote the well-balanced operation of the youth job market at the country's national and regional levels. The employment service is the key agency that governs young people's part of the job market, considering social and technological changes.

In the world system of international regulation of labor relations processes, a considerable place is taken by the World Association of Public Employment Services (hereinafter referred to as the Association), which brings together the National employment units of about 80 nations. The Association is comprised of an extended system of regional and local units that offer programs and services for youth in accordance with the norms of the law in force, employment policy, social and economic development, and other conditions of each member country. Table 3 summarizes the generic descriptions of the typological features of the organizational types of state employment services in diverse countries worldwide.

Table 3 – Types of the organizational forms of state employment agencies in other countries

Organizational set up of employment promotion	A distinguishing feature	Country
run by a governing and responsible to the appropriate ministry	extra-governmental interests of employees' union and employer groups are included	Belgium, France, Canada, Sweden, Germany, UK
a part of the Labor Department and is included in the structure of the Ministry of Labor and Employment	agreeing and coordinating decision-making at the federal entity level	Japan, Finland, Netherlands Australia
works under municipal governance and is subordinated to a center coordinating body	an adapted framework for intra-regional control	United States of America, Switzerland
Note – compiled by the author		

One of the basic features of the young people's career support strategy is the vocational guidance institute (in practice, *Career Development*), the primary task of which is to assist young people in employment, given their occupational choices and career paths, skills, qualifications, knowledge, abilities, and future trends in the labor market. In international markets, the vocational orientation of graduates is a critically significant direction of public labor policy, affecting the creation of the work potential of recent specialists and the competitive edge of their careers. The profound goal of the career guidance system is to enable young people of varying age groups, especially teenagers, to form the ability to choose an aware and sustainable career option that not only helps them to realize their professional aspirations but also conforms to social and economic needs and long-term tendencies in the field of job growth and extension.

The dual training Institute is a framework that combines academic and practical experience in preparing highly competent personnel, allowing for their successful integration into the existing labor market conditions. Within the scope of this initiative, collaboration with partners is achieved by concluding contracts on specific profile training in response to the relevant requirements of employers, thereby contributing to

increased workforce flexibility and strengthening the competitiveness of specialists and graduates. Dual program funds are allocated according to the joint participation of the government and the employer community, thus enabling the stable expansion of the vocational training system (Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Great Britain, China, Japan, etc.). The dual program applies an active technology, socioeconomic, and IT education system. It focuses on fulfilling important players' priorities, such as the government, businesses, and young specialists. Its crucial aspect is to promote three related areas: economical efficacy, societal integration, and individual growth of youth.

The importance of this approach is of special relevance in the case of the high level of joblessness. For instance, in the contracting parts of the EU, the total rate of unemployment differs from 10% to 20%, peaking at 25% in economies such as Spain, Portugal, Greece, and a few other nations and surpassing 30% in East European economies. Among the young, about 40 % of the overall number of jobless people are young. Statistics from the International Labor Organization reveal a steady tendency towards expanding the near-term jobless population, with a rising share of regular and informal work and an expanding share of casual and vulnerable forms of employment.

To solve the employment crunch for the youth, it is necessary to establish efficient control systems involving the promotion of the total demand, raising the level of industrial capital investment and the accessibility of funds, supporting the placement of youth, expanding the range of economic structures, and promoting the sectors oriented towards providing jobs for young professionals. The analysis of macroeconomic variables associated with youth engagement supports a clear link between youth joblessness in both developed industrial countries and developing regions and several underlying macroeconomic conditions. These included, in general, more significant activity in investment, which was influenced by the access to and availability and cost of loans, as well as levels of interest rates, as the growing cost of loans substantially limits entrepreneurial engagement and, as a result, narrows job opportunities for young adults.

To ensure that young people can find work, tax stimuli aimed at developing infrastructure and offering favorable benefits to companies that operate in priority sectors of the national economy with high employment potential for the youth should also be given an active role. In addition, an important support tool for youth employment is the creation of wage subsidies for businesses that employ young professionals, particularly in sectors with staff deficits. Such policies not only decrease the financial pressure on businesses, but also help youth obtain their first work experience, which is essential for their ability to compete in the job market.

Tax incentives, on-the-job training and public-private partnerships for career orientations and internships are also widely used in a few countries, strengthening the link between the education system and the demands of the economy. A review of foreign practices shows that the tools used in other countries to stimulate young labor force participation have a common feature and are aimed at ensuring the functioning of the job market. Figure 3 illustrates these tools pictorially.

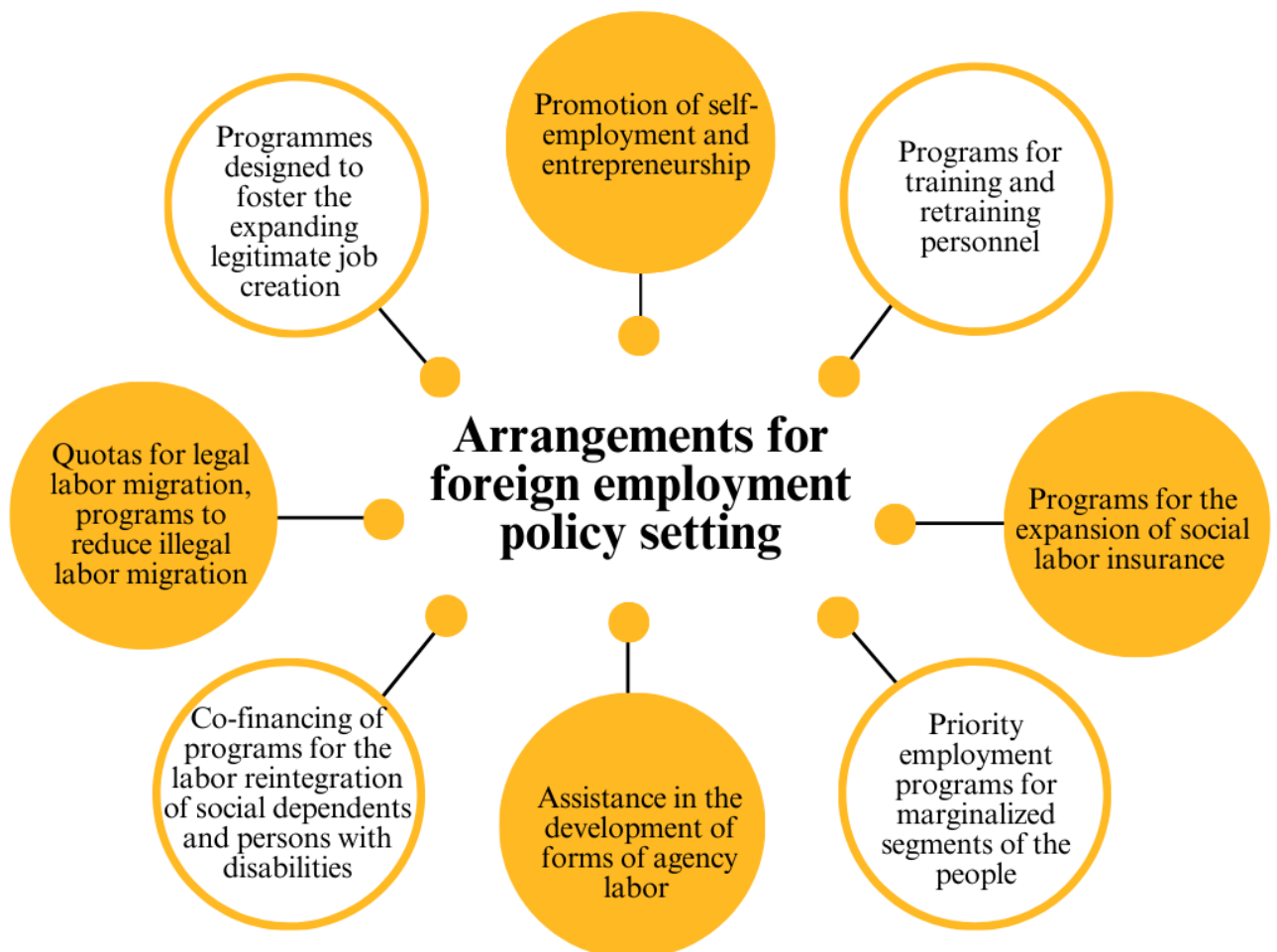


Figure 3 – Arrangements for foreign employment policy setting

Note – compiled by the author

Over 56 % of youth in the Peruvian workforce, or nearly 8 billion persons, were in insecure jobs or facing unemployment from 2000 to 2010. In reaction to this issue, the State designed and applied a program to foster job placement for young workers, which was part of forming a National Tripartite Committee. It was composed of members of youth labor associations, the employers' community, and the workforce. Following these incentives, over 390,000 young people have received placement opportunities from 2010 to 2012 due to these activities alone.

As part of its governmental efforts to promote youth employment, the Peruvian Government has implemented a range of structural and organizational measures, including the simplification of administrative procedures and reduction of labor market costs through the introduction of the free standardized CERTIJOven certificate, the launch of the “Jóvenes a la obra” initiative aimed at improving youth skills and labor adaptability, the modernization of the professional orientation system to enhance support in career decision-making, the implementation of the “ProJoven Emprendedor” program to encourage youth entrepreneurship and self-employment, the creation of a centralized online database of unemployed citizens, and the establishment

of a dedicated counseling center (Infomigra) for young people working abroad or planning to migrate for employment purposes [38].

The practice of countries such as Denmark, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in implementing the “dual training scheme for skilled workers”, aimed at combining the learning experience with practical activity at the workplace, is of particular significance for the Republic of Kazakhstan. The comparably small share of youth unemployment in the countries mentioned above is caused by the high effectiveness of the existing policy in the sphere of employment, in part, by the strong involvement of local social groups in the formation and implementation of job placement programs, as well as by the tailoring of vocational training to meet the current requirements of the job market.

The German dual training program provides for the realization of the following key parts of the dual learning system:

- the design of the program structure and course content of company-based training initiatives is done in partnership between state authorities, municipal bodies, employers, and union representatives at the national level. This ensures close linkage of the training process with real-world economic needs and contributes to providing adequate professional preparation for young adults;
- certain enterprises design and introduce sector-specific education techniques customized to meet the industry's needs;
- the allocation of the funding commitments for the provision of training is carried out based on a joint partnership approach: the government covers the costs related to the academic studies, while enterprises' employers cover the expenses related to hands-on training arranged based on companies;
- a minimum level of remuneration for training during the period of vocational training is fixed in agreements on labor contracts;
- awarding qualifying positions is based on passing written and practice-guided tests, which ensures high-quality education. Recognition of certificates of competency by the relevant body, enabling them to be accepted across the whole economy, thereby improving the workforce's flexibility and mobility.

Adopting the successfully implemented dual education program has also been supported in Kazakhstan. By the initiative of the Entrepreneurs' Chamber of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a Cooperation Memorandum was signed in April 2015, and a stage-by-stage plan of everyday actions was confirmed between the National Chamber, the Education and Science Ministry, and the Health and Social Development Ministry. As part of the plan, a development roadmap is being followed for adopting the dual training module, which integrates theoretical preparation with practical-oriented training in the workplace. Simultaneously, it is provided to upgrade the technical and professional training system, considering the current demands and requirements of Kazakhstan's job market.

Focused state policies that ensure a balanced relationship between labor market supply and demand are crucial for raising the rate of youth inclusion in official jobs. One good case in point is the Argentinean experience, in which, after the economic downturn of the 2000s, the country's government launched a complex policy aimed at



lowering the rate of illegal informal work. The measures taken as an integral element of this program were as follows:

- enactment of a law imposing a temporal decrease in welfare transfers for new hires in micro and small companies for a 12-month period, which stimulated official jobs;
- establishment of the “Programa de Simplificación Registral” initiative, aimed at easing administratively the job placement process and setting up a single worker enrolment network;
- the launch of a country plan to promote the decline of informal work among young workers, the “National Plan for Labor Regulation”, and more excellent financing for the employment inspection, which has allowed about 1/3 of workers who are illegally occupied to be moved to the official sphere;
- implementation of penalties for companies that employ the practice of apprenticeship in contravention of the norms of labor legislation, including the cases connected with the registration of fixed-term contracts governing the rules of vocational training, as well as social safety nets and the granting of benefits;
- developing arrangements to ease the process of registering home-based workers, including the possibility of tax deductions for contributions from employers' tax bills, thus promoting the normalization of working arrangements;
- establish a social security program for self-employed workers with insufficient earnings in the illegal economy (“Mono-tributo social”), which ensures base-level social welfare for this type of labor force.

This complex of actions helped to lower the rate of unofficial jobs, enhance the labor environment, and strengthen employee safety, which proves the efficacy of public policy in regulating the occupancy sector. Government efforts to promote the job market for young workers in the following economies require particular emphasis: Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Denmark, Poland, and Germany have implemented youth guarantee schemes designed to improve the level of engagement and competitive edge of young specialists. In specific, a range of initiatives were launched in Poland as part of implementing this policy, among them:

- “Young people on the job placement market” project, elaborated by the Labor and Social Policy Ministry, designed to foster the promotion of youth career activity until the age of 30;
- The “Your career - it's your choice” project, which aims to enhance the incentives of younger people and provides for the implementation of: professional training programs and post-school and postgraduate education measures aimed at forming up-to-date vocational competencies; obtaining work experience in the form of traineeships with follow-up employment or supported hiring (provision of job vouchers to the employers to recruit graduates) to encourage the occupational movement of youth.

The Polish youth guarantee Concept provides that every young person under 25 must receive employment, continued learning, training, or apprenticeship opportunities four months after finishing their regular studies or gaining joblessness status. Priority

youth population targeted by priority target group within employment support schemes consists of the below categories:

- 15-17 years of age who have dropped out of schooling early, which includes persons who, for reasons of funding, were unable to complete mandatory school education (under 16 years of age) or complete secondary level education (under 18 years of age);

- youth ages 18-24 who are neither in the labor force nor in school or training (NEET), including members of disadvantaged groups, those in rural areas, and people excluded from the regular job market;

- unemployed young adults aged 18-25, formally recorded as officially registered as jobless, studying in part-time training and not in the category of NEETs;

- young adults and high school graduates aged 18-29 actively looking for a job for up to 48 months after leaving an institution or obtaining a professional qualification.

The realization of these actions facilitated a considerable increase in youth engagement in initiatives aimed at supporting their employment. From 2009 to 2013, the state employment services at Polish job centers annually helped an average of over 200,000 young persons under the legal age of 25, which constituted 35.8% of the overall registered unemployed actively looking for a job. In 2012, the project for young people "Successful youth employment" was adopted, and the program for middle and older age "Search for a new job" was implemented (Table 4).

Table 4 – Employment regulation and promotion practices of the country of the Korean Republic

Item	Program “Efficient Inclusion of youth in the job market”	“Search for new employment” program	“A complex of actions to support an efficient employment” program
Primarily intended user group	Adolescent youth between the ages of 15-29 years.	Candidates who are of medium and elderly age (40-64 years) with earnings below two hundred % of the defined limit.	Low-income applicants 15-64 years old, with lower than 150 % of the low cost of living.
	Unemployed high school graduates.	An individual who stays in jobless status for more than 1 month after receipt of the last payment of unemployment compensation.	Persons receiving “National Basic Livelihood” funds who can work.
	Graduates of colleges facing unemployment for more than six months after finishing their education.	-Individuals with jobless status who were earlier recorded in the system of unemployment insurance but who are not currently eligible to claim payments; -Jobless individuals who have been searching actively for work for the previous five years or a more extended period.	

Continuous of Table 4

Item	Program	
Available facilities (accessible within all program frameworks)	<p>Phase 1: Evaluation and building of the professional growth incentive (duration - 1 month)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Members attend in-depth personal consultations with Job center advisers (employment consultants) and are assessed on their vocational skills, wishes, and possibilities;</li> <li>– Based on the evaluation, a personalized action plan is prepared, which incorporates the following phase services.</li> </ul> <p>Phase 2: Developing Skills (68 months)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Training, work experience placements, start-up assistance schemes, and youth practices.</li> </ul> <p>Phase 3: Job search (2 months)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Accompaniment by consultants of the employment center of program participants before their interview and provide support;</li> <li>– Conduction of group interviews with participants and recruiting campaigns.</li> </ul>	
Benefits (available to whole programs)	<p>Phase 1: Starting from 200,000 KRW monthly;</p> <p>Phase 2: Starting from 200,000 KRW monthly, including 110,000 KRW participation in a professional program.</p>	
Payout period	Maximum 7 months	Maximum nine months
Training costs	Disbursements of up to KRW 2 million using the Skills Development Account System.	Disbursements of up to KRW 3 million using the Skills Development Account System.
Benefits for successful employment	No	Payments of up to KRW 1 million upon successful employment.
Note – complied by the author		

Enhanced vocational training (South Korean experience). The “Professional Skills Development System” and consultations for students are essential for the employment of applicants and include:

- the passing of the Law on Vocational Education and Training in 1967 was an essential factor in the process of serial industrialization and growth, helping to create a professionally prepared labor force;
- a system of continuing vocational education and training achieves employment security and increases job applicants' adaptability to the job market.
- enhancing the performance of training packages via coordination with state and private sector employment services;
- training and qualification improvement of the participants of the program;
- expanding the scope of training courses to comply with the demands of the job market;
- provide intensive consultation, relevant guidance, and information to assist with employment outcomes;
- provision of training assistance of up to KRW 2 million (financing in the value of KRW 3 million is provided via funding bodies by the employer providing the

apprenticeship, with a choice of training courses within the frame of state-certified occupational preparation training programs for the members of the "complex of actions to support an efficient employment" program);

- work-net - employment services provided reliable information about recruiting companies and job seekers and an online selection of vacancies. This function especially provided jobs for SMEs: development of the online employment service and, in the future, the Labor Market Analysis System, which comprehensively provides information for job seekers from the three main work information networks as the Work-Net info service, professional preparation, and job insurance service. A Work-Net electronic database platform has been created, providing complex availability of vacancies in both public and private postings;

*Poland's case study.* Just one-third of citizens of Poland below the age of 25 are included in vocational work. This is because, even though they keep studying and improving their skills, almost 90 % stay vocationally non-active. In the conditions of job challenges, many young people opt for higher education to enhance their chances of getting a proper job. This process continues to be facilitated by the rapid expansion of higher education. For instance, in the 2012-2013 educational year, there were nearly 1.7 million enrolments at more than 450 higher education institutions, up from just over 400,000 in the 1990/1991 educational year. Although the number of enrolments remains strong, there has been a declining trend over the last four years, mainly due to demographic changes.

In addition, about 5.5 % of vocationally non-active labor force youth do not participate in labor market work due to family commitments and household responsibilities, and 2 % due to disease or invalidity. This means that about 2% of people (approximately 60 thousand people) aged 15-24 are not professionally active. One in four people aged 15-24 is employed, and the joblessness rate in this segment is higher than 27%. Reducing youth unemployment has become one of the core priorities of the employment strategy in the Polish labor market. For illustration, the "The Law on Employment Assistance and Labor Market Institutes" of April 20, 2004, defines youth under the age of up to 25 as a separate social group. This group has a particular position in the labor market and, accordingly, is eligible for specific support measures and assistance in obtaining jobs.

Consequently, public job services are required to develop a "personalized plan of activities" for young adults oriented towards getting an education, placement in a job, or upgrading their skills. The bill establishes a time frame for support for those under 25 who are jobless, which is six months from the time of their enrolment in the labor office. In 2012, the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection of the Public of the Polish Republic launched the young people on the job market project, focusing on the career enhancement of individuals below 30 years of age. This program provides a range of standard activities for job seekers and the jobless through the state employment bodies.

As a follow-up to the pilot project, "Your Career - Your Choice" has been launched to test new employment policy instruments aimed at fostering the

employability of youth under 30. The scheme provides for encouraging the involvement of youth in two key areas:

- education - offering training vouchers designed to enable young people to complete training, post-primary or supplementary education in developing the required work skills;
- provide job opportunities in the form of practical experience in the context of apprenticeships with further placement or supported work (e.g., granting a voucher to a graduate of a tertiary education for placement in an organization), as well as facilitating career mobility via awarding a settling-in subsidy.

In June 2013, a contract was concluded by the Polish Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Poland National Bank of Economy for the realization of the program “The First Business - Support for Start-ups”, aimed at helping to promote the establishment of new business and employment opportunities by providing favorable lending. The project's initial phase includes three regions: Mazowieckie, Małopolskie, and Świętokrzyskie. The specifics of business starting loans under the program “First Business - Assistance to New Start-Ups” include:

- subordinated rates of interest fixed at the level of 0.25 of the discount rate of the Polish National Bank;
- maximal amount - up to 20 times the average salary amount;
- extended maturity - up to 7-year repayment period;
- opportunity to receive an annuity deferral on the principal payback;
- no charges for the extension and further maintenance of loan funds.

The leading institutions providing youth support under the employment promotion policies are:

1) District and provincial-level territorial employment offices (employment services) operate within the framework of local self-governance and play a key role in ensuring support measures for jobless youth and their reinsertion into the country's job sector. Unemployed persons under 25 years of age are the main beneficiaries of support offered by State employment services. On average, during 2009-2013, more than 200,000 people under the age of 25 (35.8% of all active unemployed) were covered by employment services. Work experience and training are of the highest interest to youth in occupancy services. Thus, in 2013, 100,000 members were covered, which is 51.4% of all trainees and young participants of the training (of which 23,000 are people under 25). In the identical year, around 8.6 thousand youth (under 25 - 28.8 % of the total number of recipients) began their ventures thanks to the funding support offered by the local county employment service.

2) The Voluntary Labor Corps or Volunteer Employment Service (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy - OHP) is a state-funded educational unit. This entity performs government tasks in labor and combating social exclusion and isolation of young people, involving issues connected with their formation and training. The primary goal of the OHP is to ensure full social and career development of young persons, with special attention to the promotion of youth facing problems of social discrimination and in contact with state agencies. The main objectives in this respect comprise the provision of support to the system of education for social, professional, and even

economic enhancement of youth, as well as the realization of actions facilitating the increase of professional qualification level or re-qualifying, promoting initiatives aimed at decreasing levels of unemployment, as well as learning by doing, as part of professional activities, taking into account the creation of jobs and the promotion of cross-border collaboration between the youth.

The primary focus group addressed by the work program of the OHP consists of young people deprived of care, young disabled people, those with a weak level of social adaptability, such as those with a criminal background, and members of dysfunctional, broken, and poor families in urgent need of institutional assistance and social support, need in training influences and qualification level, which determines a separate entering into adulthood. The latter group comprises secondary school and university graduate students—well-educated younger people who have certain occupational skills but have trouble finding a job in the highly competitive labor market and are at risk of unemployment. For these young people, the OHP provides for actions in the labor market to organize the professional orientation, employment, and training system.

3) The National Economy Bank is a state financial entity oriented towards providing services to the state financial industry. As part of measures to encourage young people to enter the job market, this institution has been involved in the corresponding projects through the involvement in the execution of the 2013 piloted scheme “The first start-up business - support for young entrepreneurs” is to be extended to the entire Poland after the entry into force of the updated version of the law regulating employment promotion and the activities of labor market institutions. The primary purpose of the pilot project is to aid and soft loans to young people to launch their business activities. Young people's guarantees are designed to ensure younger individuals' occupation and career development until 25. They require young individuals to obtain an employment offer, continued study, professional learning, or internship within four months of finishing their official training or receiving jobless status. The users of the young people's guarantee scheme in Polska are divided into four groups of recipients:

a) young people aged 15-17 who have left education prematurely and do not have the financial means to complete compulsory education (up to age 16) or to continue to the next level of education (up to age 18);

b) young people aged 18-24 without employment, education, or training (NEET), including socially vulnerable groups, young people excluded from the labor force, and those living in rural and remote areas needing exceptional support;

c) young people aged 18-25 who are formally registered as unemployed combine training with part-time employment and do not fall under the NEET criteria;

d) young people aged 18-29 looking for work, including graduates who have completed training or obtained a professional qualification within the last forty-eight months; special attention is given to support measures for youth entrepreneurship within this group.

Standard assistance measures are focused on non-active youth who are not in full-time studies and have no regular work placements but who require the facilitation of occupational inclusion in the job market (financed by the state). Basic support

comprises a complex assessment of the youth's vocational and individual position, encompassing an analysis of their competencies, abilities, and capacity, as well as an inquiry into their family background. This is needed to design a personalized type of care that corresponds to the current needs of the target young adult.

If the evaluation outcome shows that the availability of suitable jobs or another type of targeted support is sufficient to activate professional potential, the so-known standard employment support measures are applied, which include the following areas:

- activities of employment agencies and organizations providing internships and vocational training programs;
- provision of professional counseling and access to information resources on career guidance (both individual and group);
- organizing training activities on active job search methods, including involvement of target categories of citizens, holding seminars to develop employment-related competencies, and personalized counseling.

Complex assistance, i.e., including all kinds of assistance that are identified in the case of a given person as necessary to stabilize his or her situation in the work industry or get supporting actions offered by the government and EU funding, will be focused on individuals in special difficult circumstances who face considerable obstacles in joining or retaining the job market. These challenges may be due, for instance, to a shortage of qualifications and job experience or a mismatch between available competencies and the actual needs of the labor market. The activities to be undertaken will mainly target obtaining a job, retraining or further training, acquiring work experience, and job placements to help youth become economically independent. Within this type of support framework, provision is made for vocational instruction, job training for prospective employers, job promotion units, and occupational advisory and job mediation services. Training on actively seeking work, including improving employment competencies and the availability of data and e-databases used during the job-hunting process, is also organized. Therefore, these interventions will tackle the problem of joblessness not only of low-skilled young people who have withdrawn from education earlier but also of an increasing proportion of graduates who are struggling to find their first employment.

Employment services are entities offering support services for local labor markets to help young people find jobs. According to the youth assurance scheme, newly jobless people will receive *powiat*, a form of occupational stimulation envisaged in the Act of 20 April 2004 on Support for Employment and Institutions of the Labor Market, for four months from registration with the Labor Office. In the framework of training programs, all unemployed youth can take training courses at no cost in the educational centers organized on behalf of the job service. According to the Labor Office regulations, all young citizens currently unemployed can request financial support for training on the open education market. The financing can be as high as 300 % of the average earnings. This measure covers not only the cost of the course itself but also includes reimbursement of transport costs and daily subsistence allowance in case of training away from the place of origin. During the study period, the job seeker receives financial compensation equal to 120 % of the fixed benefit. In exceptional cases of job

placement during the program, the benefit payment is reduced to 20 % of the original amount.

Practical-oriented education is directed at obtaining professional skills without signing an employment agreement with an employer. Within this period, the job seeker is allowed to claim an amount equal to 120 % of the defined benefit sum. For those under 25 years of age and for those aged up to 27 who have graduated from training, the internship can last up to twelve months. For the remaining categories of individuals, the maximal period of the work placement is limited to only six months.

The senior trainee placement for older persons combines professional practical training (80 % of the study time) and academic studies (20 % of the training time). This form of training is implemented without concluding an employment contract with an employer and provides for mastering both practical and theoretical professional skills with subsequent certification. During the entire traineeship period, the applicant is entitled to receive monetary compensation of 120 % of the established unemployment benefit.

In addition, grants are available to cover the costs of qualification examinations and licenses. Applicants, including youth applicants, can apply for financial support to cover the costs of certification, diplomas, and professional authorizations. The subsidy can be up to 100 % of the mean salary. It is also available to meet the expenses incurred to access these types of exams.

*Study credits* – to fund educational expenses, jobless people can take out an interest-free loan of 400 % of the mean salary. The term of repayment of this loan shall be eighteen months. *Subsidized studies at post-graduate studies* - young specialists with higher education are entitled to financial support of up to 300% of their average salary to cover the costs of postgraduate studies. Additionally, upon completion of the educational program and in case of subsequent employment, participants are provided with a grant payment of 20% of the established allowance.

Continuing education support also includes scholarships for continuing education. In the absence of a vocational qualification, applicants may apply for a scholarship of 100 % of the grant, provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the training is carried out part-time at an adult upper secondary school or a higher education institution and begins within twelve months of official registration with the labor office; 2) the size of earnings per one family member makes it sufficient to get social grants (the sum of grants is not counted in the computation of earnings). The stipend is paid at the jobseeker's request and is available for one year from the beginning of the study program. In reasonable cases, the payment period can be renewed until the end of the study program.

*Work through community service* - jobseekers may be involved in a public works activity for up to six months in line with a contract between the local employment service and the project provider. Within the scope of this program, the jobless are hired in agencies of the public utilities sector, education, culture, sports, tourism, health services, and social care. *Specific job support programs* - special programs are available for the jobless in need of personalized assistance. They are designed to fund non-typical choices needed for labor market placement and occupational inclusion.



These types of programs allow the application of specialized employment assistance instruments to adapt support packages flexibly to the individual requirements of the participants.

*Grant support* for starting their own business is provided to unemployed citizens, including young people with entrepreneurial skills. This form of support provides an opportunity to receive funding for setting up a new enterprise, registering an individual business, or joining a social cooperative. The value of the support can be up to 600 % of the mean salary. Financing can be used to pay for start-up expenses and cover legal and consultancy services related to opening one's own business. If an out-of-work employee selects a career within a co-operative established under the terms and circumstances set out in the legislation, he or she can obtain financing of up to 400 % of the mean salary per one founder of such a co-operative. To become a member of an existing cooperative, an individual may be granted up to 300 % of the average salary per new cooperative member.

An international analysis of experiences in ensuring quality employment for young people in the conditions of the new economy has identified key tools for its realization. Specifically, one significant area is the introduction of the “Europe 2020” policy, which is directed at decreasing levels of unemployment and youth employment management. This strategic paper defines the primary priorities of the socioeconomic policies of the European Union (EU) states, including the implementation of the “New opportunities and job growth plan”, the improvement of high-tech and dynamically developing manufacturing businesses characterized by an average yearly growth in the number of employees of more than 20% over a three-year term [58];

- promoting youth employment programs in the European Union, including the implementation of strategies for sustainable and lasting employment with competitive pay, proper occupancy security, and safety and hygiene in the workplace;

- improvement of the activities of state employment services and promoting vocational education, providing a step-by-step and well-structured transfer of young people from the Education system to vocational activity;

- design and launch comprehensive actions focusing on enhancing the skills level of the labor force, occupational training, and upgrading the system of elementary, middle, and upper secondary education in compliance with the relevant requirements of the job market;

- promotion of the manufacturing industry as a key driver of economic growth, a source of capital accumulation, knowledge generation, and job creation [39];

- expansion of the high-tech sector and focus on achieving a technological breakthrough in the post-crisis period;

- the intensification of the development of the service sector is one of the priority directions for the structural transformation of the economy. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), in 2014, 45.1% of all workers in the world took occupancy in the service field, while the share of those employed has increased by 10.1% over 20 years. The proportion of people in the agro-sphere diminished by 11.7%, while the industry's contribution to global employment increased by only 1.6% to 23%. Thus, 80.1% of all workers in the United States were employed in the service

sector, and in the EU-27 countries - 71.5%. The development of the service sector has led to the emergence of new online services (banking, trading, publishing, information and telecommunications, software, content). Familiarity with a comprehensive range of services in sectors such as education, transport, post, healthcare, scientific, and finance fostered the emergence of a job market geared towards high-skill employees. At the beginning of 2012, the leading states of the European Union - Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, and Italy - were employed in the services sector, covering 65.8% of total employment in the common European job market;

- forming a market for business services (market, financial, information, and communication) and providing new jobs. The United States ranks first (32% of the world level in 2012) in the business services market, the EU countries are in second place (23%), and the share of China and Japan was 8% [41]. In the EU, knowledge-intensive business services in 2012 accounted for 7.6% of their total world volume and provided jobs for almost 15 million people with the leading position of entrepreneurs in Italy, Germany, France, England;

- providing tax preferences and subsidies to entrepreneurs to stimulate job creation, expand youth employment, and develop affordable and high-level services;

- modernization of social protection systems, including the establishment of a minimum guaranteed income level, as well as the implementation of youth-friendly unemployment benefit programs [42];

- encouraging the promotion of micro- and small businesses as factors for accelerating the growth of the economy and job creation. For instance, in the USA in 2010, small enterprises accounted for 78% of the total number of economic entities and 31.1% of employment, with up to 250 employees (19%) employing 52.2% of the working-age population [42]. The growth of the knowledge-intensive services sector and the expansion of employment contributed to the strengthening of the middle class, maintaining stability in society and high levels of development;

- development and realization of territorial programs of employment to reduce the regional imbalance in socio-economic growth, to eliminate the gap between the depressed regions of Europe (in particular, those in the peripheral zones, distant rural and highland areas), as well as to limit regional differences in access to production factors - capital, labor, education, and social services in the EU member states;

- arranging public jobs to ensure the effective use of labor potential and provide temporary employment for the jobless;

- development of infrastructure to stabilize employment (South Korean experience), in particular, the creation of employment centers in large cities with the involvement of additional consultants and their transfer to the status of civil servants, the public services of employment, that provide functions to promote employment, which includes mediation services and guidance in the field of employment, the arrangement and management of the joblessness insurance scheme, which comprises the administration of employers' insurance obligations and the provision of payments of allowances to the jobless, as well as the provision of vocational training, re-training and advanced vocational education programs for the able-bodied population [42];

- an extension of counseling services and development of individualized job placement promotion actions aimed at the evaluation of a job seeker's occupational capacity and creation of an individual plan of action;
- introduction of the “Employment package” program aimed at supporting job seekers from socially vulnerable and low-income categories of the population;
- developing and implementing specialized employment promotion programs, including the successful placement of young people initiative aimed at young professionals and the search for a new job project aimed at middle-aged and elderly people;
- improvement and upgrading of the Work-net portal and offering jobs for medium and small enterprises. Provision of employment services with reliable information about recruiting companies and job seekers, online selection of vacancies;
- development of the online employment service and the labor market analysis system and the provision of information for job seekers from the following main work data networks: work platform, arrangement of a vocational training and skills enhancement system, creation of an informative network to facilitate the functioning of the labor insurance system; job-net site development, which ensures the availability of access to information on jobs through the process of integration of public and private employment portals, ensuring young people under the age of 25 (using the Polish experience as an example) a mandatory guarantee of one of the following choices: employment, ongoing education, vocational guidance, training or traineeship within four months of finishing formal education or acquiring status of unemployed.

Consequently, the study of international experience in implementing state programs directed at providing efficient labor force participation has made it possible to determine the main instruments, tools, and mechanisms of their practical application (Table 5).

Table 5 – Tools of the policy of ensuring (promoting) employment of the population abroad

No.	Policy area	Instrument description	Target
1	Formalization of labor relations	Legal and institutional frameworks to reduce informal employment in outbound labor migration	Schemes to encourage the development of formal employment aimed at reducing underground and unofficial labor practices
2	Job creation and innovation	Support programs for job development, including high-technology ones. Facilitating self-employment and business	Young professionals, start-up founders, tech-skilled labor migrants
3	Workforce adaptability	Staff training and re-training programs, as also management of staff cuts and dismissals	Workers affected by automation, increased labor market flexibility

Continuous of Table 5

No.	Policy area	Instrument description	Target
4	Social protection	Programs for the expansion of social labor insurance and programs of material support for the unemployed	Young people, actively seeking work, high need for financial support during unemployment
5	Employment flexibility	Assistance in the development of forms of agency labor (leasing, outsourcing, staff out staffing)	Access to temporary work, entry into the job market and prospective skills development
6	Social Reintegration	Co-financing of programs for the labor reintegration of social dependents and persons with disabilities	Active inclusion of disadvantaged groups
7	Migration governance	Quotas for legal labor migration, programs to reduce illegal labor migration	Legal migrants benefit from organized recruitment, legal protection, and safe employment conditions
8	Workforce development	Co-financing of employee assignment programs	Schemes to reduce labor market imbalances, enhance skills, and support inclusive employment practices
Note – complied by the author			

Thus, foreign experience in implementing state programs to ensure effective employment of the population has made it possible to determine the key directions for improving youth employment in Kazakhstan, which will be used in developing the concept of employment.

### **1.3 Conceptual framework for the employment of youth in the condition of global challenges**

The United Nations Global Initiative on youth employment, decent jobs for young person's program presents the world's first comprehensive and sustained systemic action to advance youth employability worldwide. The program is mobilizing principal global inputs and using the coordination capacities of the United Nations and additional major international players to optimize the effect of investing in youth engagement and assist participating states in realizing the 2030 sustainable growth goals agenda. In Kazakhstan, state bodies are constantly engaged in guaranteeing the people's work placement during the crisis. The Roadmap of Employability makes it possible to save jobs and implement industrial development projects in the regions. The Nurlyzhol

program is also in this direction to provide important infrastructure facilities with jobs in a crisis. The unemployment rate of the economically active population in Kazakhstan is 5.2%, according to the results of statistical reporting for 2014 and the first half of 2015. It should be noted that the official data on unemployment can be significantly adjusted towards negative growth with a scientifically based methodology for considering the structure of the employed and self-employed population. A formalized approach to the statistical reflection of 2.7 million people in the self-employed population is far from being world experience, especially in the EU countries and the United States. At the same time, there is a net outflow of skilled labor from the Republic of Kazakhstan and a net influx of labor force without professional education. If this trend continues and accelerates, we may have a problem for the self-employed population without appropriate professional training, fraught with social tension. Unskilled labor is abundant in Kazakhstan itself; it is provided without migrants. This trend will expose the problem of the lack or absence of a vocational education system in the country.

The unfavorable external and internal economic situation has exacerbated a variety of economic and social issues of the state, considering the employment issues of the public. Employment, as an economic concept, is a crucial indicator of the socio-economic condition of a community. Several characteristics describe the current state of the economy:

- reorganization and differentiation of industries carried out within the scope of the programs of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> five-year plans of forced Industrial and Innovative Development, reduce low-efficiency jobs, and release workers;
- age-related changes in the structure of the adult labor market caused the freeing up of workplaces previously occupied by professionals with obsolete skills and, at simultaneously, resulted in a shortage of specialists with newly available and state-of-the-art skills;
- flows of labor market disintegration, including regional imbalances between labor demand and supply, as well as mismatches between job markets and education delivery schemes;
- salary grading, which promotes the drain of highly educated staff and reduces demand for training in working professions;
- low job standards contribute to increased staff fluctuations and lower employment stability.

Under these terms, there is a drop in the level of public employability, continuing high levels of joblessness, growing disparities between labor supply and labor demand, as well as a reduction in the overall perceived quality of the labor force. The regulation of employment that began in the pre-crisis period, despite its significant scale, does not give the expected result. Depression, a decline in GDP growth rates, and, in some regions (for large facilities) recession, job cuts do not provide an opportunity for positive regulation of employment, training, and retraining of workers, especially in new professions of a qualified level.

The misbalance of core economics paradigms, aggravated in periods of world financial and economic shifts, forms a complicated and essentially new problem for

research and practices, necessitating urgent actions to ensure stable growth of economic development and social stabilization. Specifically, such steps involve the achievement of sustainability in the labor market, lowering its pressure, and promoting productive employment, which necessitates the proactive state regulation of this area. The basis for the creation of institutional decisions in state control of jobs is the legal basis, an in-depth review of which demonstrates its dynamical compliance with current transformations in the occupational, social, and labor sectors and the types of labor arrangements in different branches of the country's economy. In these years, though, employment legislation has removed several protections linked to securing the welfare interests of citizens.

One of the most relevant fundamental institutional problems is the elimination from the law of the concept of the “right to work”, which can be considered as the government's rejection of liability for the population's occupation status. The delegation of these responsibilities to entities of the country shows that the importance of state bodies in the field of market regulation and the creation of an efficient job system has been reduced. The restriction of the rights of workers in the central sphere of life and the restriction of fair wages should also include the provision of the new draft law on the Labor Code discussed in the Mazhilis of the National Parliament of the Kazakhstan Republic, which proposes to limit the payment of overtime work from the existing standard – a coefficient of 2.0 to 1.25, which objectively gives employers the right to overtime operation of an employee.

In the current conditions of the economy, state services in the field of job promotion can be divided into two main types: conventional and innovative (non-traditional). Conventional services include measures of active public sector policy and instruments of official (fictional) character. These include assistance to citizens in finding suitable work and to employers in selecting skilled workers, provision of information on the state and trends of the labor market, organization of job fairs and training jobs, vocational guidance and vocational training for citizens, advanced training for the unemployed, organization of paid social work and temporary employment, and promotion of self-employment of jobless residents.

These are the core components of the government's system of employment management. Yet, in today's socio-economic realities, some conventional forms of public policy are slowly losing their usefulness and must be changed. In this context, it is necessary to review and upgrade the entire range of tools of public employment regulation and implement actively novel, innovative types of jobs policy, focusing on the needs and challenges of the innovative society. Non-traditional services are associated with forming a set of means to ensure a higher efficiency in promoting employment. New institutional structures for the organization of employment are significant for regional governance and regulation. Such innovative organizations consist of professional career guidance centers, casual and temporary employment agencies, job training facilities, business incentive centers, and occupational recovery and employment assistance centers. Such institutional frameworks are operating actively in The European Union and the USA, and in the context of macro-economic instability, mechanisms are frequently used in Russia, too. These employment

promotion mechanisms absorb adverse effects such as staff reductions and a massive exodus of workers into the labor market. Such structures would come in handy when the management of Temirtau ArcelorMittal periodically threatens to lay off 30% of the workers of the metallurgical plant, motivating the imbalance in the supply and demand of jobs, which provokes an increase in unemployment and social tension. In similar crisis conditions in foreign countries, there is a practice such as allocating subsidies for creating jobs and subventions for active and passive employment programs. In this regard, organizing public works and advanced vocational training is essential. To reduce tension in the job sector, the patent taxation framework for self-employed citizens must be applied.

These measures are proposed in the aspect of strengthening state regulation of employment in conditions of crisis, growing economic difficulties and disruptions in the cycles of reproduction. Special attention is paid to the arrangement of occupational training for workers at threat of mass layoffs, with further possibility to carry out continuing studies at companies implementing innovative technologies, as well as the conduct of vocational training and professional development of staff of enterprises implementing restructuring and technological modernization of production. The circumstances in the world economy are developing in such a way that all the developed countries of the Western bloc are rapidly changing the technological base of production and laying down a fundamentally new model of employment in the economy with a focus on the latest sixth technological order, on the latest achievements of information, nano and biotechnology, and the cognitive economy. Such a course is the only one that provides a fundamentally new structure of employment with the achievement of a high level of labor productivity and production efficiency. Thus, the material and technical basis for a radical renewal of the professional and qualification structure of labor potential and the formation of a new model of effective employment is laid. The interconnected renewal of the material basis of production and the human factor after overcoming the protracted economic crisis is perceived by developed countries as a decisive condition for ensuring competitiveness in a new round of global economic growth.

In this context, the Nurlyzhol program acquires special significance, forming a practical basis for the bilateral exchange of advanced technological developments and modern management of production processes. An important task of the state is the preservation, restoration, and development of a person as a factor of reproduction in the new conditions of industrial and innovative development. In social and humanitarian terms, the solution to the problem in the current crisis conditions rests on a radical revision of budget expenditures in the direction of maintaining social investments and improving the general conditions of employment. It means meeting the needs of state programs that are adequate to the stage of innovative development, improving wages in education, health care and science, and other social guarantees for the population.

A key goal of the acute distress phase is to provide sustainable economic growth and structural transformations of the economy, implementing employment programs and social obligations to smooth out sharp social differentiation in the republic.

Therefore, in the framework of the analysis, we have proposed a conceptual model of employment, including the formulation of the goal, definition of key objectives, principles of realization, and strategic focus. The aim of policy in the field of employment is the reproduction of the region's labor capacity, based on the effective utilization of qualified workforce.

Regional employment management is an essential element of the state governance system and a key direction in the realization of socio-economic policy at the national, territorial, and local levels. In this respect, the employment promotion policy should be based on the application of a comprehensive mechanism that integrates market tools and administrative control. The formation of the mechanism for governing regional employment is determined by its systemic nature, embedded in the reproduction processes of labor potential, as well as by the specifics of the regional labor market functioning, formed under the influence of regional factors. The crucial objective of the regional employment strategy in Kazakhstan must be to achieve an effective state of employment, ensure regional economic growth, and improve people's welfare status. The organizational and economic mechanism for the implementation of the regional employment policy includes a system of interaction between the levels of management and public organizations implementing the interests of the entities of the labor policy based on legal and normative documents, as well as the realization of the responsibilities directed to the performance of the management functions of the reproduction processes of the labor capacity of the area in compliance with the strategy goals of the government strategy in the area of employability.

The development and practical implementation of territorial employment policy for youth should be based on socially focused patterns of cooperation between regional authorities, local government institutions, representatives of civil society, and the business community, as well as on the principle of strategic state-private and community partnership. The conception of providing employment for people in a new economic environment designed by the author determines the core priorities of public policy focused on improving the efficiency of the market, promoting sustainable employment, lowering the rate of unemployment, and ensuring welfare support for jobless individuals. The concept is built on consistent logic: “Problems – Determinants – Goals and objectives – Priority areas – Methods – Instruments – Mechanism of implementation”. Its structure includes:

- carrying out an analysis of the labor market condition in terms of the supply and demand ratio for labor;
- defining objectives, targets, and focus directions for the government's efforts to regulate employment;
- creation of a set of institutionally designed measures involving both conventional and modern means of supporting employment;
- determination of key targets and mechanisms for cooperation between key social partners;
- ensuring the provision of resources and instruments for the realization of the conception in action. The concept of providing employment is given in the Figure 4.



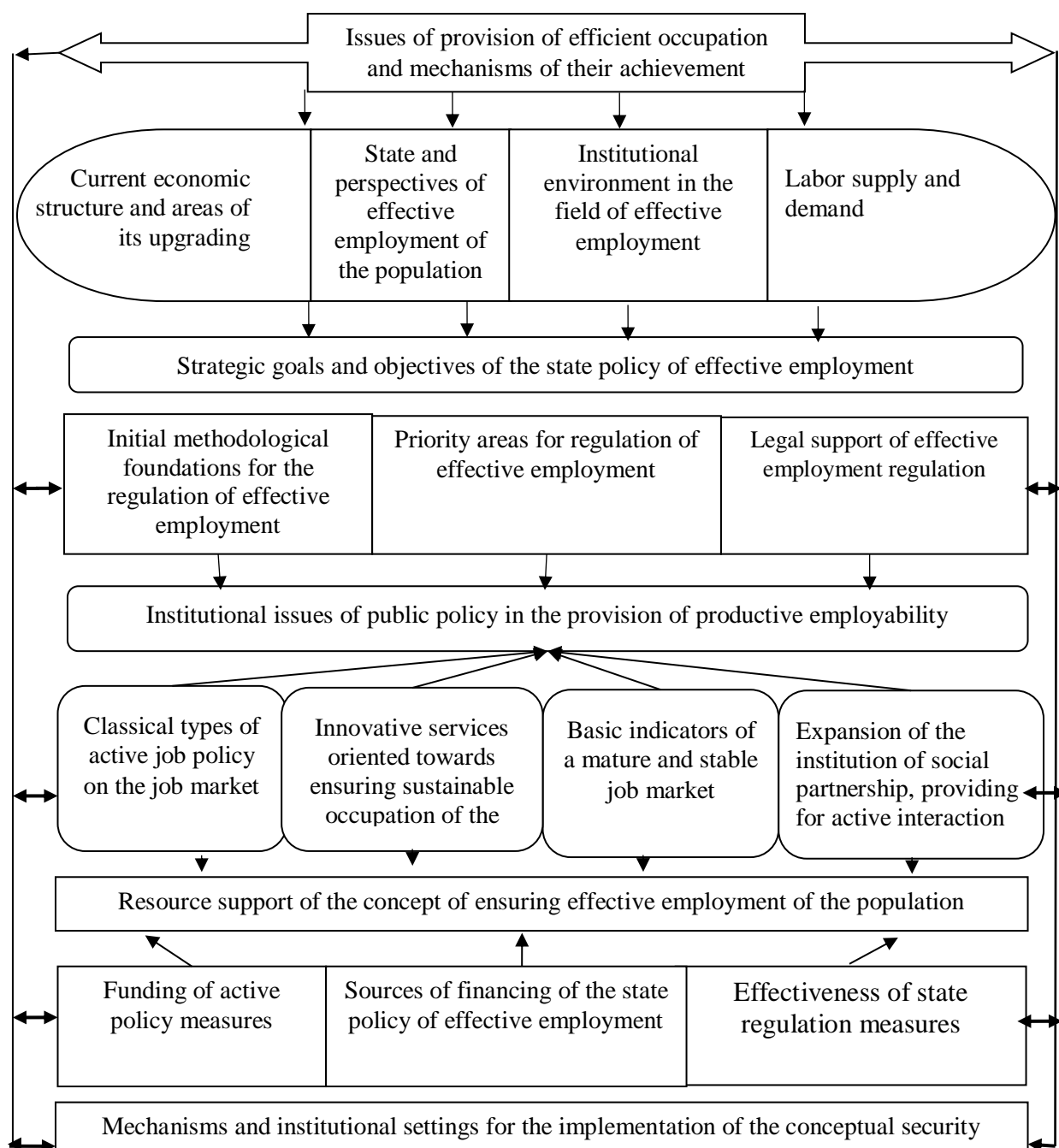


Figure 4 – Concept of providing employment

Note – compiled by the author

The goals of this conception are to establish an optimal employment framework, enhance the efficiency of the employment sector, upgrade the quality and attractiveness of the workforce, and provide social protection for the public in a fast-changing economic climate. Aims of the conception: to offer specialized assistance to persons at risk of being laid off, ensure the rights of people to fair working conditions and protect them from joblessness, provision of skilled labor in the required number of workers to employers. The methodological basis of the concept includes a set of key parameters,

such as qualitative characteristics and composition of the labor force, reflecting the supply in the labor market; employment structure, characterizing the volume and directions of demand for labor resources; the system of social and labor relations, regulating the interaction of subjects of the labor market; conditions and levels of labor remuneration, as well as other socio-economic factors affecting the functioning and development of the labor market.

The main directions of state policy of institutional nature include: job creation to reduce unemployment; support for the development of entrepreneurship as a mechanism for expanding access to employment; training and retraining of labor resources following the current needs of the national economy; providing the population with access to services in the field of employment promotion; development of a system of interaction between the state, employers and professional associations; cooperation between the state, employers and professional associations. Key indicators of the effectiveness of the implementation of the concept include: the overall level of economic activity of the labor force; the number of newly created jobs, the share of employed persons in the total number of officially registered workers; the number of citizens who have registered individual entrepreneur status and have remained employed for more than one year; the share of persons employed as a result of vocational training; the volume of regional financial resources allocated for the implementation of employment promotion programs; the dynamics of the indicators of the employment promotion programs; and the number of people who have been employed for more than one year.

The mechanisms for implementing the concept provide for a comprehensive approach to achieving the set goals, including the following key components:

- legislative mechanism involving the development and improvement of the legal and regulatory framework governing employment relations;
- financial and economic mechanisms involving state support for employment, including subsidizing jobs and investing in human capital development;
- an organizational mechanism aimed at expanding employment opportunities and introducing active employment policy instruments;
- a methodological mechanism that ensures the development of strategic approaches to labor market management based on modern analytical and forecasting models.

The implementation of the concept of promoting the employment of young people and young adults is focused on increasing the efficiency of using labor potential and revealing its productive efficiency, stimulating demand for labor from the private sector, and improving the quality and competitiveness of labor resources through the development of career potential. The most important tasks are to promote productive employment, strengthen the social protection system, create conditions for the emergence of innovative jobs in high-tech sectors of the economy, and transition from fragmented support to systemic transformations aimed at modernizing the labor market, stimulating innovative activity, investing in human capital, providing conditions for personal fulfillment, and increasing the level of social protection for unemployed citizens. The need to develop a modern concept of employment in the

system of balanced territorial development is due not only to the urgent need to solve existing problems in this area, but also to adapt to new social and economic realities, and its efficiency depends on structural elements. The modern socio-economic environment includes a set of key issues, including innovation-based growth of the economy, transformation of social and labor relationships under the impact of globalization trends, establishment of a step-by-step interaction model between the government, employers and hired workers, as well as the elaboration and adoption of modern mechanisms and tools of regulation of employment directed at the effective implementation and use of labor capabilities. Moreover, essential drivers are changes in the nature and types of socio-economic activities of Kazakhstan's regional development in the conditions of world changes, the national economy modernization, and the country's inclusion in the world economic environment.

The conducted work on the current situation in the labor market and problems of employment in the Republic of Kazakhstan on the background of global changes in the economic environment allows to draw a series of important lessons. Nowadays the labor market of the economy facing multiple calls due to both internal constraints - the structural shifts in the economy, the obsolescence of workers' professional skills, the imbalance between the education systems and the real requirements of the job market - and external constraints - worldwide instability, strengthening of migration flows, changing patterns of labor relationships in the context of a technological transition. State policy in the area of employment in the last few years has focused on the realization of a set of actions aimed at keeping stability in the job market. The Employment Roadmap, Nurlyzhol and similar infrastructure initiatives have all played an effective role in reducing the negative effects of the crises, saving potentially many thousands of jobs and promoting regional development. Nonetheless, challenges persist in terms of the insufficient efficiency of conventional tools of public employment support and the need to adjust these measures to the newly emerging socio-economic environment.

It is important to mention that urgent issue for economy is the rising imbalance between the supply and demand for workers, whose quality features often do not meet the needs of modern industry. There is a tendency of qualified specialists to leave the country and unskilled labor force to flow into the economy, which intensifies social risks and worsens the problem of self-employment without an adequate level of vocational training. In these contexts, the insufficient development of the professional education and retraining of personnel becomes a key factor limiting the possibilities for sustainable economic growth.

The gradual institutional deterioration of employment guarantees is another key challenge, which is expressed in the declining role of the state as a provider of the right of people to work and adequate remuneration for their work. Amendments to labor legislation designed to promote the liberalization of the job market have in some respects led to a lower level of social security for workers, which is likely to lead to increased social pressure. It is getting obvious that subsequent evolution of the state employment policy calls for a switch from primarily reactive actions to the construction of a more proactive system of labor market regulation. This assumes upgrading the

entire system of employment promotion tools and enhancing the role of innovation initiatives, such as the setting up of vocational training centers, agencies for temporary employment, vocational guidance offices and business stimulation units. The most significant element of such upgrading should be systemic assistance to lifelong professional training, the creation of mechanisms for forecasting staffing requirements, and the enhancement of state responsibilities for ensuring the fair and proper functioning of the job market.

In the current conditions, when economy crises are getting more frequent and deeper, the key focus should be a proactive policy directed at raising the efficiency and adaptability of the job market and promoting the enhancement of human capital as the main asset for sustainable economy growth. Of especial importance is the adoption of a patent system of taxation for self-employed people, the promotion of advanced training programs, and the development of employment prospects for young people and the vulnerable groups of the society. As a result, ensuring the stability of the job market, reduction of joblessness, raising the quality of the workforce and establishing conditions suitable for effective employment should be strategic government policy priorities in the field of labor and employment. Only a complex, targeted and innovative way of addressing problems of the labor market will allow Kazakhstan to meet the current challenges, ensure economic stability and establish a basis for a fair and prosperous community.

The main focus of government employment policies is also the integration of the principles of sustainable development and inclusivity. The new conditions necessitate the creation of models of the labor market that not only ensure economic efficiency, but also contribute to social justice, reduce disparities and expand employment opportunities for all categories of the society, including young people, women, people with disabilities and people in rural areas. This calls for strengthening interagency co-operation and promoting effective partnership arrangements between the state, business and educational institutions.

With the rapidly accelerating pace of changes in technology, the issue of workplace digitalization is of great relevance. The spread of remote forms of employment, the growth of the platform economy, and the expansion of flexible forms of work organization create both new potential and new risks, including with regard to the social security of workers. In this connection, it is important to develop a contemporary legal and normative framework regulating non-conventional forms of work, as well as to develop tools for the social security of freelancers, platform workers and those who are employed on a temporary basis.

The problem of youth jobs, which is one of the most disadvantaged segments of the job market, deserves special note. Inadequate correlation between training programs and the real needs facing the economy, the low degree of professional orientation system development, and lack of incentives for business activity among young people necessitate the need to improve state support measures for young specialists, expand practical-oriented training, and set up special schemes to facilitate the placement of graduates in the labor market. Therefore, further growth of Kazakhstan's labor market should be based on a mix of strategic and tactical steps

aimed at improving the level of human capital, fostering innovation, and establishing new jobs that meet the demands of the digital economy and the green economy.

The result of the performed review is the understanding of the need for a package solution to employment challenges, which should include efforts to address education and vocational training, upgrade the institutional environment of the job market, boost entrepreneurship, develop job infrastructure, as well as an intensive social policy aimed directly at supporting sensitive groups of the populations. Only with the consistent and coordinated efforts to implement these strategies should it become possible to create an effective, durable and fair labor market model capable of coping with the current stage of social and economic dynamics.

## **2 ANALYSIS OF THE ACTUAL STATE OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE LABOR MARKET OF KAZAKHSTAN**

### **2.1 Analysis of the features of youth employment in the nationwide and territorial labor markets**

The job market is one of the core spheres of the country's economy and is the most important indicator since which it is necessary to assess the degree of socio-economic sustainability, the welfare of the population, and the efficiency of the ongoing reforms. In this context, public employment is a vital element of social reproduction, influencing the overall standard of living, as well as the volume of public costs related to the selection, training, retraining, and further training of personnel, their placement, and social assistance to the jobless. Special emphasis on the functioning of the labor market is placed on young people as one of the most vulnerable categories.

Increasing interest in the tasks and opportunities of young people as a socio-demographic group is currently being observed. Youth is determined through a set of age features, social standing, and functions in the social framework, as well as through the specifics of their interests and value orientations. The term “youth” is usually understood as a set of individuals of early age who are provided with the possibility to fulfill their capacity to realize their potential while at the same time enjoying certain social benefits but also encountering limits on their participation in certain spheres of public life. It is worth emphasizing that the age limits of youth vary across country-specific contexts. Internationally, 15–24-year-olds are categorized as youth. However, in those countries where entry into labor activity takes place at a later stage, the youth category age limit can be raised to 29 years. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, from January 1, 2023, the youth age requirement was formally expanded to 35 years of age.

The specific characteristic of the young as a socio-demographic group is their ability to assimilate, reproduce, and further transmit the established system of social, economic, and cultural relations that form today's society. According to the United Nations, the world's youth population amounts to about 1.8 billion people. In this regard, the formation of effective tools to promote this group is increasingly relevant since it is the younger generation that has the capacity to greatly affect key issues of the long-term development of a society and help to achieve a greater level of welfare and sustainability at the global level [2].

There are several challenges facing labor force youth in the job market that hinder their success in employment and career advancement. Here are the major ones:

1. lack of experience – employees often request work-related experience even for initial positions, hampers graduates' ability to find employment;
2. strong competition – many new graduates with the same skills and qualifications create intense competition for positions;
3. education does not meet the requirements of the market – universities' programs are not necessarily adapted to the actual needs of their employers, so students have to finish their studies or re-educate themselves;

4. poor pay and insecurity – young specialists often earn low incomes and face interim contracts, non-paid internships, or part-time jobs;
5. no career advancement – in some sectors, it is complex for junior employees to get on the career ladder because more senior workers are favored;
6. age discrimination – employers may hesitate to hire young people, believing they are insufficiently responsible or professionally qualified;
7. issues with soft skills – some youth have inadequate communication, critical thinking, and teamwork skills, which makes them less likely to be competitive.

The automation and technology – driven transition of working life are shrinking the number of conventional occupations, while new jobs that are emerging demand greater levels of qualifications and digital skills that might not be sufficiently accessible to young people. In addition, young people are losing employment opportunities due to their lack of familiarity with modern job-hunting tools, including CV writing, job interviews, and the use of digital tools to engage with prospective employers. Youth also face significant pressure from high expectations from their society and family, as well as intensive competition, which can trigger stress, self-doubt, and professional burnout early in their careers.

Therefore, young specialists remain in a weaker position than representatives of older age categories, particularly in the context of increased economic instability. After graduating from institutions of higher or specialized secondary schools, young people frequently face the so-called “first job trap”, where there are no opportunities to find a position corresponding to their skills. In many cases, the available vacancies in the job market do not match the vocational qualifications and background of graduates, which often leads to their finding employment outside the field of their profession or to long-term periods of joblessness. Youth in the country are considered individuals between the ages of 15 and 35, with the top age limit of this category being raised from 28 to 35 on January 1, 2023. In Table 6, the main indicators of youth labor market of Kazakhstan are provided for the period from 2019 to 2023.

Table 6 – Key indicators of the youth labor market in Kazakhstan for 2019-2023\*

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Difference (2019-2023)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Labor force, thousand persons	2,124.9	2,099.8	2,063.4	1,885.7	3,685.7	73%
Employed population, thousand persons	2,045.9	2,019.4	1,985.8	1,813.8	3,555.8	73.8%
Hired workers, thousand persons	1,567.7	1,573.1	1,565.1	1,405.8	2,784.4	77.59%
Self-employed, thousand persons	478.1	446.3	420.7	408.0	771.4	61%
Unemployed population, thousand persons	79.0	80.4	77.6	71.9	129.9	63.3%
Youth unemployment rate, %	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.5	-2%

Continuous of Table 6

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Long-term unemployment rate, %	2.0	2.1	1.9	2.1	0.9	-1.1%
Individuals not incorporated in the workforce, ths. people	1,355.2	1,354.9	1,343.0	1,334.9	1,682.2	24%
<p>Note – derived from figures of the National Statistical Bureau of the Kazakhstan Agency for State Planning and Reforms [67]</p> <p>* Data for 2019-2022 are formed according to The State Youth Policy Law of the Kazakhstan Republic defines the age range of a youth aged from 15 to 28, with the option of extending it to 29 (28+). Starting from January 1, 2023, the age cap for young adults is being raised to 35 years.</p>						

Based on data from the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan's National Bureau of Statistics, a trend towards a gradual decrease in the youth labor market from 2019 to 2022 is registered – from 2,124.9 thousand people in 2019 to 1,885.7 thousand people in 2022. However, there is a sharp increase to 3,685.7 thousand persons in 2023. It is due to a change in the definition of the age of youth: in 2023, the age range was increased to 35 years old, and it increased the labor force. The number of employed individuals also decreased from 2,045.9 thousand in 2019 to 1,813.8 thousand in 2022. In 2023, the figure rose to 3,555.8 thousand persons. The expanded age range can also explain it.

During the years between 2019 and 2022, the unemployed youth was characterized by volatility, fluctuating between 72 and 80 thousand individuals. But in 2023, there was a dramatic increase in this figure, reaching a rate of 129.9 thousand people, showing an increment of 80.6 % over the previous year. As mentioned previously, firstly, it is because of the changed age range. Also, based on statistical data from the World Bank, this can occur due to the deceleration of economic growth dynamics in the country. In the first half of the year 2024, the growth rate of Kazakhstan's economy slowed down to 3.2 % in comparison with 5.3 % in the same term of 2023. The main factors behind this trend were a 3.5 % drop in investment and a 4.5 % reduction in government expenditure. Those facts may have contributed to the decline in the creation of new employment, leading to a rise in joblessness rates.

The youth joblessness level keeps steady at 3.7-3.8% in 2019-2022. It fell slightly to 3.5% in 2023, which may indicate an improvement in youth employment despite the rise in the total amount of unemployed. The problem most affected youth specialists with few professional qualifications. In part, gender differentiation of indicators shows a higher unemployment rate among female youth (4.3%) compared to male youth (2.9%), indicating the presence of structural disproportions in the labor market. Young adults are significantly involved in informal forms of employment compared to representatives of older age categories. A particularly high share of informal employment is observed among young men. Informal jobs are largely typical of rural youth, mostly self-employed, with low education levels and little income. Therefore, a



considerable increase in the size of the registered jobless in 2023 is due to a combined influence of certain elements, including slowing economic growth, a high level of informal employment, and possible changes in the methodology of statistical recording. Long-period unemployment also remained around 2% with slight fluctuations. In 2023, this rate has dropped significantly to 0.9%, and 0,6% in the fourth quarter of 2024. It may positively signal the labor market.

In 2023, the Republic of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Labor and Social Protection took active steps to promote employment, which led to the employment of more than 900,000 Kazakhstanis. The set of measures implemented covered such areas as developing the institution of social partnership, encouraging self-employment, supporting small and medium-sized businesses, organizing professional retraining programs, implementing public works, introducing job quotas, providing economic incentives to employers, and providing information support for the functioning of the labor market. These forces have boosted labor market fluctuation, contributing to quicker job recovery, and thereby lowering long-term joblessness. In Kazakhstan, young people under 35 make up about 40% of the labor force. Most often, young people work in wage employment (more than 75% in 2023). At the same time, the service sector remains a more attractive area for employment, employing 40% of the country's youth labor force.

Table 7 provides information on the size of the country's working population for the timeframe 2019-2023. During this period, an upward trend in the self-employed is observed, rising from 478,142 in 2019 to 771,412 in 2023, an increment of 38 %, or 293,270 people. However, the productively employed population also exhibited a growth of 39 %, from 435,814 to 716,628 people.

Table 7 – Structural features of self-employed young people in Kazakhstan in 2019-2023

Employment	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	(2019-2023) differen ce, %	Differenc e
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Self-employed individuals	478142	446338	420653	407,961	771412	38	+293270
Productively employed individuals	435814	403693	378189	369,666	716628	39	+280814
Self-employed individuals (registered officially and engaged in active work) with an income above the minimum living wage	361319	333027	319091	319,272	621433	41,8	+260114
Persons engaged in private professional activities (officially registered and carried out), with an income level exceeding the established subsistence minimum	394	387	329	1,676	6196	93,6	+5802
Participants of a cooperative with revenues above the cost of living	312	2000	1822	448	4713	93	+4401
Those who operate a household farm based on the production and trade (or barter) of output, with an earnings level that is greater than the minimum subsistence level	73789	68279	56947	48,270	84286	12,4	+10497

## Continuous of Table 7

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Unproductively employed	42328	42645	42464	38,295	54784	22,7	+12456
Independent workers (unregistered)	25806	20431	25165	23,342	37797	31,7	+11991
Establishers (members) involved in business partnerships, promoters, stockholders (participants) of not registered joint-stock entities	396	598	2068	1,129	1610	75	+1214
Self-employed individuals (not active among the registered)	884	5619	1165	1,943	3925	77,47	3041
Those engaged in individual Private Practice who are not in registered worker status	-	10	-	-	284	-	284
Self-employed citizens (formally registered and carrying out legal labor activity) with an income level not exceeding the subsistence minimum	3816	5474	5830	5,323	5332	28,4	+1516
Individuals engaged in private labor activity (officially registered and accompanied by actual employment) with an income level not exceeding the established subsistence minimum	-	-	-	-	110	-	-
Participants of a cooperative with an earned income lower than the minimum living wage	28	53	17	16	-	-	-28
People involved in household farming operations are orientated on production and trade ("bartering") of output, with incomes lower than the minimum subsistence level	11398	10460	8219	6,542	5726	-49,7	-5672
Note – compiled based on data from the Kazakh National Statistics Bureau of the Strategic Plan and Reforms Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan [67]							

The breakdown of the labor force by category shows an overall increase of 41.8 % in the total number of self-employed (registered and active individuals with an average salary above the minimum subsistence wage), which is an absolute growth of 260,114:

- entities conducting private sector activities (passing registration and actively working with earnings above the minimum living wage) increased by 93,6%, from 394 to 6196 people. This significant growth may indicate a rise in the popularity of private practice;

- members of production cooperatives increased by 93%, an increase of 4401 persons;

- the number of individuals employed in personal subsidiary farms selling products (with incomes above the minimum living wage) increased by 12.4% or 10497 persons;

- the number of unproductively employed individuals increased by 22.7%, from 42328 to 54784 persons.

Among the unproductively employed:

- independent workers (unregistered) increased by 31.7%, from 25806 to 37797 persons;
- founders of business partnerships and joint-stock companies (unregistered) grew by 75%, from 396 to 1610 persons;
- individuals working individually (unregistered) increased by 77.47%, from 884 to 3925 persons;
- those engaged in private practice (unregistered) increased by 284 persons from 0;
- the number of production co-operative units' members with incomes below the subsistence minimum fell by 28 people;
- the number of persons operating private farms oriented towards commodity production and having incomes below the subsistence level dropped by 49.7 %, from 11,398 to 5,726.

The interpretation of results with abrupt changes in the mentioned indicators can be explained by actively implementing government support programs for smaller and mid-size businesses in Kazakhstan, designed to simplify business registration, reduce the tax load, and provide soft financing. Schemes such as the Business Roadmap 2025 and micro-lending via the Damu fund are encouraging increases in the number of formally established entrepreneurs. Also, in recent years, Kazakhstan has minimized regulatory burdens on smaller businesses. Automated registry procedures, fewer reporting obligations, and simplified tax regulations have improved the access and attraction of private entrepreneurial activity. As part of labor market reforms, the government is stimulating the movement of self-employed people from the informal sector to the formal sector. Adopting digital options such as mobile tax apps and business legalization information initiatives has helped increase the number of registered self-employed individuals. Growing incomes and rising household demand have created a supportive environment for developing private businesses. The services, retail, and digital economy sectors have been given an expansion boost, which led to an increase in the number of new business owners. Thus, the growth in the number of privately operating entities results from a comprehensive ongoing economic transition, an improved business climate, government business support measures, and a general trend toward formalizing the sector.

Official statistics show that the country's self-employed youth population is still high, at about 22%. The proportion of self-employed young people classified as nonproductively working was 8.9 % in 2019, 9.5 % in 2020, 10 % in 2021, 9.3 % in 2022, and 7.1 % in 2023. While this group's number has been decreasing favorably, its specific weight remains at a relatively high level. Table 8 shows the trends in the number of youths employed at the ages of 15-35 in the country by various sectors of the national economy for 2019-2023. The overall number of working youths dropped from 1,985.8 000 in 2021 to 1,813.8 000 in 2022, which is equivalent to a decrease of 8.7 %.

Table 8 – Structure of youth employment in 2019-2023 (thousand persons)

Employment in the sector	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	Growth (%)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Employed in the economy, total	3555,7	1,813.8	1,985.8	2019,4	2045,9	74
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	381,4	203.2	238.6	246,1	250,2	52
Industry	404,9	183.3	213.2	213,3	232,5	74
Mining and quarrying	98,9	40.5	45.3	48,4	51	93
Processing industry	225,2	108.5	124.8	121,8	135,3	66.4
Providing electric power, gas, heat, steam, water, hot water and air-conditioning	50,5	22.4	29	27,6	28,8	75.3
Provision of water services, waste management, collection, recycling, and disposal of wastes, operations in the sphere of protection of the environment and control of pollution	30,2	11.9	14	15,6	17,3	74.5
Building activities	247,4	124.7	143.9	148,5	144,8	70
Retail and wholesaling, servicing and maintenance of vehicles and motorbikes	599,1	335	353.5	356,9	368,1	62.7
Transport and warehousing	225,7	113.7	120.7	113,4	125,3	80.1
Provision of accommodation and food services	94,6	50.7	54.2	54	57,3	65
Information and communication	90	44.8	47.2	41,8	43,6	106
Financial and insurance activities	96,6	48.2	58.6	59,4	62,2	55.3
Real estate transactions	58	37.7	38.3	39,2	33,1	75
Professional, scientific, and technical activities	115,7	59.4	59.9	74,7	63,8	81.3
Administrative and support services activities	106,4	56	64.5	73	67,4	57.8
Government administration and protection, compulsory social security	245,3	114.8	124.5	132,6	123,2	99.1
Education	448,9	209.7	232.1	227,7	235	91
Healthcare and social services	219,5	110.6	114.6	111,5	110,5	98.6
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	59	34	33.8	36,1	39,8	48.2
Provision of other kinds of services	163,2	87.9	88.2	90,9	89	83.3
Note – compiled based on data from the Kazakh National Statistics Bureau of the Strategic Plan and Reforms Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan [67]						

According to the National Statistics Bureau of the Kazakhstan Republic, young people aged 15 to 35 make up around one quarter of the country's total economically

engaged population. Currently, the number of employed representatives of this age group exceeds 3 million. At that point, the youth population segment, analogous to the total structure of the national job market, is marked by a substantial level of misbalance [63].

In agro-industry, forestall, and fish farming, the number of employed persons increased by 52 %, from 250,2 thousand to 381,4 thousand. This is a significant increase, which may indicate growth in the sector in recent years, increased investment, and the implementation of ecological farm management, which in turn creates more jobs. Total employment in industry increased by 74%, from 232.5 thousand to 404.9 thousand. Within the industry, mining increased by 93%, and manufacturing increased by 66.4%. The supply of electricity, gas, steam, and other services increased by 75.3%. Water supply and waste treatment increased by 74.5%. The number of employed persons in construction increased by 70%, from 144.8 to 247.4 thousand. This may indicate a rise in interest in this industry or a temporary increase in available jobs. There was an overall increase in youth employment in most sectors in the fourth quarter of 2024 compared to 2019. The sectors with the largest increase in employment include information and communication, public administration and defense, and healthcare and social services. Arts, entertainment, and recreation are the only sectors where employment increased slightly, which may reflect an increased interest in creative and cultural occupations among youth. Table 9 provides summarized information on the employment rates of youth in the tourism branch of the Kazakhstan Republic for the period 2019-2023.

Table 9 – Employment of young people in the Kazakhstani tourism sector for 2019-2023

Employment	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Rendering of living and catering services	57,3	54,0	54,2	50,7	94,6
The arts, recreation, and leisure activities	39,8	36,1	33,8	34,0	59,0
Other types of services	89,0	91,0	88,2	87,9	163,3
Note – compiled based on data from the Kazakh National Statistics Bureau of the Strategic Plan and Reforms Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan [67]					

Within 2019-2022 there was a decline in the level of young people's employment in this sphere, which was due to the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and related restricting actions that affected the performance of the tourism sector. At the same time, in 2023, considerable growth in all segments of employment in the sector was recorded, which may reflect the process of post-crisis rehabilitation of the industry and an improvement in travel demand.

As a consequence of the tourism labor market analysis, we have discovered the key problematic aspects of human resources provision in the industry and identified possible areas for their solutions. The following problems can be identified among the topical ones that describe the human resources capacity at the modern phase:

- there is a lack of an efficient system of control and assessment of the quality of staff professional performance in the tourism sector;
- the dominant part of the workers has only an ordinary level of educational attainment, which restricts the opportunities for professional growth and developing competences;
- there is a shortage of corporate culture and a common organizational approach to the implementation of labor duties;
- inadequate mechanisms of entrepreneurial investment in labor potential and tourism industry infrastructure;
- there is a poor level of motivation among workers, which lowers productivity and the overall quality of services rendered;
- work conditions in most organizations in the sphere of tourism do not correspond to the latest conditions of comfort and safety;
- there is a deficit of advanced technical facilities and digital decisions necessary for efficient work.

The climate of investment in tourist organizations is still poor, which restricts the inflow of funding and the development of the staffing base. The staff retention issue in the tourism industry of Kazakhstan can be addressed through the creation of favorable occupational and accommodation conditions for youth, including sustainable employment, stable forms of employment, a competitive compensation system, and the provision of socially oriented benefits. A decrease in the level of personnel turnover is feasible based on the active engagement of state authorities in the promotion of accessible housing and communication infrastructure, as well as by introducing the elements of business culture into the education system. This must start at the stage of vocational guidance of the young generation and be supported by policies to stimulate youth entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the expansion of private initiatives in education will allow to lower the burden on the public budget in the area of social welfare support. Figure 5 shows the movement of employed youth across the different sectors of the Republic of the country's economy over the time horizon from 2019 to 2023.

Analysis of the sectoral structure of employment has shown that young professionals are predominantly employed in insufficiently productive sectors of the economy. For instance, in 2023, 16.8% of working youth were involved in trade, 10.7% in agriculture, 11.3% in industry, and 12.6% in education and other types of economic activity [67]. This accumulation of young people's work in sectors with relatively low labour productivity is evidence of structural disbalances in the job market and the limited opportunities for the career development of youth. In the face of rapid advances in technology and the digitalisation of the economy, it is important to stimulate the redistribution of workforce in favour of high-tech and knowledge-intensive sectors, such as IT, financial services, science and innovation. This calls for the realisation of comprehensive measures, including the modernisation of the vocational training network, the expansion of dual training mechanisms and the facilitation of the employment of young professionals in key priority areas.

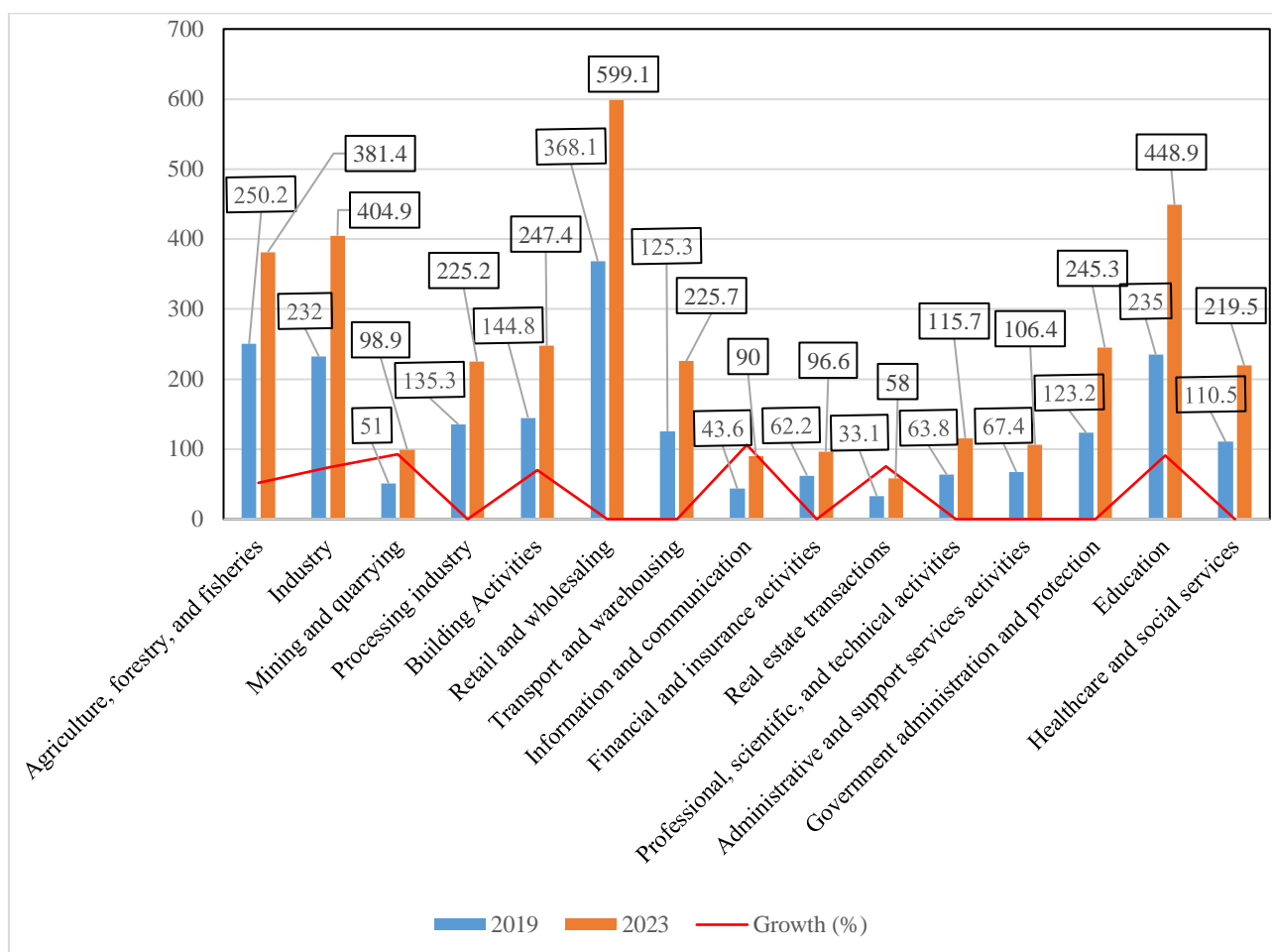


Figure 5 – Movement of employed youth by economic sectors for the period 2019-2023 (thousand persons)

Note – compiled based on [67]

It should be noted that entrepreneurial activity among young people remains at an insufficient level. Most economically active young citizens are employed as employees, while the share of self-employed is only 20.9%. It is important to underline that self-employment in Kazakhstan, as a rule, is associated with a small level of earnings and poor labor productivity. In rural regions, where there is a shortage of opportunities for formal work, self-engagement acts as an alternate form of occupation. In this view, salaried young workers are primarily concentrated in urban areas (65.9%), while most of the self-engaged youth (54.2%) live in rural localities [67]. Figure 6 shows the number of self-employed people aged 15-34 by regions of Kazakhstan in 2023.

Given these disparities, there is a need to create focused support schemes for youth self-employment, especially in rural areas. This could involve the granting of micro loans, tax incentives, educational initiatives on business, and providing support to young start-ups in their early phases of growth. Raising the financial and legal awareness of young persons, as well as setting up incubation centers in the regions, can facilitate the stable promotion of self-employment and foster the creation of jobs,

which will eventually have a beneficial effect on the decline of youth unemployment in the country.

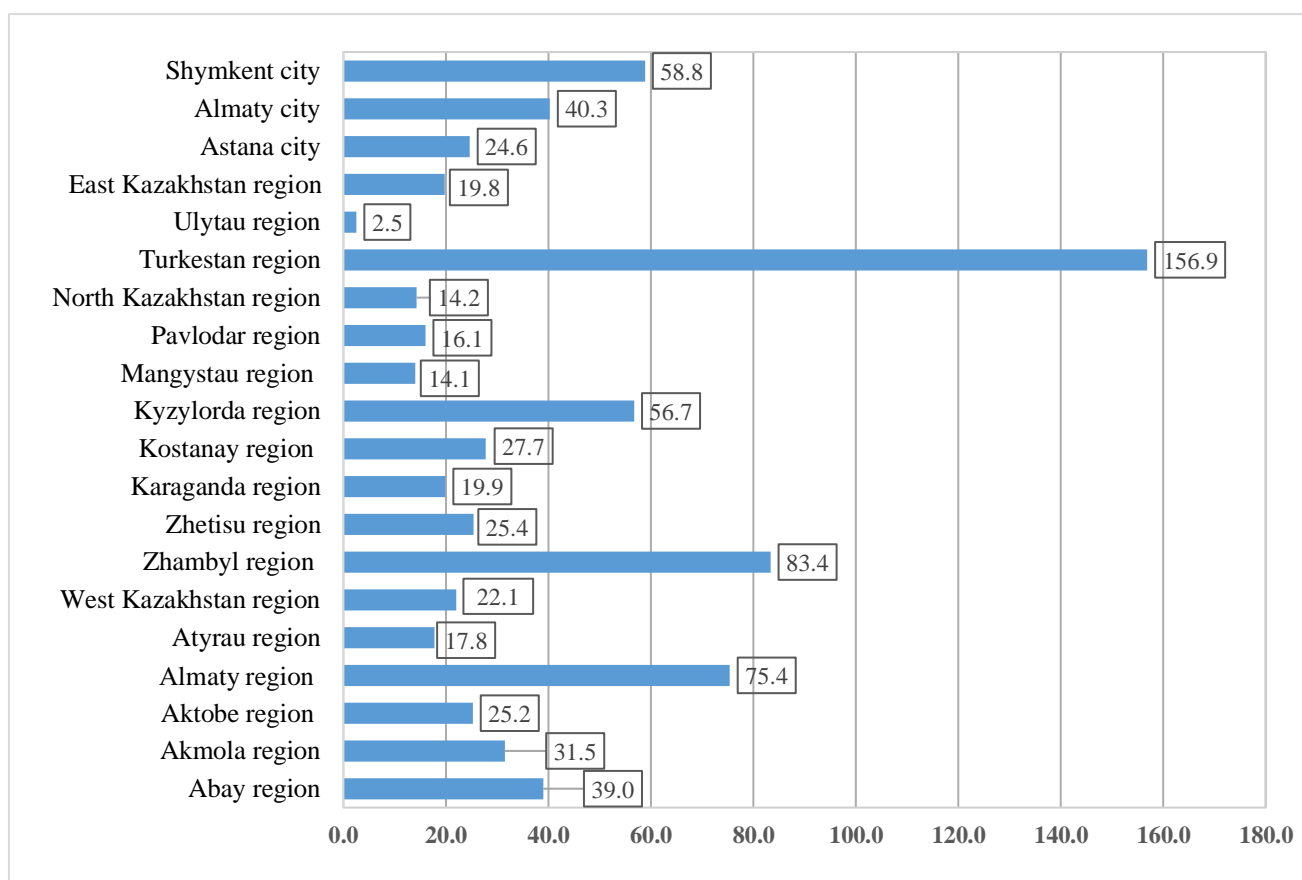


Figure 6 – Self-employed aged 15-34 in 2023 by region (thousand persons)

Note – compiled based on [67]

In the Turkestan region, there is a significant rate of self-occupation, which is the largest among the territories and makes up 156.9 thousand people. This figure may be explained by the strong traditions of business activity in agriculture and commerce, as well as by the low level of employment in the area, forcing young people to seek alternative sources of income. Zhambyl region ranks second with 83.4 thousand persons, which may also indicate the development of small businesses and agriculture. The information analysis shows essential differences in the level of self-occupation of young adults at the regional level. A high level of self-employment is observed in eastern and agriculturally oriented regions, while in remote and less developed areas, self-employment is significantly lower. This indicates the necessity to design and develop further supporting policies for self-employment in low-performing areas. The introduction of such actions can assist in lowering the level of youth joblessness and help to improve the level of economic sustainability. The next Figure 7 presents dynamic changes in the youth unemployment rate in the Republic of Kazakhstan from 2019 to 2023.



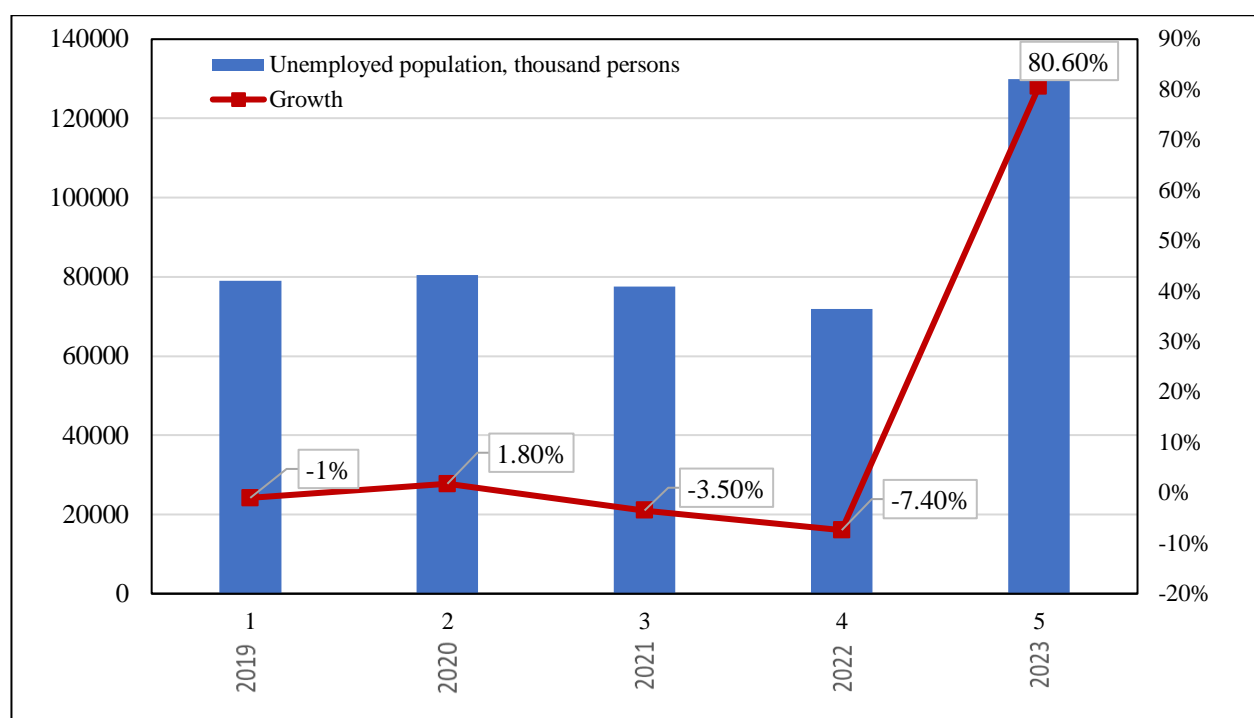


Figure 7 – Unemployed youth in 2019-2023, thousand persons

Note – compiled based on [63] \* Data for 2019-2022 are formed according to The State Youth Policy Law of the Kazakhstan Republic defines the age range of a youth aged from 15 to 28, with the option of extending it to 29 (28+). Starting from January 1, 2023, the age cap for young adults is being raised to 35 years [67]

The blue bars show the quantitative values of youth unemployment (in thousands of people), while the red line shows the change in the indicator as a percentage of the previous year. Trend analysis indicates the increasing nature of the youth unemployment rate. The significant increase in the number of unemployed people in 2023 compared to the pre-crisis period before the introduction of COVID can be attributed to a combination of factors. Among them, the key factors are the revision of the age limits of the youth category and the abolition of tax preferences. Since January 1, 2023, the upper limit of the age limit for youth in Kazakhstan was increased from 28 to 35 years, which entailed an automatic change in the statistical methodology: the structure of youth unemployment began to include persons previously counted as part of the adult unemployed population. This circumstance led to a statistically determined increase in the indicator, creating the effect of a sharp rise in youth unemployment, even though part of this increase reflects only methodological changes.

Implementing tax credits for young people in the post-quota period stimulated self-employment and entrepreneurship, enabling young workers to work in vulnerable or hybrid forms without severe tax burdens. Removing these incentives in 2023 may have resulted in many young self-employed entrepreneurs quitting business, raising unemployment rates. Despite the economic recovery, many youths' employment-oriented industries (hospitality, retail, services) have struggled with labor transformation, automation, and job cuts. This has made finding jobs difficult for young specialists without work experience. There has also been a disparity between

supply and demand in the job market. The increase in the number of graduates in specialties that are not in demand in the economy leads to a rise in youth joblessness. Rising prices and a drop in the population's purchasing power have also affected the labor market. Youth previously employed in low-paid sectors may have gone into non-formal employment, which is not recorded in official sources. Table 10 presents data trends in young people's joblessness by regions of Kazakhstan in the 2019–2023-time horizon.

Table 10 – Unemployed youth by regions for 2019-2023

Region	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Difference
Kazakhstan	79.0	80.4	77.6	71.9	129.9	63%
Abay region	-	-	-	2.4	3.1	-
Akmola region	2.4	2.4	2.1	2.1	4.6	91.6%
Aktobe region	2.9	2.4	2.1	2.0	4.4	51.7%
Almaty region	8.3	9.7	9.1	5.3	9.3	12%
Atyrau region	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.7	3.8	90%
West Kazakhstan	3.1	3.5	3.1	2.8	4.5	45%
Zhambyl region	4.2	5.0	4.5	4.1	8.0	90.5%
Zhetysay region	-	-	-	3.3	4.4	-
Karaganda region	6.0	6.3	6.0	4.0	5.5	-8%
Kostanay region	3.1	2.6	2.5	2.0	4.3	38.7%
Kyzylorda region	4.1	3.6	3.4	3.1	5.2	26%
Mangystau region	2.3	2.8	2.7	2.1	7.0	204%
South Kazakhstan	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pavlodar region	2.2	2.2	2.0	1.8	3.5	59%
North Kazakhstan	1.4	1.9	1.4	1.4	4.0	185%
Turkestan region	5.8	6.2	5.8	6.8	10.1	74%
Ulytau region	-	-	-	0.8	1.5	-
East Kazakhstan	6.4	5.6	5.6	3.1	4.3	-32%
Astana city	5.9	5.6	6.9	7.7	12.0	103%
Almaty city	15.3	15.5	15.4	12.6	23.4	52.95
Shymkent city	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.1	7.1	108%
Note – compiled based on data from the National Statistics Bureau of the Strategic Plan and Reforms Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan * Data for 2019-2022 are formed according to The State Youth Policy Law of the Kazakhstan Republic defines the age range of a youth aged from 15 to 28, with the option of extending it to 29 (28+). Starting from January 1, 2023, the age cap for young adults is being raised to 35 years [68]						

In 2023, the most significant rise in youth unemployment recording is in the city of Almaty, which experienced an expansion of the youth unemployment rate to 23.4 thousand persons, up from 12.6 thousand persons in 2022. The city of Astana also observed an increase in the youth unemployment rate to 12.0 thousand people compared to 7.7 thousand people in 2022, Turkestan region - increased to 10.1

thousand persons compared to 6.8 thousand in 2022. Regions with stable or steadily rising unemployment rates include Karaganda region, where rates remain basically stable except for a small increase to 5.5 thousand in 2023; Almaty region, which experienced a decrease in unemployment to 5.3 thousand in 2022 but again jumped to 9.3 thousand in 2023; and Zhambyl region, where the number of jobless increased to 8 thousand in 2023, despite an earlier downward trend in this indicator. The regional labor market and its dynamics are among the main drivers influencing the socio-economic enhancement of a region. At the same time, youth employment and job placement are determined by factors such as:

- slowdown of economic growth rates: under current conditions, the economy of Kazakhstan and its regions is experiencing structural transformations, mainly due to the import substitution policy and increased focus on the domestic market, which, in turn, affects the development of the manufacturing industry;
- demographic transformation in the composition of the population;
- technological changes: ensuring technological sovereignty and the structural adaptation of the national economy. The implementation of new technological projects will increase the demand for certain professions and worker qualifications;
- social changes include the socialization of labor, youth preferences, and societal differentiation into rich and poor. Youth in Kazakhstan face several challenges that complicate their employment and career advancement.

To begin with, even though the unemployment rate for young workers in Kazakhstan was 3.3 % in 2023, which is less than the republic-wide mean (4.6 %), the issue remains pressing. Youth with poor occupational skill levels are more likely to face joblessness due to the reduced availability of qualified positions. Among unemployed young people, women predominate (4.3%), compared to 2.9% among men. Secondly, young workers are preferable to adults in the informal sector, with an exceptionally high share of informal employment among young men. This sector typically includes self-employed rural youth with low levels of education and modest incomes. Thirdly, approximately 7.3% of youth in Kazakhstan aren't involved in training, study, or work (NEET). Unsustainable employment among young people in the Republic of Kazakhstan is among the pressing troubles in the job market. The situation is aggravated by factors such as the mismatch between the qualifications of young specialists and the requirements of employers, low wages, lack of social guarantees, and the temporary nature of work, especially in the private sector and in temporary or seasonal jobs. Figure 8 shows a share of NEET category 15-34 aged in Kazakhstan by region.

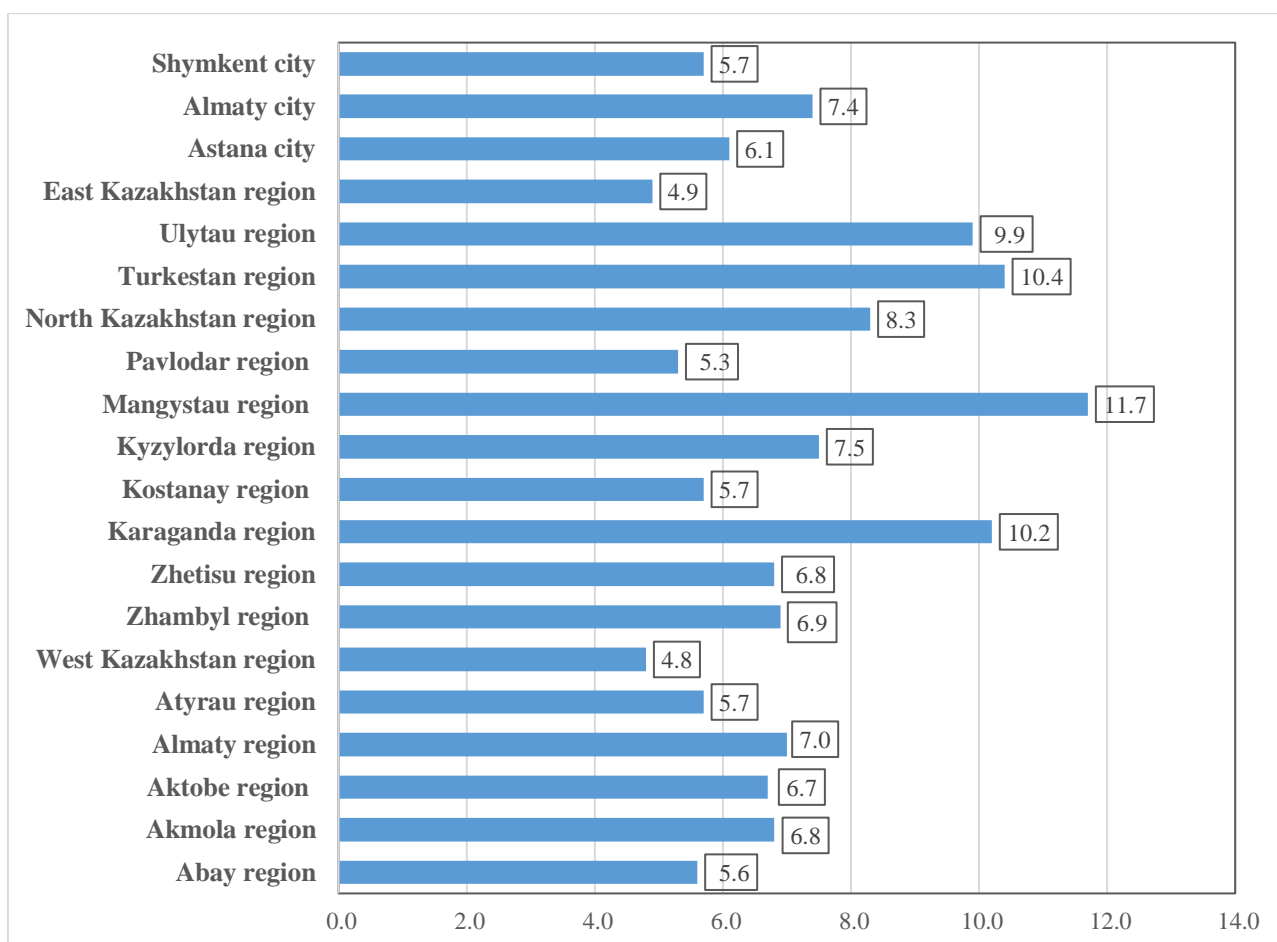


Figure 8 – Share of NEET category 15-34 aged in Kazakhstan by region (2023), %

Note – compiled based on data from the National Statistics Bureau of the Strategic Plan and Reforms Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan [67]

This situation varies dramatically across regions, with the highest NEET rates recorded in the Turkestan (10,4%), Karaganda (10.2%), and Mangystau (11.7%) regions. Based on Figure 8, we defined the impacts of precarious (unstable) jobs, that are shown below:

- economic volatility: youth without a regular income face difficulties providing basic needs and planning for the future;
- social insecurity: people without social guarantees and health insurance are working on temporary jobs or without official registration;
- decreased motivation for career advancement. Constant instability can reduce young people's interest in professional growth, negatively affecting their qualifications and prospects.

One of Kazakhstan's main employment challenges is the difficulty youth face in adapting to the labor market. To address this issue, centers have been established across the country to assist young people in finding meaningful and promising jobs. The Kazakh labor market has recently experienced a shortage of skilled specialists in technical professions, education, and agriculture. There is also a notable lack of workers for tasks that do not require specialized education, including general laborers,

drivers, salespeople, couriers, waiters, loaders, inspectors, nannies, security guards, and bodyguards.

Employment is a priority on the socio-economic agenda, as the availability of jobs directly impacts the population's ability to ensure a decent standard of living. Special attention is paid to youth employment in this context, given that young people are a group with increased vulnerability in the labor market. Employment rates are closely correlated with unemployment rates, especially among youth cohorts. On the result of the studied research, we may project higher demand for the following jobs in the future: specialists in online advertisement, programming, web developing, city farmers, agro-economists, medics, chefs, brand marketers, taxi drivers, as well as technical and engineering experts, household appliance service and repair technicians, pharmacists, psychologists and psychotherapists, veterinarians, robotics specialists, and others.

Given the constantly changing requirements for employees, special attention should be paid to continuing education. Implementing this approach will allow specialists to systematically update professional knowledge and improve practical skills. Investing in continuing education, including self-funded training, contributes to better employment opportunities for higher-paid positions, career advancement, and increased income through competitive salaries.

Implementing this approach will allow specialists to systematically update professional knowledge and improve practical skills. Investing in continuing education, including self-funded training, contributes to better employment opportunities for higher-paid positions, career advancement, and increased income through competitive salaries. Regular monitoring of labor market dynamics, including a comprehensive assessment of labor supply and demand, is a key priority in developing the labor market. Labor market forecasting also plays a crucial role in this area.

The main problem of forming a competitive and civilized labor market remains the rate of joblessness, typically among the younger population. To address the issue of employment, the country has developed various programs, among which the following can be highlighted:

- The “First Job” Program aims to employ young specialists who have just completed their education and lack work experience or seniority;
- The “Roadmap” Project aims to give younger individuals access to training, housing, decent jobs, and favorable conditions for young families;
- “Enbek” State Program (2017–2021): focused on employing graduates of universities and vocational education institutions;
- “Zhas Maman” Project: designed to train specialists in demand on the labor market;
- “With a Diploma – to the Village” Program and others: targeted at developing rural areas and addressing youth employment issues in the regions.

One key area in employment regulation is economic development, including support for less profitable companies with the capacity to create jobs and promote greater job prospects. Considering the possible threats of growing youth

joblessness and increasing illegal jobs, it is necessary to improve the effective implementation of the “Youth Practices” initiative. The suggested steps can be adopted and implemented in other job-orientated interim job creation employment projects. Kazakhstan has several state programs aimed at fostering youth engagement. Below is a comparative review of the main ones, based on the available data and their effectiveness in meeting the goals of reducing youth joblessness (Table 11) [69].

Table 11 – State program initiatives aimed at stimulating the employment of youth

Initiative	Aim	Realization	Information
1	2	3	4
«First Job»	promoting the placement of young people with no work background by granting subsidized jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provision of casual jobs for youth with no previous work record;</li> <li>-subsidizing a portion of salaries for employers taking on new young specialists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-project has been running since 2020. In 2023, 9,970 individuals were hired, of which 6,352, or 63.7%, were university graduates, the duration of the project is no more than 18 months;</li> <li>-in practice, more than 30 % of participants terminate their involvement in the project ahead of schedule—within the first six months of placement;</li> <li>-the project regulations stipulate that employer are obliged to provide permanent job placement for the project participants at the end of the set period of involvement;</li> <li>-actual data show that only 20% of participants continue to be employed on a regular basis after the end of the program;</li> <li>-due to the low rate of long-term employment, the integration of the project with the youth internship program is being investigated to enhance its impact.</li> </ul>
«Enbek» State Program (2021-2025)	supporting the employment of the people, involving youth segments, by expanding the availability of education possibilities, encouraging business activity, and fostering the development of new jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-arranging vocational education and staff retraining programs;</li> <li>- offering microloans and starting grants to help start-up entrepreneurs;</li> <li>- creating social job opportunities and providing youth practice-oriented educational programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indicators by 2025:</li> <li>-the employed population in small and medium-sized enterprises is rising to 4 million;</li> <li>-reaching the proportion of medium-sized entrepreneurship in the gross domestic product (GDP) up to 15%;</li> <li>-growth of the share of SMEs in GDP to 35%;</li> <li>-the population's real monetary earnings have grown by 27% compared to 2019;</li> <li>-lowering the unemployment up to 4.7%;</li> <li>-36,018 inhabitants of the regions were hired for available jobs, 1,072 people were directed to social jobs, 3,047 young graduates were sent for youth internships, 10,256 jobless persons were involved in paid public works;</li> <li>-in 2021, 113 specific jobs were created to recruit persons with disabilities by subsidizing employers' equipping costs.</li> </ul>

Continuous of Table 11

1	2	3	4
«Zhas Maman» Project	upgrade educational institutes and enhance the training quality of young people in the occupations in need on the job market.	modernize 180 colleges / 20 high schools in 100 of the most in-need professions, introduce the best international experience in the training; - new educational programs and standards development; - collaboration with employers	-allocated budget- 48 bln.tg; -college specialties involved in the project: 1401000 ‘Construction and exploitation of buildings and structures’; 1201000 ‘Maintenance, repair and operation of motor transport’. 0901000 ‘Electrical equipment of electrical stations and networks’; 0707000 ‘Maintenance and repair of mining electromechanical equipment’.
«With a Diploma – to the Village» Program	recruitment of young professionals to work in rural localities, providing them with accommodation and social guarantees.	- budget credit for the acquisition of housing; - paying lifting benefits; - granting social welfare packages and benefits.	the state gives professional’s jobs in rural places and corresponding social support: -payout of the lifting allowance in the sum of 100 MCI; -the option to apply for a 15-year budget loan for the housing purchase with an Interest Level of 0.01 %; -in 2023, the total number of experts who received the lifting allowance was 9,433, showing an increment of 14.5 % as compared to 2019 (8,241 people); in total, over the 2019 - 2023 period, 45.0 thousand professionals have benefited from the program's terms by receiving lifting allowances, which is twice as many specialists who got a state loan for the housing purchase (21.2 thousand people).
Note – compiled by the author			

In Kazakhstan, as part of the implementation of the state program for the promotion of youth employability in 2017-2021 and 2021-2025, there is the “Enbek” Program for the Promotion of Effective Employment and Mass Entrepreneurship. This target program provided for the implementation of a set of state measures aimed at increasing youth employment, including [69]:

- providing access to technical and vocational education, as well as organizing short-term vocational education;
- stimulating large-scale entrepreneurial activity among young people;
- building the infrastructure of the job market by facilitating job placement and enhancing the mobility of the workforce;

- implementing joint activities of the “Zhastar-el tiregi” National Project.

In furtherance of these initiatives, 2019 was declared the Year of Youth, 2020 the Year of the Volunteer, and 2025 the Year of Working Professions, reflecting the priority of the youth initiative in the state strategy. As part of the second area of the Enbek Program, the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs “Atameken” carried out an education project, “Zhas kasipker” to stimulate youth businesses. This education project featured practice-oriented cases and master classes from the leading business coaches of the country, and it facilitated the active integration of youth into the business environment.

The aim of the “Bastau” project, which is also implemented under the second direction of the “Enbek” Program, is to enhance society's economic activity through business activities [70]. This project's tasks are to massively involve the public in entrepreneurial activity, promote promising ideas for entrepreneurship, provide hands-on training, acquire business skills through practical training, promote entrepreneurial activity by young people, and create a business atmosphere in rural areas. In 2020, 40,000 people received business-basics training under the “Bastau” project. Over 26,000 people have received grants and microloans to realize new business ideas, start their own companies, and create new jobs [70].

In 2020, government support for youth was revised, and two new instruments were developed: the “First Job” and “Generation Contract” projects. The “First Job” project is designed to help citizens without any professional background find jobs by allowing them to take their workplace for the first time. The “Generation Contract” program aims to gradually involve young specialists to replace employees who have reached retirement age successively. As part of this initiative, priority employment rights are given to young specialists, employable members of large and disadvantaged families, and persons with disabilities who have the potential to integrate into the job market.

As part of the “First Job” project, a youth internship program is available to young higher and secondary education graduates. This temporary form of engagement serves as a tool for gaining initial work experience in the occupation (specialty) they have obtained. The initiative is aimed at graduates under the age of 29 who are registered as unemployed and who meet their skills profile. The labor market program is carried out through the provision of temporary jobs. Temporary employment within the scope of youth practice is time-limited, and wages are financed from the budget. The number of jobs created under the youth internship has no limit. In 2020, 9,900 people took part in youth practices.

In various years in Kazakhstan, the following programs have been in effect: “Kazakhstan's youth” from 2001, youth policies drafts for 2003-2004 and 2005-2007, and “Kazakhstan 2020: the path to the future”. Every one of these instruments was intended to help improve the situation of young people's employability. However, no special policy aimed at addressing the issue of unemployment among youth has been elaborated. The created mechanisms for this purpose are built into general employment schemes. A state program in employment is currently being implemented in the country:



- “National entrepreneurship development” project for 2021-2025, the primary purpose of which is to stimulate business activity, support small and medium-sized enterprises, and create favorable conditions for the opening and sustainable development of one's private business. The plan is to create 995,300 jobs, increase the share of SMEs in total GDP to 35 %, and raise the volume of tourism in total GDP to 8.4 trillion tenge;

- “Incomes improvement plan 2025”: The objective is to develop large-scale employment by providing quality jobs, raising wages for public staff, addressing income disparities, and encouraging business. It is intended to generate about 2 million jobs, reduce the level of unemployment, and raise the share of labor compensation in GDP to 34.5%;

- “The labor market development concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2024-2029” is focused on the formation and development of human capital, stimulation of demand for quality and productive jobs, modernization of the vocational education system, and increasing the inclusiveness of the labor market. Implementation of the provisions of the concept is aimed at ensuring the adaptability of the national economy in the context of transformational changes and the introduction of new technological solutions;

- “Supported jobs”: allowing employers to create workplaces with partial or complete salary compensation at the state's expense. Subsidized jobs include social work, public service, youth apprenticeships, “First workplace”, “Generation contract”, and “Silver age” initiatives.

The “Bolashak program” is an educational fellowship of the President of the Kazakhstan Republic oriented to preparing, retraining, and upgrading the qualifications of professionals for core and top-priority branches of the national economy. The scholarships include obtaining academic degrees and training at top corporations and universities around the globe. An examination of the outcomes of various youth employment support programs in the country over the last two decades suggests that the government has repeatedly taken steps to lower youth unemployment. The applied tools differ considerably and comprise activities to raise skills, provide preferential loans, and provide temporary jobs for young people. In most cases, these interventions are carried out in the form of short-term training courses at the employers' request and training programs in technological skills and business fundamentals.

Despite a specific favorable effect, the above-mentioned measures have a mainly short-lived and volatile impact on the targets. The most effective instrument is the youth apprenticeship scheme, which aims to give young graduates initial work experiences. Therefore, the government, acting as an employer of last resort, strives to ensure the maximum engagement of the population in active economic life and performs complex regulations for the employment sector. This is done by supporting sustainable growth in pay, improving working conditions, and taking structural measures, including the dual system of professional education and employment guarantees for institutional graduates. Despite legal and structural mechanisms, culture also has a significant role in creating positive employment dynamics. In addition, young people are also sent to social work, where the government subsidizes 35 % of

the salaries set for them, as well as to “Zhasyl-el” summer jobs with salaries varying from 30,000 to 150,000 tenge. In this regard, the country is implementing the “First job” program, which provides for the permanent employment of citizens for up to 24 months, with wages fully subsidized by local employment authorities for the first year. In 2020, 1,000 people participated in this project [69].

The lower registration rate of the unemployed in public employment centers indicates a large number of unrecorded jobless people. In addition, the programs offer positions that do not assist job seekers in finding regular jobs with decent working terms and conditions. Considering this, it can be deduced that state policies are unfavorable to increasing youth employability [71]. The labor market's situation will become more acute due to the changing structure of the economy and the entry of new generations into the job market. However, the government reproduces the usual employment programs year after year, the essential tools of which are grants, credit, training courses, salary subsidies, and temporary jobs with small wages. They assist a reasonably small share of youth in getting a job and are mainly designed only to fulfill their target indicators.

As youth continue to experience poor wage levels and a lack of jobs with good working standards, it is necessary to consider options for the existing youth labor policy. However, it should focus not only on unemployed young people but also on the unemployed part of the citizenry. The low youth employment rate is not an autonomous issue but part of the structural problems of the job market, which needs to be tackled comprehensively. Raise information for higher education students: particular emphasis needs to be placed on increasing the knowledge of youth, specifically representatives of disadvantaged families, about the possibility of joining the “Youth practices” program. Reviewing and improving the interaction links between training providers, job centers, and young people is necessary, focusing on strengthening cooperation and effective co-work.

As a sum, we conclude that it is essential to design tools to proactively motivate employers to interact with state employment services. International experience suggests that various methods have been used to attract employers, from creating national employment policies to using individualized measures of cooperation with each employer. Secondly, it is mandatory to ensure efficient and appropriate use of public resources, systematically analyze and evaluate the impact of the implemented measures on the expansion of employment opportunities for specific categories of the target population segments, for instance, impact evaluation systems should be introduced in the process of social support. It may include online questionnaires both at the time of application and upon completion of participation in state employment programs. Such an approach would allow to qualitatively assess the results, build a profile of beneficiaries, and analyze the program's impact on their future financial situation. Thirdly, it is recommended to promote the upgrade human resource capacities using priority expansion of its highly qualified and economically mobilized element in businesses with strong capacity, particularly in those companies that suffered the loss of a significant quantity of workers in the conditions of lower production output and inadequate wage rates. In forth, it is required to provide

accelerated vocational re-training of experts whose skills are in declining need due to the restructuring of the national economy, technological upgrading of production operations, and liquidation of enterprises (including in bankruptcy). In fifth, there is need for supporting the immediate placement of qualified employees who have lost their workplaces to retain and keep their skills and professional competence.

Additionally, important direction is a provision of mandatory employment for vocational school graduates in compliance with their obtained qualifications, that these correspond to the needs of the economy, or deliver this category of population a priority access to professional retraining programs, taking into account the current requirements of the labor market compared to other groups of job seekers, ensuring the continuous improvement of managerial staff's professional, economic, and legal competence at all stages of their activity and promoting their all-round personal and managerial development, including mental, cultural, spiritual, moral, and physical growth. Therefore, the study findings have some practical implications. They are oriented to improving the existing employment practices of state employment policy, enhancing the performance of labor services, and expanding the youth's involvement in the job market.

## **2.2 Matters and challenges of young people's employment**

The youth face numerous issues and challenges not only in Kazakhstan but also in the global labor market. The International Labor Organization estimates that the number of unemployed youths worldwide is approximately 73 million, of whom about 15 million are excluded from the employment system and not involved in education or training. Compared to the older generation, youth are more vulnerable to economic instability and new global challenges.

After completing higher or vocational education, young professionals face a phenomenon known as the “first job trap”, which consists of a mismatch between the graduates' existing level of qualifications and the requirements of current vacancies. This leads either to employment outside the specialty they have obtained or to maintaining their jobless status. Employment in jobs unrelated to their profession and low-yield self-employment of youth contribute to a decline in workforce skills and deficits for the national income due to the “forgone” earnings from youth occupancy and the tax generation they would have paid.

According to the data from the National Statistics Bureau of Kazakhstan, 15.5% of unemployed youth have been searching for work for 6 to 12 months and 27% for 3 to 6 months, which pushes youth to seek jobs in other sectors. Moreover, 20% of Kazakhstan's economically active population works in industries that do not align with their education, reaching 40% among youth [67]. In Kazakhstan, young people under 35 make up about 40% of the labor force. Young people often work in wage employment (more than 75% in 2023).

At the same time, the service sector remains a more attractive area for employment, employing 40% of the country's youth labor force. Based on data from the Workforce center of the Labor and Social Security Ministry of Kazakhstan, the youth workforce is projected to reach 6 million by 2030. Analyzing the

demographic processes since 1991, it is essential to provide a scientific justification for the causal links of these processes, assess the patterns, and assess the real intensity of the demographic indicators for the country's youth in the long term. The situation with birth rates resulted from the wave-like trend of changes in the youth population size. The wavy character of birth rates in various years has defined the uneven age composition of young people, which results in significant swings in the amount of youth labour force on the job market. These population variations have a direct effect on the shape of the labour supply, employment trends, the level of unemployment and the level of rivalry among young professionals. In the longer term, the predicted youth population will require the development of effective public policy responses in the area of employment, vocational guidance and training in order to prevent possible imbalances between the supply and demand sides in the job market. A science-based approach to the analysis of demographic trends will make it easier to create a stable model of human capital development focused on increasing labour efficiency, economic growth and social sustainability in the country. Thus, Figure 9 shows the dynamics of the youth for 2009-2024.

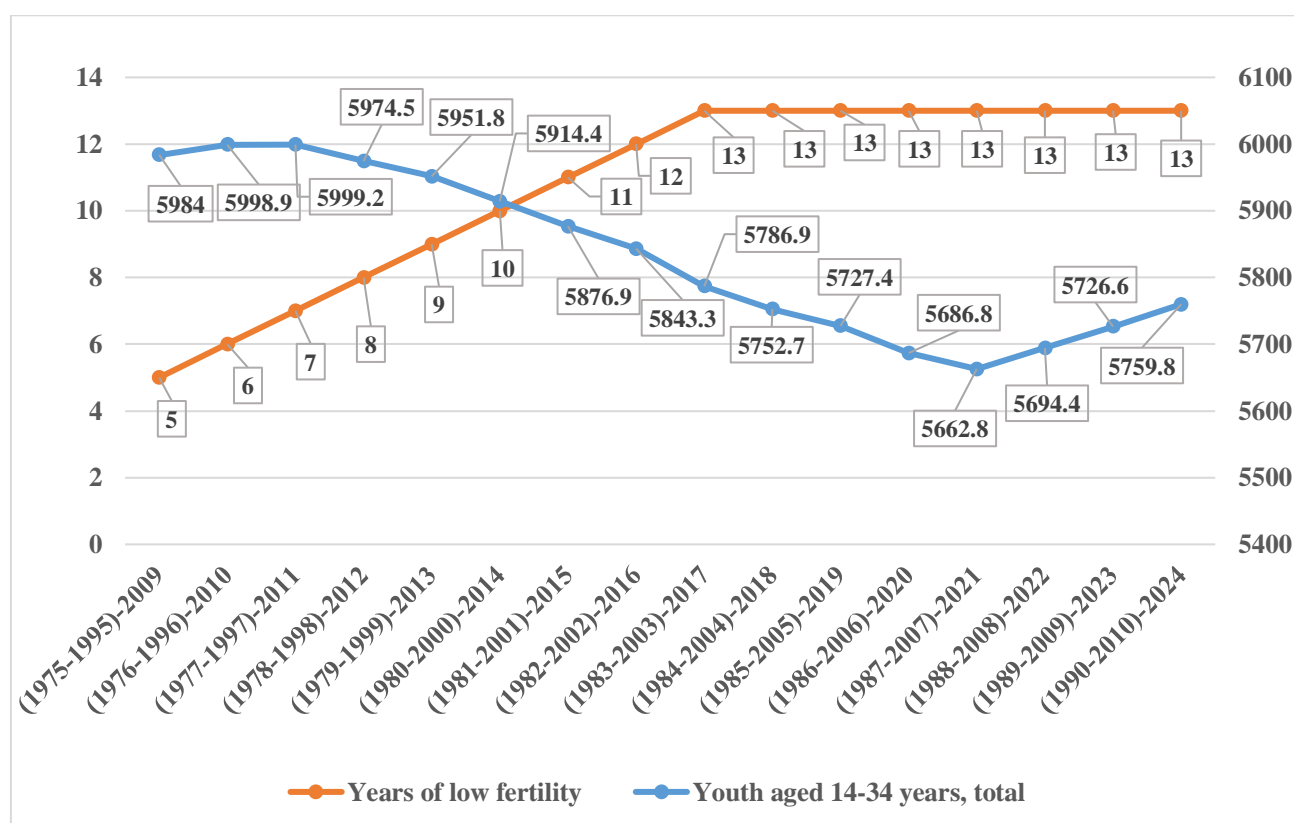


Figure 9 – Dynamics of the youth population size and the number of years with low birth rates from 2009 to 2024

Note – compiled by the author

In 1999, the youth population was 5,197.5 thousand; in 2009, it increased to 5,984.0 thousand. The youth of 2009 were formed by children born between 1975 and

1995, meaning that the generation born between 1991 and 1995 (5 years) formed a restricting factor for the overall size of the youth population. The graph shows a decrease in the youth population until 2022. The number of years of demographic crisis grows to 13 years, after which a decline is expected from 2025 to 2037. Thus, the youth population will slowly grow until 2037, in line with the decreasing crisis burden.

Demographic trends may transform Kazakhstan, increasing pressure on employment and a growing need to create quality, productive, and safe jobs that provide competitive wages. At the same time, the main criterion when choosing a job is not so much a high salary as working conditions, the hybrid work format, opportunities for acquiring new skills, continuous learning and retraining, professional growth, and social support. Youth has an important significance in shaping and evolving the job market. First, this is caused by the high level of youth's activeness, flexibility, and preparedness to accept and adopt innovations. Second, youth represent a key pool of labor potential for sustainable development but are among the most vulnerable groups in the labor market. This is due to factors such as a lack of relevant skills and practical experience, insufficient qualifications, inflated wage expectations, a desire for rapid career growth, etc.

The problems faced by youth in Kazakhstan when transitioning from the training scheme to the labor market include the following:

- low level of professional training: this leads to a higher likelihood of becoming unemployed (young women are more often unemployed (4.3%) compared to young men (2.9%);

- informal employment: a significant share of youth, particularly young men, works informally, especially in rural areas. These young people are self-employed, with low levels of education and modest incomes;

- NEET youth: Around 7.3% of Kazakhstan's youth fall into this category, with significant regional disparities. The highest proportion of NEET youth is observed in the Karaganda (10.2%) and Mangystau (11.7%) regions [68].

The International Labor Organization's latest report, *Global Youth Employment Trends 2024*, indicates that in 2023, the proportion of young people not in employment, education, or training will be 20.4% (equivalent to one in five young people), with females accounting for two-thirds of this category. The situation in different regions of the world is characterized by considerable heterogeneity. In countries with low levels of socio-economic development, a larger share of youth falls into the NEET category. According to ILO experts, the main reasons are the limited availability of affordable education and decent working conditions. In high-income countries, the share of NEET youth is 10.4%, while in low-income countries, it reaches 28.7%. In the poorest countries of Africa, this figure exceeds 31%, whereas in Europe, it is less than 10%.

According to the Kazakh National Statistics Bureau of the Strategic Plan and Reforms Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the share of NEET youth in the country was 18.6% in 2001. By 2023, this figure decreased to 7.3%; in 2024, it was 6.5%. In Kazakhstan, 3.2% of people under 35 do not have a permanent job, which is lower than the overall national unemployment rate of 4.7%. In 2023, the number of young adults in the NEET category was 394.2 thousand, 82.7% more than in 2022.

Such dynamics are associated with the change in the age of young people. Since January 2023, the age limit for NEET youth has been raised from 24 to 35. As a result, the number of NEET youth has increased. By mid-2024, there were 349,100 NEET youth in Kazakhstan.

In the next 10-15 years, Kazakhstan is expected to experience a “demographic window” for economic growth, as the share of youth in the population structure will increase. However, this “youth bulge” will be temporary, followed by a decline in birth rates and an increased burden from the elderly population. As international studies show, younger workers are demanding new working conditions, focusing on global trends such as work-life balance. Flexible employment is becoming increasingly popular among youth. For example, in Kazakhstan, less than 1% of the working population is employed remotely. However, experts estimate that the potential for remote work could reach about 30%. Given these new trends, the labor market will adapt to the needs and demands of the younger generation. Companies must be ready for these changes by implementing new employment models and educational programs [67].

Today, despite generally positive statistical data in Kazakhstan, the shortage of specialists has its characteristics. The employed amounted to 9.2 million persons, employees – 7 million persons (which is 76.2 % of all employment in the country's economy), and the self-employed reaching 2.2 million people (23.8 % of total employment) in different sectors of the economy of Kazakhstan in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024. The total occupancy increased by 134.6 thousand people, primarily due to hired workers, compared with the first quarter of 2023.

The largest employment share was shown in commerce (16.8%), training (13.1%), the industry sector (12.3%), and the agro-sector (11.1%). At about the exact same time, the jobless rate (based on the ILO's methodology) was only 4.7%, and the share of NEET youth was 7% [68]. Drivers, educators, and security guards are among the most sought-after workers, according to the data (as of April 2024) on Enbek Electronic Labor Exchange vacancies. In March-April 2024 alone, more than 90,000 vacancies were offered for workers with average qualifications. In this regard, the demand for labor resources in Kazakhstan is growing, but it is mainly the need for low and medium-skilled workers.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024, the whole number of working younger adults in the range of 15 and 28 years of age in the Kazakhstan Republic amounted to 1.7 million, a reduction of 3.2 % from the same period in 2023, of those 1.4 million were in the category of employed workers, 308.8 thousand persons were individual entrepreneurs, 61.5 thousand persons were independent workers, 5.5 thousand persons were persons engaged in private practices, 3.5 thousand persons are individual founders and members of business partnerships and joint-stock companies, production cooperatives [68]. The number of employed youth in Almaty amounted to 243.6 thousand and in the Almaty and Turkestan regions – 182.7 thousand and 144.2 thousand, respectively. The smallest number of employed youth was shown by Ulytau – 12.9 thousand, North Kazakhstan – 29.4 thousand, and Zhetyssu – 39.3 thousand people.

By sector, the largest number of young people employed in the first quarter of 2024 was recorded in wholesale and retail trade and motor vehicle repair – 341 thousand people, which is 6.4% higher than in the same period of 2023. In the education sector, youth employment totaled 194.6 thousand, showing a decrease of 8.7 % compared to the same period of the previous year. The agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector employed 173,000 people, down 13.9 % year-on-year. Young people were the least employed in water supply, electricity, and real estate operations.

Youth employed in the profession totals 452,300 (or 25.9 % of the overall number of working youth). 285,000 people are working in the sales and service sector, 266,400 as non-skilled laborers, 189,1 as technical staff and helpers, 141,900 as manufacturing, building, transportation, and other sectors, 122,400 as operating equipment, installers and drivers, 97,800 as administrative staff and 91,700 as agricultural, forestry, fishery and other sectors, and 91,700 as farmers and workers in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and hunting, 76.1 thousand persons as managers and civil servants, 24.1 thousand persons as employees not included in other groups [36].

Thus, although the Kazakh labor market shows stable growth, there are problems and challenges in ensuring youth employment. They include:

1) the economic recession and the COVID-19 pandemic substantially influenced the dynamism and evolution of the job market and internal and external challenges;

2) programs for the development of entrepreneurship and industrialization implemented in Kazakhstan are not effective enough. Despite the active measures of the state to stimulate the economy, the contribution of private business to the creation of new jobs is only about 20%—four times less than in OECD countries. Accordingly, the increase in jobs is provided by low-productivity industries and the public sector. As a result, Kazakhstan lags three times behind these countries in terms of labor productivity;

3) there is an acute shortage of labor in agriculture due to the Sectoral migration of workers from the agricultural sector to services and trade and the increase in the outflow of young people from villages;

4) informal employment continues to be high, which is indicated by the following indicators: in 2023, the payroll amounted to 20 trillion tenge, estimated based on real pension allocations, and according to the calculations of the BNS of the ASPR of Kazakhstan, the payroll finance sum is almost twice as high - KZT 38 trillion. The largest payroll data discrepancy is observed in sectors such as trade, agriculture, and real estate. Most university graduates do not work in their specialty, resulting in informal employment [37].

In Kazakhstan, 3.2% of young people under 35 do not have a permanent job. This is less than the country's unemployment rate (4.7%). Figures from the BNS of the ASPR of Kazakhstan show that the share of young Kazakhstanis who did not work for various reasons has also been systematically decreasing since 2001. In 2023, 1.1 million people were employed in agriculture in Kazakhstan, of which more than half were self-employed. Their wages were two times lower than the national average. This confirms the high level of non-official employment and the poor welfare security of rural workers. Introducing new forms of employment in rural areas (rotational,

seasonal, mobile entrepreneurship) will reduce the level of informal employment of young people.

5) NEET youth are at greater risk of marginalization and demonstrate high protest sentiment. Thus, according to the results of sociological studies made by the “Youth” Research Center, it turned out during a comparison of the indicators of the NEET share and the level of protest moods in the Mangistau region that it is in this region, where the largest share of younger adult of the NEET group is recorded, that the rate of protest sentiments is the highest in the country. An average of 20% of young people are ready for mass protests due to higher prices for food, fuel, medicines, labor conflicts, corruption, environmental problems, and the authorities’ unwillingness to solve the problems of cities and villages. This level is higher in such socially sensitive categories as rising prices for food (28.4%) and medicines (25.6%), and an increase in utility tariffs (26.4%) [72];

6) a significant part of jobs are temporary and with low wages;

7) in 2024, about 74 thousand people became university students, and 143 thousand people became college students. However, the employment of graduates is a significant problem. So, in 2023, approximately 40% of college students and less than 25% of higher education graduates were hired according to their specialization. It is observed that a considerable part of the working population does not work in their specialization or receive vocational re-qualification. Only about 31% of job vacancies in the job market set requirements for having a university degree. In comparison, the demand for specialists with vocational education is 70% higher than the demand for university graduates. However, there is still no call for blue-collar jobs.

In this regard, reviewing the number of stipends allocated to universities with a low percentage of employed graduates is essential. A unique role should be assigned to colleges in the training of personnel. The issue of targeted grants for the needs of a particular enterprise will allow future employees to be selected by the enterprises themselves. The employer guarantees a graduate's employment and work at this enterprise. We also propose to provide an opportunity for students in Grades 10-11 to study in colleges at the same time, to receive both a certificate and a diploma with a specific qualification.

Overall, higher school represents a key building block in the country's continuous education system [67]. Based on the data of the National Statistics Bureau of the Agency for State Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Kazakhstan Republic, as of the beginning of the 2024-2025 educational year, there are 113 higher education facilities in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The following are among them: 81 universities, 12 academic centers, nine institutions and equivalent conservatories, high schools, and colleges of higher education, eight national higher schools, and three national scientific research universities.

Presently, there are various kinds of organizations of higher and postgraduate education (OHPE) in the framework of the higher education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan, such as a national scientific research university, a national higher education school, a scientific research university, a university, an academic institution, an institute (implementing only undergraduate programs), as well as equated



educational institutions, such as a conservatory, a high school, and a vocational school [73, 74].

The state regulates the distribution of educational grants by categories of study programs, focusing on encouraging enrolment in professions recognized as priorities in socio-economic development but not characterized by a high level of individual profitability. Such priorities are formed centrally, mainly based on employment forecasts developed with limited participation of employers' representatives [75]. In Table 12 provided information on allocated training grants for 2020-2024 in Kazakhstan.

Table 12 – Overall grants allocated for 2020-2024

Education year	Bachelor	Master's	Doctoral	Total
2020-2021	53 785	13 500	2 355	69 640
2021-2022	56 561	13 263	1 890	71 714
2022-2023	73 061	12 825	1 890	87 776
2023-2024	73 061	12 825	1 890	87 776
2024-2025	78 219	13 113	2 919	94 251
Note – compiled by the author				

From 2020 to 2024, Kazakhstan experienced a steady rise in state training grants. In 2022, over 88000 grants were awarded, 19 % higher than in 2021. In 2023, their quantity was also 88000, which is 23 % above the figure for 2021. For the 2024-2025 educational years, over 94000 grants are provided, of which 78000 are for bachelor's students, 13000 for graduate students, and 3000 for doctorate students. The gradual increase in state educational grants in Kazakhstan between 2020 and 2024 is evidence of the state's targeted efforts to expand access to higher education and provide the country's economy with qualified specialists.

This division of grants is focused on boosting young people's demand for technical and engineering occupations. This is by predictions that up to 1.5 million new employment opportunities will be available in mining, construction, transportation, and other sectors over the coming five-year period. In particular, the growth in the volume of grants in the teaching fields has been due to the continuing rise in the fertility rate and, therefore, the growing need for quality educators (Table13).

Table 13 – Comparative assessment: education grants and needs of the labor market

Direction of program	Quantity of grants (2024)	Need in specialty in the job market	Note
Technical, industrial, and construction fields	19 344	High	It is estimated that 1.5 mln workplaces will be developed in these industries
Pedagogies	13 735	High	Fertility growth → teacher shortage
Informational and communicational technologies (ICTs)	10 903	Very high	Advancing digitalization, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence (AI)
Natural sciences, Math, and Statistical sciences	8 288	Moderate	In relevance to R&D and analytics centers
Note – compiled by the author			

In the year 2024, the greatest amount of state study grants in Kazakhstan were shared among the below groups of study programs:

- Engineering, manufacturing, and construction specialties – 19,344 grants;
- Teaching studies – 13,735 grants;
- ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) – 10,903 grants;
- Natural science, Math, and Statistical Sciences – 8,288 grants [67].

Thus, the mechanism of distributing state educational grants largely correlates with the actual and projected needs of the labor market in the Republic of Kazakhstan, contributing to the formation of human resources in the most demanded sectors of the economy. As a follow-up to the results of the call for proposals, 412 orphans, 382 disabled people, over 3.5 000 young persons from large family groups, 933 single-parent families, and 437 disabled children from families bringing up children with special needs received grants for study. Because of changes in the admission procedure this year, over 1.6 thousand ethnic Kazakhs received educational grants, compared to 804 people in 2023 [67].

To enhance the health care sector's human resource capacities, the number of state grants in residencies was increased to 2.5 thousand from 1.5 thousand, which is equal to a 70 % growth. The Kazakh National University of Water Management and Irrigation has been established to train experts in water management. In 2024, differentiated grants with part payment of tuition fees were launched for the first time. 150 such grants are available for the state programs “Pedagogies” and “Social studies, journalism and information.” The government provides 50 % of the cost of tuition, while the participant retains the option to receive a full stipend [67].

Following the “Serpin” program, 3,903 grants are also available. This program offers studies in four areas: pedagogical studies, engineering and technical fields, information technology, and agricultural areas. The program's participants are youth from rural areas in the country's south. Previously, the term of obligatory grant fulfillment was shortened from 3 to 2 years, and the list of areas for placement was increased to 11. The Grant list includes 5,000 focused training grants for educating young adults from populous, newly established, and western regions of the country, among them applicants from Atyrau and Mangistau regions, at the top higher education organizations in the country. The country's authorities are working on a Keleshek voluntary financial savings system, enabling families to collect funds for their child's schooling. In the meantime, the state educational grants will remain the same, a the mentioned program will act as a supplementary support tool.

In the current climate, one of the leading indicators of sustained economic performance is the degree of human capital formation. The tourism sector, as a major part of the country's economy, is also affected by this issue. There is a steady deficit of skilled labor in tourism globally, and Kazakhstan is no exception. As a growing country with substantial tourism capacity, the state attaches special attention to the staffing development of this sector. The efficient implementation of tourism potential is impossible unless highly skilled personnel can fulfill professional roles and contribute to the sector's strategic development. In this respect, a set of actions aimed at preparing and improving the skills of specialists in the field of tourism is realized at the

governmental level. Each year, a new group of workers with modern outlooks, innovative thinking, and the capability to change tourism in response to the actual needs of the time joins the job market, which sets the stage for taking the industry to a new qualitative stage.

Tourism has become one of the most profitable spheres of entrepreneurial activity globally in recent years. As a cross-sectoral complex integrating social and domestic infrastructure elements, the tourism sector occupies a key position in the macroeconomic system, providing about 10% of the total world gross national product. In addition, the multinational nature of tourism activity significantly impacts employment.

It is widely recognized that the 21st century is characterized as the age of information technology, education, knowledge, technological innovation, resources, and services. In this regard, the world's leading scientists predict that developing technological and engineering solutions in tourism and related industries will catalyze significant progress in this area. It is no coincidence that the current period of active global interaction has been labeled “the age of tourism” by UNESCO [76].

In today's conditions of rapid tourist entrepreneurship development both in the world and in the Republic of Kazakhstan, it becomes evident that the effective functioning and resilience of the tourism industry, especially in terms of the provision of quality service, is nearly impossible without the existence of specialized higher education of business entities. The aggravation of the competition and the growth of tourists' requirements define the necessity of the sphere of professionalization. Special significance is paid to ensuring the industry has highly qualified staff. This is important for Kazakhstan, where preparing qualified specialists in the field of tourism is seen as a priority task. At the same time, the experts of narrow vocational orientation, capable of providing special types of tourism activities, are the most in demand.

Active tourism, being the sector's leading and most widely used segment, has gained the most excellent attention in the country. However, this type of tourism is connected with higher expectations for the professionalism of the staff, as the level of safety and service quality directly affect the competence of the experts. The involvement of foreign visitors in outdoor activities suggests that they have a high level of confidence in the excellence of professional training of accompanying people and organizers, which in turn creates the reputation of the travel industry of Kazakhstan in the world.

Higher vocational education in the tourism and hospitality industry has a range of significant strengths that contribute to creating highly competitive specialists. It ensures not only the acquisition of fundamental knowledge and applied skills necessary for building a career in the industry but also offers possibilities for training and work practice, as well as traineeships both in Kazakhstan and outside its borders. An essential element of the education process is the advanced study of languages and the establishment of stable links in social and professional areas, which helps graduates enter the international working environment.

Education programs in “tourism” and “restaurant business and hospitality” are available in a wide range of higher schools in Kazakhstan, in both Kazakh and Russian

languages of study. These programs are accessible in most parts of the country, which provides a territorial reach of profile education and facilitates staffing of the travel industry at the regional scale. From 2020 to 2024, Kazakhstan experienced a positive dynamic in terms of the growth of the volume of training grants provided in the tourism and hospitality industry education. Particularly meaningful was the year 2024, when the Tourism and Sports Ministry of Kazakhstan allocated 800 educational grants to prepare specialists in need in the relevant sectors of the economy [77].

The following educational programs were allocated under these educational grants:

B091—Tourism: this training program aims to develop professionals' skills in organizing, planning, and controlling tourism activities. 352 grants were provided to realize the program;

B092—Leisure (Sports and recreational fitness): the program is intended to train specialists in sports and health recreation, involving the organization of outdoor and recreational activities. 200 grants were envisaged under this area;

B093—Restaurant and hotel business: the degree program targets developing administrative and service competencies in restaurant and hospitality services. 140 grants were provided in this direction.

In this way, the rise in the number of dedicated grants indicates the government's desire to consistently train highly qualified staff capable of providing sustainable development in the tourism and hospitality sector in compliance with the modern demands of the job market. In 2023, the Kazakh National University, named after Al-Farabi (KazNU), proposed vacant grants for those studying tourism, restaurant, and hotel business. According to the university's data, two grants for the speciality of "tourism" and one grant for "restaurant and hotel businesses" were open in the second year. Also, in 2024, the Turkestan International University of Tourism and Hospitality proposed 800 targeted grants for entrants willing to study in the above-mentioned fields. In addition, municipal executive bodies (akimats) provided grants for specialized training in priority fields. In 2024, 2,475 such grants were given, some of which may be directed to specialties in the field of tourism and hotel hospitality [78].

In order to facilitate the employment of young specialists in the tourism and hospitality industry, youth internship programs are implemented in the country. Following the provisions of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on "Employment", participants in these programs are unemployed graduates who have completed their studies in educational institutions within the last five years and have not reached the age of 35. Workplaces for youth internships are established at businesses and organizations of all kinds of ownership appropriate to the profession acquired by the graduates. The average monthly salary is 30 times the monthly pay scale, including taxes and social security contributions.

Notwithstanding a broad range of training programs oriented to tourism, there is a strong need for a comprehensive approach to practice-oriented education and occupational training for separate categories of professionals in the travel industry. Of special importance is the development of clearly structured professional requirements for such specialties as tour guides, animators of entertainment programs, and other

categories of workers, taking into account the actual needs of the modern market of tourist services. According to the expert assessment of the Committee on Tourism, only about 20% of hotel enterprises in Kazakhstan employ graduates of higher educational institutions who do not have professional experience. In comparison, about 80% of managers of organizations express dissatisfaction with the quality of training.

Considering the priority nature of the state policy aimed at developing the tourism industry in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the system of professional training should be focused on the specialties in demand in the regional labor market. Particular attention should be paid to training personnel for tourism-related industries, including mid-level specialists and narrowly specialized professionals involved in domestic and inbound tourism, such as local historians, tour guides, and tour guide instructors. Thus, the quality of service is a key factor that significantly impacts the dynamics of tourism industry development in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Strengthening state regulation and involvement in the system of professional training in the field of tourism can contribute to the accelerated growth of the industry in the region. In the meantime, underestimation of the importance of the quality of provided tourist services can become a deterrent to further development of the industry. In Kazakhstan, the issue of training highly qualified specialists in tourism and ensuring their subsequent effective employment is of particular relevance.

It should be noted that the current professional training system in the tourism industry requires deep modernization. It is necessary to make a transition from traditional, largely outdated, teaching models to more flexible educational formats, including the expansion of the range of academic disciplines and electives, providing students with the opportunity for individualized choice of learning trajectory, as well as strengthening the practice-oriented component of the educational process. Such transformations will increase the attractiveness of tourism education programs for applicants and ensure a higher level of professional readiness for graduates. In the long term, it will contribute to the progressive development of the tourism industry and the formation of its qualitatively new level in the national economy.

*Today's international practices in providing study grants.* One of the most well-developed and efficient systems of funding education is the German model, shown in Table 14. It is a complex mechanism integrating state scholarships, fellowships, and student aid programs.

Table 14 –Main characteristics of the model

Driver	German Model (Educational grants, targeted government funding, and the BAföG student financial support program)
Access	Free implementation of educational programs in most public higher education institutions.
Credit and grants	The BAföG program partially covers trainees' living costs by providing financial support through a 50% grant and 50% concessional loan financing.
Specialized scholarships	High-performing candidates are funded by public foundations (for example, the Deutschland stipendium) and privately funded organizations.

## Continuous of Table 14

Interaction with the labor market	The dual training system integrates theoretical training with practical activities in real production conditions, which contributes to graduates' competitiveness and subsequent labor adaptation.
Flexibility	The level of financial aid is measured by the family income and the academic achievement of the student.
Driver	German Model (Educational grants, targeted government funding, and the BAföG student financial support program).
Transparency	Explicit selection process and automatic applications procedure.
Note – compiled by the author	

### *Strengths of the model:*

- higher education remains available without a large debt load;
- the dual training scheme keeps students in line with the requirements of the job market;
- funding is implemented in the context of public-private cooperation.

*Applying in Kazakhstan. This kind of model can be customized in Kazakhstan through:*

- introducing hybrid funding (grants + interest-free loan return);
- promoting dual training in higher schools;
- increase the amount of special-purpose grants from businesses and the state.

### *Singapore: The Tuition Grant Scheme (Contract). Special Features:*

- the state partially funds the education of students via the Tuition Grant Scholarship Program;
- in return, alumni are obliged to work for 3 years in companies in Singapore;
- it covers engineering, tech, and healthcare professions.

### *Advantages:*

- straightforward adaptation of alumni to job market needs;
- contributing to economic growth by preparing in-need experts.

### *Disadvantages:*

- limiting the flexibility to choose a job after leaving the university.

It has already increased the number of study grants and implemented the “Keleshek” savings program, bringing it closer to the German and Singaporean models. In the conditions of fast-moving global tendency changes, higher education is emerging as a key long-term investment in the future, defining the progress of societies and industries. The modern education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan should have a high degree of adaptability and resilience to external challenges, function effectively in unstable conditions, train highly qualified and competitive specialists to meet the dynamically changing requirements of the labor market, and demonstrate high professional efficiency. When forming and distributing the state educational order, priority should be given to training specialists in demand in key industries and sectors of the economy, active introduction of incremental forms of education, development of digital competences, as well as strengthening partnerships with employers in order to increase the practice-oriented nature of the educational process.

Enhancing collaboration between academic institutions, companies, and vocational centers is also essential. This will make it feasible to create practice-oriented

technology programs that correspond to the actual requirements of the job market. Taking into account international practices and focusing on recent trends in education is also essential, which will improve the market competitiveness of Kazakhstani graduates.

Hence, the Kazakh education system must prepare highly qualified specialists and drive the country's innovation and economy, contributing to its stable growth. The development of human capital is a key factor in ensuring the training of highly qualified and in-demand personnel capable of making a significant contribution to the state's socio-economic development. In the context of global digital transformation, rapid technological progress, and widespread use of information technologies, modern specialists must have a solid theoretical base in their professional field and demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the rapidly changing socio-economic environment.

Critical skills include well-developed analytical thinking, creativity, adaptability, flexibility, and the ability to make informed managerial decisions under conditions of uncertainty. In today's economy, professional competencies and the ability to interact effectively in interdisciplinary teams, critically evaluate information, and respond quickly to changes are in demand. In this regard, the system of professional training and development should be focused on the formation of specialists with high expert competence and readiness for productive activity in conditions of constant transformations. The current level of differentiation of youth employment is due to both objective economic conditions and the insufficient level of interaction between the system of higher education and employers in terms of identifying the current demand in the labor market and the formation of relevant professional skills and competencies in graduates, contributing to their successful labor adaptation and career development. In this regard, the importance of developing and implementing practical recommendations aimed at improving the situation of young people in the labor market of the Republic of Kazakhstan is increasing.

In specific, the proposed measures involve upgrading of the labor market needs prediction and personnel training systems by raising the efficiency of the collaboration mechanism among education institutions and the business sector. Promoting professional orientation programs for young people should be regarded as one of the key areas of state employment policy. The main task of such programs is to create an adequate information infrastructure that provides broad and timely access to reliable data on the structure of professional activity, the list of in-demand professions at the level of the country, regions, individual settlements, and enterprises, as well as on potential employment opportunities in the modern labor market. At the same time, vocational guidance work should be multi-format and include a wide range of activities, such as open days, individual and group counseling, development and distribution of methodological materials, guides, and recommendations on employment and career planning. The realization of such initiatives will facilitate the creation of a career path in the professional world.

Implementing these initiatives will contribute to the formation of young people's ability to objectively assess their personal and professional competencies and provide

a complete and more realistic picture of the structure, trends, and requirements of the modern labor market. In addition, it is necessary to intensify the processes of short-term professional training and retraining of personnel with the integration of elements of the dual training model, oriented towards the combination of theoretical and practical components. At the same time, it is necessary to improve distance education technologies, including the format of open lectures, seminars, and master classes with the participation of leading scientists and industry practitioners.

To provide youth sustainable youth employment in the field of tourism and hospitality, it is suggested that:

1. to strengthen practical-oriented education: Implement dual educational programs that connect theoretical study with practical training at the companies in the tourism and hospitality industry;
2. developing partnerships between academic institutions and enterprises: cooperation between higher education institutions and tourist and hotel businesses to provide traineeships and further graduates' employment;
3. youth entrepreneurship assistance: creating conditions for young specialists to open their own companies in the travel and hospitality sphere;
4. raising the appeal of professions in the sector: awareness campaigns and career orientation events to promote career opportunities in tourism and hospitality.

Realizing these measures will strengthen the youth's position in the tourism and hospitality business job market, ensuring stable and prospective employment. In general, it is also crucial to create the necessary environment for ongoing professional advancement and to provide accessible programs for staff professional upgrade and re-qualification. Government support needs to be focused not only on financing priority studies but also on modernizing educational processes, adopting innovative techniques, and advancing academic mobility.

### **2.3 Importance of a firm's attractiveness as a facilitator of young people's employment in Kazakhstan**

What level of interest do specific companies attract from job seekers and young professionals? To what degree does institutional identity contribute to the job placement of youth with relevant digital capabilities? What can organizations do regarding policies to help them secure young people's high potential and quality? Such questions update today's business's core issues, irrespective of industry or sector size. Those calls are reinforced by the wide use of smart appliances, online tools, and social media networks, which young specialists extensively utilize to seek input on future job prospects and staff to improve their ability to stay competitive in the labor market. The reference underlines that both corporate perception and reputation are crucial elements of staff relations (HR) strategy that promote an effective response to these trends and concerns [79].

The term “attractive workplace” is strongly linked to the idea of “job branding” [80]. The reputation and prestige of an entity are crucial for defining its appeal, significantly determining either the prospective staff's decision on whether to take up



employment or the current ones' desire to keep their jobs in this particular entity [81]. The theory of founder attractiveness provides the basis for the present study, which looks at a complex of principles that determine employees' feelings about their boss and affect their job behavior and occupational attitudes. In fact, according to this theoretical concept, the multiplicity of factors has a determining influence on employees' perception of their current employer, which, in turn, significantly affects the level of their involvement in the labor process and the effectiveness of the professional activity performed [82]. Notably, the theory of employer likeability is based on the framework of perceived predictive psychological contraction, focusing on the entity's subjectively felt attraction to the employer.

The attraction of a specific organization or founder is a collection of drivers that motivate prospective and actual staff to choose employment or stay in a particular institution. Source of employment data can be acquired from a wide diversity of channels and resources, classified into official and non-official ones. In contrast, formal or conventional channels include web-based official job sites of firms, job recruitment services, and advertisements in the domestic media. In comparison, non-formal types of contacts refer to various channels, including online social networks, actual members of an institution's staff, and verbal (word-of-mouth) referrals via trusted contacts through friends and individual networks. According to studies, job seekers consider non-formal communication sources reliable and trustworthy, unlike official channels of information [83-87].

The scope of this exploration concentrated on the kinds of entities such as business start-ups and smaller and mid-scale companies that function in the sector of Kazakhstan's travel, hotel, and leisure (HTTL) hospitality market. Conducting this investigation is motivated by four key rationales. The first reason is the deficit of available relevant background information that has been identified. A holistic analysis of the existing academic literature showed a lack and absence of studies investigating the appeal of companies and organizations in the countries of this area, including Kazakhstan, in Central Asia. Prior work demonstrates that individuals from diverse cultures can widely diverge in how they feel about a corporation or individual employer, thus making it necessary to look at the predictors of an employer's appeal and its implications from a broad range of cultural perspectives [88].

The latter cause is that this investigation was carried out to identify *inadequate sector development*. Most previous studies have focused on universities and large organizations, including multinational corporations and government agencies, with significant resources and on analyzing the factors that shape their attractiveness and reputational capital [89,90]. At the same time, the level of scientific awareness regarding resource-constrained actors such as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups operating in the travel, hospitality, tourism, and leisure (HTTL) industries remains insufficient and requires further theoretical and empirical understanding. For instance, the lack of existing empowerment studies empirically constrains the capabilities of practitioners to arrive at well-justified governance decisions and design efficient policies for their respective organizations. With a shortage of relevant and available empirical data, experts might rely primarily on

intuition or anecdotal feedback, which raises the danger of drawing biased or flawed findings. In furtherance of this, the lack of empirical studies in the HTTL sector is a considerable cause for alarm within the academic field, as it holds back the expansion of theoretical basis and an in-depth clearance of the tools that identify the attraction of the workforce in this area.

The selection of the data analysis unit was the third basis for this study. A few recent scientific publications [91] have mainly centered on investigating the perceptions of the attitudes of young students at higher education institutions and active job seekers [92], as well as their views on the appeal of the organization as an employing organization. Insufficient attention has been paid to examining the opinions and priorities of middle-aged junior workers. In this current work, the units of study are those of midlife young adults, including Gen Z and millennial workers, employed in various diverse entities in the travel, tourism, hospitality, and leisure (HTTL) field. Past work has primarily learned from exploring outside job seekers' views of perceived corporate image. In comparison, the present research has concentrated on looking at the intrinsic attraction of firms, i.e., the drivers of young adults' motivation to stay engaged in these entities.

The number four determinant of the topicality of this investigation was the selection of the hospitality, traveling, tourism, and leisure (HTTL) related sectors. In 2019, the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan approved a seven-year strategy for the development of the tourism and recreation industry, which aims to make the country one of the 50 most attractive tourist destinations in the world by 2025, according to the ratings of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) [93]. It includes adopting stimulus packages for the HTTL service industry. It seeks to enhance the country's overall performance and the welfare of its residents by establishing more tourism areas, broadening the job market, and upgrading the qualifications of the labor force [93]. The programs of assistance and incentives offered for the HTTL branch, in addition to intense digitalization, automation, and restructuring processes, have encouraged sector upgrading investments and reorganization of business processes. Those changes are aimed at boosting operational performance, strengthening corporate identity, streamlining hiring, maximizing work productivity, and reinforcing staff involvement. However, despite these initiatives, recruiting and keeping skilled talent remains a significant issue for large numbers of institutions in the field [94].

Given the identification of perceived shortcomings in available studies, the current investigation has a few key goals. This study primarily aims to broaden the scientific understanding of recruitment and human resource management processes in the travel, hospitality, tourism, and leisure (HTTL) industry by analyzing young people's career challenges in the early stages. Particular emphasis is placed on investigating the attitudes and beliefs of younger employees in the early stages of their careers, in contrast to more experienced and established professionals in managerial positions. Generally, younger employees perceive employers as attractive due to career prospects, the availability of training and promotion programs, a balance between professional and personal life, and a supportive organizational environment [83]. In

opposition, seniors are more frequently guided by wages, welfare perks, employment guarantees, and the firm's image and consistency [84]. Based on modern academic studies [95] and the employer appeal theory, this work focuses on investigating the core assumptions and effects of firm fit and corporate attraction. This enabled the generation of reasonable assumptions and exploring correlations between different indigenous factors. The unit of analysis in this study is the members of the Millennials generation aged 18 to 35 who use digital technologies and are engaged in entrepreneurial activities in the travel, hospitality, tourism, and leisure (HTTL) sectors in the Republic of Kazakhstan. According to the Eurasian Research Institute (2021), over 53% of Kazakhstan's population, equivalent to approximately 10.3 million out of a total of 19.17 million people, are children and youth, a significant proportion of whom have a high level of digital competence. Members of the digital-born young are predicted to have a substantial role in influencing public sector policy formulation in the next couple of decades [96]. In this context, researching the opinions of the young workforce on employability appears to be a reasonable effort, as the implications of this research may be valuable for a broad audience segment and could have practical applicability in a more general environment.

The study has developed the below research question(s) [97]:

RQ1. Where does the company's image and appeal impact younger staff's judgments on whether to continue or terminate careers with the company?

RQ2. Which critical enablers enhance the appeal of firms working in the travel, hospitality, tourism, and recreation (HTTL) industry?

RQ3. Within the HTTL spectrum, what is the impact of perceived levels of job satisfaction on young employees' propensity to spread positive information about their employer in the form of informal word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendations and on their increased professional engagement within the organization?

The outcomes of this investigation have substantial value at both micro and broader scales, thus contributing to the growing service industry in the Republic of Kazakhstan, particularly in the hospitality and tourism business. At the micro-scale, the findings will underline the significance of corporative attraction for youth workers in Kazakhstan, as the competitiveness of a business is strongly influenced by its capability to engage and keep a talented and qualified workforce. A deep appreciation of these dimensions will bring specific benefits to Kazakhstani businesses, including opportunities to increase the quality of service, decrease employee retention, strengthen corporate image, and enhance the return on investment. At the macro scale, the ongoing trends of globalization, digitization, and greater levels of competition due to the growth of ICT are causing economies with a strong potential for touristic growth, such as the Republic of Kazakhstan, to revise and create effective strategies for promoting and marketing their tourism. These endeavors enhance the nation's foreign image and target visitors, investments, and high-skilled migration. The findings of this study could be helpful in public authorities governing the country's labor sector, as well as for policymakers and planners developing and adopting activities designed to promote the growth and preservation of the country's labor market human capital. In part, the evidence generated can inform the creation of strong youth labor market

initiatives and facilitate the formation of a favorable policy environment for the promotion and expansion of the job market in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The phenomenon of “employer likeability” has been the topic of extensive study in different academic fields, including occupational conduct [98], managerial science [99], application psychology [100], communicational studies, and the field of marketing [101]. Employer appeal refers to a combination of perceived benefits that a potentially eligible employee anticipates receiving upon entering a job in a particular firm, organization, or with a specific type of employer. As per the management theories encyclopedia, the organization or founder attraction theory outlines the degree to which an applicant regards a firm as a preferred destination for a job and articulates a willingness to join the organization or a firm as an employee. This framework concentrates on the tools for creating a favorable brand image of an entity as an employer, designed to engage and keep well-qualified people [84]. A crucial role in this respect is fulfilled by both outward employer marketing policies and the inward image of the employer, which is based on the impression of current staff members.

The appeal of a firm or entity is described as the degree to which an applicant regards the entity as a desirable place to be employed [102] or generally forms a favorable impression of a job there [103]. In this framework, job applicants' potential employer self-perception, precisely the organization's appeal, is a crucial driver of a firm's ability to recruit skilled job seekers [104]. Company likeability is a high-dimensional concept involving two fundamental attributes: outward and inward appeal. Outward appeal relates to how prospective staff and outside interested parties see the entity as an engaging place to work. In turn, inner appeal refers to the views of existing staff and inner actors about employment terms and conditions, the company environment, corporate culture, and internal growth possibilities within the firm. The factors that form the attractiveness of a company as an employer can be systematized into five key parameters: economic value, the value of career growth, the value of professional fulfillment, social significance, and value due to interest in the content of labor activity [97]:

- economical value covers tangible benefits, including salaries, additional perks, and job guarantees that provide financial sustainability for staff;
- value of promotion is linked to career and vocational growth options, incentive tools, recognized merit, and future employability;
- value of application shows the level of integration of an individual into the organization's culture, integration into corporative procedures, and the ability to provide coaching and supporting co-workers;
- societal value is defined by the interpersonal qualities in the collective, the existence of a positive working climate, and the level of cooperation with co-workers and superiors;
- value of interest embraces issues connected with a stable working atmosphere and the organization's encouragement and support of staff members' creativity, innovativeness, and self-actualization.

*Corporate identity.* Research papers broadly acknowledge that the enterprise, company, and employer reputation significantly determine its appeal to potential and

incumbent workers [79, 95]. A company's corporate identity is a set of perceptions by internal and external stakeholders, including corporate values, organizational culture, management policy, and visually identifiable elements such as logos, corporate symbols, and other image components. Corporate identity also embraces issues such as staff composition, job profile, and work environment, which create a picture of the organization in the mind of a prospective recruit [105]. In research on personnel selection, emphasis is given to investigating staff feedback on their personal job performance since the company's reputation is often shaped by personal experiences and 'word of mouth' tools. This fact significantly affects job applicants' interest in finding a job in a specific institution [106].

The corporate identity includes these three main parts:

1. fair information on the company, including corporate rules, everyday operating practices, standard operating procedures, staffing practices, human resource policies, code of behavior, and rules of ethics;
2. occupational information, covering specific characteristics of work processes, functional duties of employees, and level of responsibility;
3. staff information reflects the variety of workers at multiple levels of the institutional setting and their contribution to forming the inner corporate culture [96].

So, the firm's image plays a pivotal role in establishing its appeal as an employer and essentially affects how the organization is perceived by its potential and present personnel [97]. Hiring and recruitment programs, regardless of whether they are conducted in-place or by outside recruiters, can be broken down into a set of three key phases:

1. building a pool of candidates - attracting prospective seekers who fulfill the employer's needs;
2. keeping candidate standing - the retention process of holding motivated job applicants at all phases of the recruitment cycle;
3. affecting job search - establishing an atmosphere that promotes job seekers' acceptance of employment with a specific entity [107]. Job recruiters must construct a positive and helpful dialogue with junior staff, as this improves their efficiency in engaging talented young candidates with the right skills and expertise [108].

Source reliability is the extent to which source data is plausible and credible regarding a business conveyed by a given source channel, often by an individual with previous experience working for the entity in question [109]. It is also determined as perceived veracity and reliance on the data source [110]. Research approaches identify three categories of information sources that potential job seekers may rely on when making decisions related to choosing an employer:

- instant sources – includee online reviews, user feedback, word-of-mouth (WOM) mechanisms, and articles in general news media and professional literature. These types of sources are widely taken to be the most reputable [110];
- indirect sources – cover monitoring companies' campaigns, advertising messaging, and advice from marketers or PR agents, which are generally regarded as less trusted;

- actual sources – represent sources of knowledge based on the firsthand experience of users or employees, thereby making them highly credible [109]. Thus, reliable sources of information play a vital role in building potential staff's understanding of the firm and can considerably impact their choice of career options.

The mechanism of employee word-of-mouth (WOM) is defined as the spread of information. It views an institution by its existing or ex-employees, within and outside their occupational and societal settings [97]. This ongoing process can be viewed in the context of staff reference schemes, a recruitment strategy that recruiters initiate. In such referral schemes, existing staff members suggest candidates for job vacancies using their personal and career networks. As the Oxford Dictionary of Cambridge describes, a recruitment referral scheme includes a reward to an individual staff member materially for recommending a job candidate who has been hired successfully. Besides formal referral systems, however, the overall scheme of WOM in the employability context covers incumbent staff and external parties who are not closely associated with the institution [97].

An employee's commitment to the organization is characterized by several indicators, including high attendance discipline, full-time employment, willingness to put in extra effort beyond the job description, and identification with the company's mission and strategic goals [97]. Loyalty is marked by optimistic feelings about the employees' attitude toward the organization and their willingness to strive to perform better in terms of their effectiveness, which is derived from the division of company values. A high level of organizational commitment is possible only if there is stable mutual trust between the founder and employees. This trust promotes the formation of a standard value platform and stimulates collective efforts to increase staff involvement in the organization's activities. This, in turn, has a good effect on the cost-efficiency and sustainability of the institution. Three types of loyalty are distinguished:

1. affective – affectionate attachment to the organization;
2. normative – dedication based on their moral duties to the institution;
3. constant – a commitment based on the considerable cost of switching jobs [97-99].

Prior research shows a strong positive relationship between employees' degree of attachment and their primary working experience in the organization's workplace [111-113]. The conceptualized version of the theoretical framework used in this particular research. The framework of the model distinguished three crucial items that affected the corporate likeability of a business:

1. organizational identity;
2. hiring policies;
3. reliability of sources of information.

Based on these items, we formulated seven hypotheses to understand company appeal's effects on young hires. Namely, the pattern suggests that an enhancement of firm appeal is correlated positively with an improvement in the amount of positive feedback from employees and the commitment level of employees. In addition, the modeling accounts for such test variables as gender, age, sex, income level, work experience, and skill level, which may impact the observed correlations.

Hypothesis generation is centered on Barbaros' proposition that a firm's brand image affects its appeal to staff. In a survey on the relationship between corporate identity and its prospective and active staff acceptance, Kissel & Buttgen revealed a strong, meaningful positive correspondence between these drivers. The results prove that a favorable company image improves the firm's attractiveness as an employer [114]. Given these analytical and empirical findings, the following proposed hypothesis was developed (Figure 10):

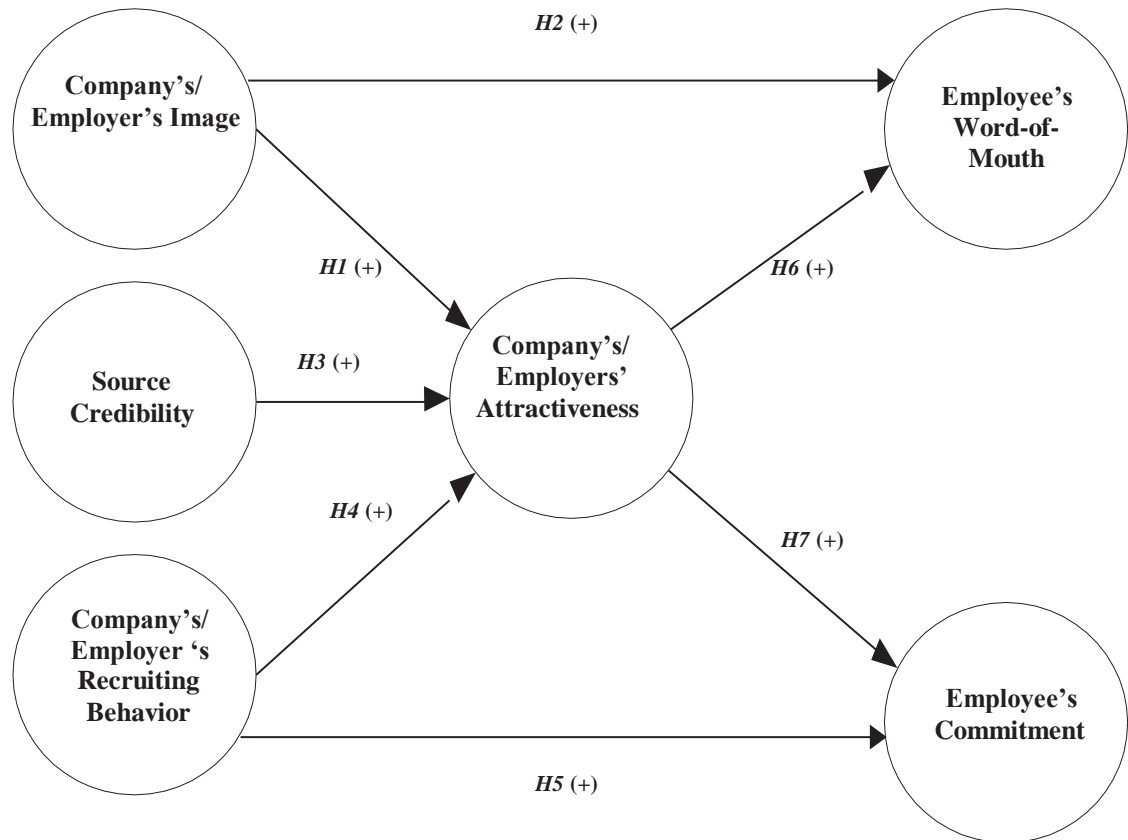


Figure 10 – Theoretical Model of Company Appeal to Young Employees

Note – compiled by the author

H1: The higher the positive company identity, the better its appeal as an employer.

Image of the firm and “word spreading radio” of the workers. The word-of-mouth transfer mechanism by staff covers the sharing behavior intentions, active job promotion of the founder, and firm recommendations to potential recruits. The evolution of technology, such as digital platforms, online communities, and social media platforms, has further developed and enhanced the effects of communicating through wearable word of mouth (WOM). As a direct result, businesses have focused more on corporate image quality management, as adverse word of mouth can destroy an institution's overall image. A present study that explored the influence of corporate image and credibility on the generation of positive WOM among students in academia found that a conducive institutional identity and high employee trust level contribute much to the propagation of good WOM [97]. Drawing on these

conclusions, the following stated hypothesis was framed:

H2: A good company image facilitates the creation of a favorable “word of mouth” campaign among staff members.

Influence of corporate image on word of mouth. The more stable and favorable a firm's image is, the better the probability of generating a positive “word of mouth” that enhances the image of the organization among prospective and existing employees. Also, as noted previously, the trust in an employee's source of this type of information is driven by the level to which it is viewed as reliable and delivers trustworthy, correct details. In this setting, the focus is on the information provider rather than on the content of the information. Reliability of the source and data quality are linked related concepts and are perceived to be an essential feature of how information is characterized, particularly in the context of the online environment [115].

For applicants, prospective sources of business information may serve as:

- the formal site of the entity and its page in social networks;
- active members of staff or their friends;
- visiting the firm in person to gain a primary source of first-hand insight.

Sources greatly influence job seekers' feelings about an organization [116] and can improve or reduce their judgment of the company's appeal. Hence, the link between source reliability and an entity's attractiveness seems to be a logical one. An explorative investigation ( $2 \times 2$  design) examining the relation between hiring information sources and firm appeal [117] confirmed that two critical reliable information sources, vacancy adverts and word of mouth, promote organizational likability. Due to these conclusions, the below hypothesis was stated:

H3: The more substantial the reliability of a firm's source of information, the greater the firm's appeal is viewed by prospective hires.

An organization's hiring processes and policies are critical to its appeal to job candidates. Recruiting processes are conducted via a wide variety of channels, including conventional print mass media and digital communication platforms. In the past few years, the utilization of online tools, such as company websites and online social networks, has evolved into a crucial instrument for engaging top-quality talent and driving job responses. Available research suggests that the success of advertising policies realized through various digital tools, such as the company's website and other forms of online communication, plays a pivotal role in building a positive impression of the company and recruiting high-quality talent [118, 119].

Further, job applicants' impression of hiring procedures directly influences their view of a candidate's perception of the company's appeal [109]. Thus, recruiting procedures, whether performed inside the organization or by outside agents, can greatly influence the degree of appeal of the organization in the minds of prospective employees. Given this underlying theoretical and experiential hypothesis, the below-proposed assumption has been stated:

H4: The better a company's recruiting policies are implemented, the stronger its appeal to potential staff members.

Employee recruitment and adaptation programs in an organization are not a single activity but a continual administrative effort involving such items as:



- career mapping;
- on-the-job education;
- advancement;
- gaining access to vocational options;
- a framework for remuneration and for recognizing success.

The efficiency of the staff recruitment and adaptation process is essential to avoid staff change, decrease the risk of losing personnel's loyalty, and reinforce their long-lasting incentives to stay with the institution. In this background, the objective of hiring and adaptation is not only to fill existing vacancies but also to ensure the long-term retention of employees in the business [120]. Additionally, studies confirm that staff member engagement with the firm is one of the key results of an effective hire selection process [121]. A significant managerial level of behavioral engagement is tightly linked to the selection philosophy and employment human resource policy of the employer's owner. Taking these theoretical assumptions into account, the following hypothesis was developed:

H5: The more substantial the recruiting and adaptation procedures are, the higher the level of commitment of the company's staff remains.

Word-of-mouth and character references are non-formal data sources that can offer a more specific view of a business and its job openings. WOM provides job candidates with a more unambiguous indication of a match between a possible employer and their vocational interests and expertise [122, 123]. In distinction to former formal data sources (such as corporate websites), previous studies have found that non-formal recruitment sources significantly affect individuals' perceptions of a company's likeability. Given the ability of employer branding and appeal to form a favorable WOM among staff, previous studies confirmed the positive relationship between these concepts [124, 125, 126].

Associates who are highly loyal to the company feel proud to be members and often go beyond their regular job tasks to advocate for the corporation's benefits [96]. An organization's attraction and image play an active role in acquiring skilled talent and retaining high-value employees. Organizations must recognize the relevance of employee engagement at all stages, from upper management to new entrants into the workforce [97]. Among the techniques to make a company more appealing is to give employees opportunities for innovation and creativity as part of their work activities, thus fostering: growth of their level of engagement; raising behavioral and organizational adherence; stimulation of the positive word of mouth about the enterprise as an interesting place to get a job [97]. The following hypothesis was derived from these notional assumptions:

H6: The larger the appeal of the company, the better the chances of positive word of mouth among staff and their organizational adherence.

H7: The correlation between firm likeability and staff engagement.

In addition, the level of firm appeal has a straight-line link with the level of commitment of employees, which supports the significance of firm image and staff retention policies in creating lasting employee commitment. A questionnaire tool was constructed and shared for the data collection, including scaling dimensions chosen

based on earlier validated methodologies. The self-completion questionnaire consisted of two key sections:

1. Demographic info (age, schooling level, sex, and career occupation).
2. Six latent constants encompassing:
  - attraction to the firm;
  - staff loyalty;
  - company identity;
  - word of mouth (WOM) tool;
  - credibility of the data source;
  - recruiting policies of the firm.

In its original phase, the tool was piloted among a group of mid-level executives who belong to the generation of millennials operating in the tourism, travel, tourism, and leisure (HTTL) sector in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The test group's objective was to seek final feedback and revise the survey tool to optimize the questions' design, minimize probable bias, and raise the degree of response comprehension of the questionnaire [97]. The primary observations of the response from the test group pertained to: questionnaire format and length; the phrasing of the questionnaires is precise. The survey instrument was improved based on the obtained responses, allowing its construct validity and accuracy to be further used in the baseline study.

*Data gathering techniques and sampling.* To analyze the study modeling and evaluate the suggested relationships, data was gathered via two methods:

1. An online questionnaire. An interactive online poll was created and placed on the Webropol portal platform. The reference was sent to specialists in hospitality, travel, tourism, and leisure (HTTL) all over Kazakhstan.
2. Engagement of a firm of survey marketers. In order to boost the rate of response, a specialist marketing firm was engaged in the collection procedure to secure further engagement of respondents in line with the study's criterion.

*Selecting Sample Methodology.* Drawing on prior studies [127], this research employed a mixture sampling method, including: quota selection and purposive selection. As described [128], a mixed method used in stratified sampling procedures is considered a sound and holistic approach to obtaining a representative and good-quality sample. The utilization of quota sampling allowed for the representation of varied categorizations of employees in the HTTL industry, providing a more in-depth understanding of the issue under research. At the same time, targeted sampling focused on the top informants most qualified to provide the research with relevant evidence for the study. Notably, the choice of sampling was oriented towards representatives of defined age groupings, staff with professional background in HTTL, persons with appropriate qualifications, which helped harmonize the survey's scope and aim, ensuring the high quality and validity of the data gathered.

In order to ensure the representativeness of the sample population covering the hospitality, travel, tourism, and leisure (HTTL) industry in the Republic of Kazakhstan, it was determined that at least 10% of the sample should be representative of each key segment of the surveyed sector, including:

- tourism companies;

- transport and logistics organizations;
- travel agencies and tour operators;
- hotel and restaurant service enterprises;
- public, private, and hired taxi services.

To confirm the correctness of the purposive sampling method [129], respondents were asked two filtering questions in the first stage:

1. Do they belong to the Millennial generation or Generation Z, i.e., are they aged 18 to 35?
2. Have they worked in the HTTL sector in the Republic of Kazakhstan for at least two years?

For this study, Millennials are defined as those born between 1981 and 1996, and Generation Z is defined as those born between 1997 and 2012. 218 valid questionnaires were received for data collection, which were analyzed using the partial least squares structural modeling (PLS-SEM) method. The choice of Smart PLS software as the primary tool for analyzing empirical data is based on many sound methodological considerations:

1. Suitable applicability to the analysis of small samples. Unlike covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM), which requires significant data, partial least squares (PLS-SEM) demonstrates high efficiency when dealing with limited samples;
2. Flexibility and ease of use. Compared to AMOS, MPLUS, and R, which are employed in CB-SEM and are orientated mainly to confirmation analyses, Smart PLS has an intensive interface that is easy to use and does not demand in-depth expertise in statistical and program skills;
3. Applicability for exploration-type analyses. Smart PLS is a universal tool suitable for simple and complicated patterns, making it the right choice for exploratory analyses and applications.

Thus, the use of the Partial Least Squares Method (PLS-SEM) on the Smart PLS platform provided a comprehensive analysis of the empirical data and allowed us to identify stable structural relationships between key variables of the model, thus contributing to the reliability and validity of the results obtained. In order to assess the key variables of the study, we utilized scales that were adapted from prior empirical work. The scales' reliability was estimated using Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient, which helped to confirm their Internal Coherence:

- the six-point scale used to assess the level of attractiveness of the company showed a high level of internal consistency, which is confirmed by the value of reliability coefficient  $\alpha = 0.835$ ;
- a four-item scale for evaluating company image, also possessing an acceptable level of reliabilities ( $\alpha = 0.759$ );
- an eight-item scale for measuring company hiring behavior that achieved a reasonable level of reliability ( $\alpha = 0.860$ );
- a three-item trust scale in the origin of info, adapted from past studies, showed good reliabilities ( $\alpha = 0.819$ );

- a three-item scale to evaluate word of mouth (WOM) among the staff, which also demonstrated a high level of reliability ( $\alpha = 0.888$ ), exceeding the established thresholds;

- a six-item employee adherence scale [129-133].

All the scaled items were adapted and modeled to suit the circumstances of the given study. A five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) was used in measuring replies to facilitate the interpretation of the available data. Since the research was carried out among Kazakhstani interviewees, the poll tool was converted from English into Russian. The back-to-back-translation method [134] was utilized to check the accurate translation:

1. original translation of the questionnaire from its original English version into Russian;
2. back- translating the version of the Russian into English;
3. compare the original and the retranslated English version to identify potential discrepancies and clarify phrasing.

This approach ensured that the measurement tools were semantically equivalent and assured their correct use in the study context. Appendix 1 provides detailed information on the demographic characteristics of the sample population, including the following parameters:

- age range of respondents;
- gender;
- income level;
- professional status;
- length of service;
- industry affiliation of the company;
- the degree to which the level of education corresponds to the position held.

Statistical processing and analysis of empirical data were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 23 software, which is designed for data analysis in the social sciences. The essential demographic variables are as follows:

- sex: most of the respondents are men (52%);
- ages: A large majority of the interviewees were in the age group 18-30 years (91%);
- occupation status: 61% of the participants were employed;
- experience: 59% of the members stated that their working experience ranges from 1 to 3 years;
- earnings: 65.1% of the interviewees stated that their salary ranges from 1,000,000 to 5,000,000 tenge;
- line of work: 35% work in transport and logistics-related companies, 22% - in hotel and restaurant sector, 20.6 % work in travel agency companies, 12% work in taxi agencies (e.g., Yandex, Uber), 10.6% - with overseas or local tour operators;
- job match with background: 58% of respondents indicate that their actual job matches their current education. The primary source of earnings: 83% of the participants have declared that their current employment is their major source as their primary source of earnings.

The normality test of the data was analyzed. The validity of data interpreting the collected data depends highly on the normal distribution of the findings. In the current study, testing for normality was conducted based on the mean  $\pm 3$  standard criterion for skewness and kurtosis scores. The results analyzed using Smart PLS demonstrated that all the levels of kurtosis and skewness were well within the normal range ( $< 3$ ), supporting the normal distribution of the data and its reliability.

To check for the occurrence of multi-collinearity between the research designs, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was computed. The results indicated that all the values of VIF were below 5, suggesting that there was no issue of multi collinearity and validating the correctness of further analyzing the relations between the various variables. Partial Least Squares Structural Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to verify the stated hypotheses. This technique was preferred as it is best suited for forecasting and focuses on increasing the variance explained [135], consistent with the purpose of this study.

The modeling was assessed in two steps, comprising:

1. measurement model estimation (reliability and validity evaluation of the scales);
2. structural model evaluation (analyzing the relationship between components of the variables).

A bootstrapping technique involving 5,000 iterations [136] has been applied to improve the reliability of the outcomes.

The model under analysis includes the following components [137]:

1. Evaluation of scale reliability and consistency.

Reliability of selected elements. To check the validity of the separate items of the survey questionnaire, the factorial loadings of the examined constructions were assessed. The established criterion dictates that the values of factor loadings shall not be below 0.5. As summarized in Table 15, all the factor loads in this research were in the range of 0.706 to 0.888, meeting the set norms. This proves that all the questionnaire points have reasonable reliabilities.

2. Inter-reliability.

The assessment of item internal consistency of the rating scales was performed on the base of Composite Reliability (CR). In contrast to Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , CR scores are much less likely to be subject to statistical outliers and allow for a more precise dimension of scale consistency. In this present study, CR values were within the range of 0.819 to 0.933, which is greater than the minimal threshold value of 0.7 [92]. This shows that there is high validity of all the latent components of the latent variables. The CR significances for all the studied explanatory variables are reported in detail in Table 15.

Table 15 – Measurement Model

Item	Description	Loading
CA1	Company attractiveness ( $\alpha = 0.835$ , CR = 0.883, AVE = 0.602) I believe this company would be a great workplace for me	0.743

Continuous of Table 15

CA2	I find this company appealing as a potential employer.	0.808
CA3	I would only think about joining this company as a last option.	Removed
CA4	I will put in significant effort to keep my job at this company.	0.706
CA5	Employees of this company should feel proud to be associated with it.	0.837
CA6	It's likely that many individuals would be interested in working for this company.	0.780
CI1	Company image ( $\alpha = 0.759$ , CR = 0.862, AVE = 0.675) The company offers ample opportunities for professional advancement.	0.868
CI2	The company encourages its employees to apply for open positions within the organization.	0.839
CI3	The company gives employees numerous responsibilities right from the start.	0.755
CI4	The job includes a variety of tasks.	Removed
CRB1	Company recruitment behavior ( $\alpha = 0.860$ , CR = 0.896, AVE = 0.589) The company's HR department is capable and eager to address my inquiries.	Removed
CRB2	The company's HR shows interest in me as a potential candidate for recruitment.	0.779
CRB3	The company's HR is familiar with my background.	0.782
CRB4	The company's HR appears to comprehend my perspective.	0.746
CRB5	The HR department made a strong effort to recruit me for a job position.	0.786
CRB6	I gained insight into what it would be like to work at the company.	0.802
CRB7	The interview was casual and flowed naturally.	Removed
CRB8	Overall, the interview was very successful.	0.705
Source credibility ( $\alpha = 0.819$ , CR = 0.892, AVE = 0.734)		
SC1	The information is trustworthy because the source is an employee from the company.	0.816
SC2	The information provided by this source is more reliable than that from other sources.	0.866
SC3	I can rely on what the source shares with me regarding the company and the job.	0.887
WOM1	Employee's word of mouth ( $\alpha = 0.810$ , CR = 0.888, AVE = 0.726) I will suggest this company as an employer to others in the hospitality, travel, tourism, and leisure industries.	0.817
WOM2	Based on my experiences with the company, I will urge others to seek employment there.	0.849
WOM3	I will recommend this company to my family and friends who are in search of a job Employee's commitment	0.888
EC 1	I am prepared to put in significant effort, exceeding typical employee expectations, to contribute to the company's success.	0.798
EC2	I believe my values align closely with those of the company.	0.808
EC 3	I take pride in sharing with others that I am a company member.	0.830

## Continuous of Table 15

Item	Description	Loading
EC4	The company truly motivates me to perform at my best in my role	0.818
EC 5	I am very happy that I chose to join this company.	0.852
EC6	I genuinely care about the future of this company.	0.786
EC 7	This is the best company one could possibly join.	0.817
Note 1 – CR =composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted, HR= human resources		
Note 2 – compiled by the author		

To verify the correlating constructs, the average variance extracted (AVE [R<sup>2</sup>]) was computed to allow us to assess the model's convergent validity [130]. In this study, the values of the average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.589 to 0.734, which exceeds the established threshold of 0.50 [134], thus confirming an acceptable level of convergent validity. This supports the sufficient convergent validity of the examined variables and provides a proper measurement of the latent constructs.

The R<sup>2</sup> coefficient of determination assesses the level of fit of the empirical findings to the constructed model. R<sup>2</sup> scores are interpreted in accordance with standard benchmark thresholds (Table 16):

- Substantial level – 0 .75 and above;
- Moderate level – 0 .50;
- Poor level – 0 .25 [136,137].

Table 16 – Adjusted R-Square Coefficients

Latent variable	Variance explained (R <sup>2</sup> )
Company Appeal	56.5%
Worker Commitment	54.4%
Worker's Word-of-Mouth	31.5%
Note – compiled by the author	

In this research, the modified R<sup>2</sup> values were:

- Company Appeal – 57%,
- Commitment of staff – 54%,
- “Word of mouth” (WOM) – 32%.

As it is illustrated, all the findings were above the weak level threshold (0.25) and partly met the medium scale standard (0.50), which supports the appropriate fit of the figures to the exploratory model [136]. Thus, the estimation results of R<sup>2</sup> prove the validity of the developed model and its suitability for analyzing the determinants of employer appeal, employees' commitment and their readiness to share positive information about the employer. The findings demonstrated an adequate correspondence of the model to empirical data and ensure its scientific and practical value in the context of the study of socio-economic developments in the labor market.

Discriminant validity (DV) was analyzed using the heterotrait-monotrait correlation method (HTMT) [136]. According to the established methodological criteria, the HTMT coefficient values should be below the threshold value of 0.90, which indicates a sufficient degree of discriminability between latent constructs, confirming their empirical differentiability. As it is shown, all HTMT values obtained are below the offered threshold, which verifies the discriminant validity of the measured items and the validity of their use on the model [97]. The bootstrapping method [136] was used to estimate the structural model and identify linear relationships between latent constructs. The results of estimating the coefficients of direct relationships within the structural model are presented in Figure 11.

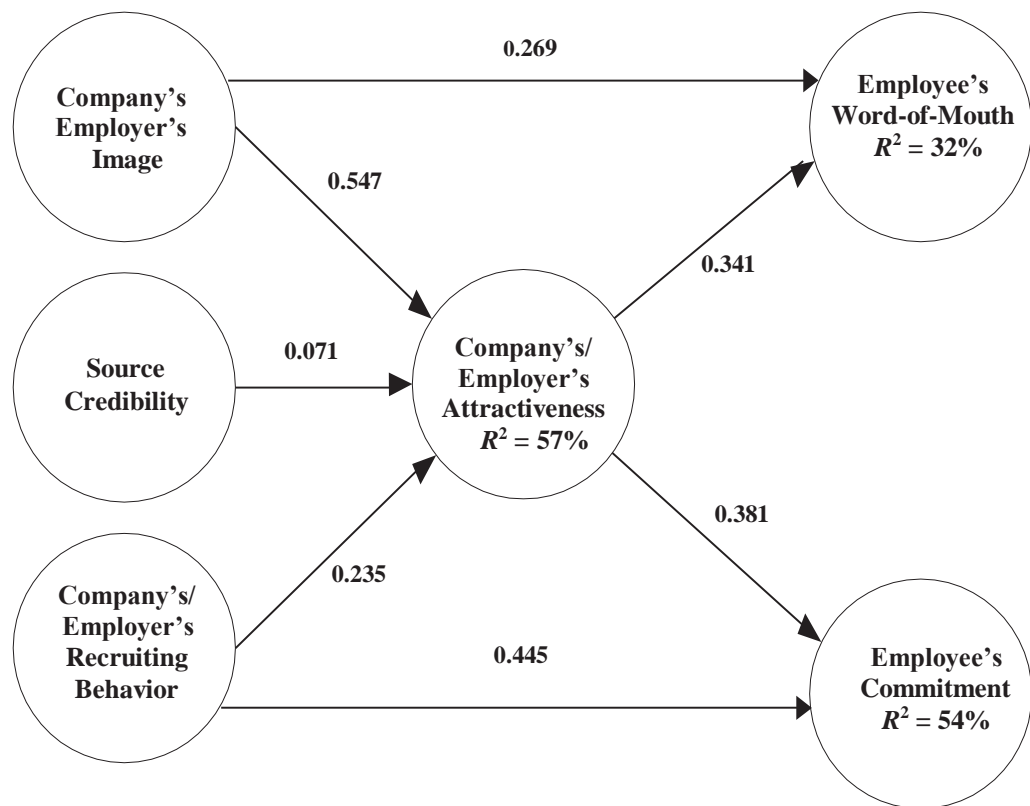


Figure 11 – Structural Model

Note – compiled by the author

The conducted analysis of the empirical hypotheses of the study revealed statistically significant positive relationships between the following variables:

H1: Company Image → Company Attractiveness-  $\beta = 0.547$ ;  $t = 7.762$ ;  $p = 0.000$ - The findings confirm that the positive image of an organization has a significant impact on the perception of its attractiveness as an employer.

H2: Company Image → Informal information dissemination (WOM) among employees- $\beta = 0.269$ ;  $t = 2.489$ ;  $p = 0.013$ - A significant positive relationship was found between perception of company image and employees' propensity to disseminate positive information about it through word-of-mouth.



H4: Company Recruitment Strategy → Company Attractiveness-  $\beta = 0.235$ ;  $t = 2.850$ ;  $p = 0.004$ - The results confirm that effective recruitment policies enhance the perceived attractiveness of the employer.

H5: Company Recruitment Activities → Employee Engagement- $\beta = 0.445$ ;  $t = 6.688$ ;  $p = 0.000$ . It was found that the organization's recruitment behavior has a significant effect on the level of employee engagement in professional activities. Suggests that hiring strategies also have a great impact on staff commitment.

H6: Company appeal → Word of mouth (WOM) among employees

$\beta = 0.341$ ,  $t = 3.462$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . Supports that good Company likeability favors the spread of a positive WOM among staff.

H7: Company attraction → Employee commitment

$\beta = 0.381$ ,  $t = 5.389$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . Demonstrating that higher appealing employers have staff with more commitment.

H3: Source credibility → company appeal

$\beta = 0.071$ ,  $t = 1.035$ ,  $p = 0.301$ . The outcome showed no meaningful favorable relation between confidence in the source of info and the attraction of the company. Hence, hypothesis H3 was not confirmed.

Thus, the majority of hypotheses (H1, H2, H4, H5, H6, H7) were empirically confirmed, indicating a considerable influence of corporate identity, recruitment strategies, and employer likeability on the commitment of employees and WOM. At the same time, hypothesis H3 was not empirically supported, indicating that there is no statistically significant effect of the perceived credibility of the information source on the level of perceived attractiveness of the company. This research contributes meaningfully to the expanding body of scholarly literature by setting out seven key hypothetical correlations to evaluate the effects of company identity, the credibility of an information provider, and recruiting behavior on the level of firm likeability. In addition, the investigation analyses whether high levels of company appeal lead to greater levels of positivity 'word of mouth' (WOM) spreading among staff and increasing their level of commitment to the entity. The current research expands the theory of employer likeability by incorporating credibility of origin, firm recruiting behavior, and firm identity as key independent explanatory variables that influence the firm's perception as a desired employer of choice among younger job applicants. Also, the investigation delves deeper into the dynamics of the interacting factors among the various variables that affect an employer's appeal by examining their interrelationships.

### **3 PRIORITIES AND MECHANISMS INTENDED TO ENSURE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL CHALLENGES**

#### **3.1 Priorities and mechanisms for implementing the new youth employment policy**

The existence of professional training does not provide a guarantee of job placement for youth in their specialization. Today, a new youth employability dynamic is the desire for flexible forms of employment. As it was noted in Chapter 2, the portion of younger adults in hired labor is decreasing, and, accordingly, the quantity of freelancers, including fresh professionals who graduated from universities, is growing. In this regard, special attention should be paid to career guidance counseling. In this direction, the Career Compass Project is being implemented in the Republic of Kazakhstan. It helps to build a career line, quickly find vacancies, analyze and compare salaries and requirements, and obtain information about in-demand professions, forecasts, and educational institutions.

To improve the professional skills of students at the Electronic Labor Exchange, they can undergo an internship, which will allow them to master specific activities and increase their competitiveness. Kazakhstan implements active measures to reduce youth unemployment and find employment. So, as of October 1, 2024, 376 thousand persons applied to career centers which are regional employment bodies. 226 thousand of them received various forms of state support (including 180 thousand young people). Employers supported vocational training in educational institutions for 2.6 thousand persons, of which 1.5 thousand completed training and 1.2 thousand were employed. Since July 2021, young people have undergone short-term digital online training in in-demand professions on a single portal.

The skills.enbek platform hosts courses for the recognition of micro-qualifications from Vocational Education and Training (VET) organizations and higher educational establishments and develops World Skills platforms - these are 615 online courses in 364 skills from 141 authors, of which 278 are available for free. 653 persons took part in vocational training at workplaces, of which 385 persons got a job, 3.5 thousand young people received grants for the development of their own business, and 106 thousand persons were employed. 1.8 thousand persons received their first work experience under the youth practice program and 27 thousand persons in public works. In our opinion, effective youth employment is productive, high-performance employment that allows one to achieve professional growth, receive decent wages, and ensure social and legal protection, i.e., it is based on the principles of decent work. In developing public policy in the sphere of young people's employment, priorities should be given not simply to the creation of work places, but especially to the quality of those placements. This kind of approach favors not only the economic sustainability of young employees, but also enhances the overall competitiveness of the country's economy (Table 17).

Table 17- Principles focused on productive and sustained youth employability

Principle of Socio-labor Inclusion	
<p>The content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-satisfying the employees' social needs;</li> <li>-protecting individual and social economic needs;</li> <li>-compliance with dignified labor standards and promotion of the system of labor and social relationships;</li> <li>-building a responsible, initiative, and autonomous employee;</li> <li>-meeting the social and cultural requirements of the working-age population.</li> </ul>	<p>Effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-attaining social welfare of the people;</li> <li>-provision of a worthy and equitable level of wages and salaries;</li> <li>-liquidation of involuntary and children's work;</li> <li>-establishing conditions for effective labor market employment;</li> <li>-gender equality;</li> <li>-social partnership and protection;</li> <li>-improvement of legislation.</li> </ul>
Principle of sustainability	
<p>Contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creation of decent work conditions;</li> <li>- reproduction of labor resources;</li> <li>- increase in labor productivity;</li> <li>- provision of full employment;</li> <li>- provision of effective demand.</li> </ul>	<p>Effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- development of labor potential;</li> <li>- professional growth;</li> <li>- decent wages;</li> <li>- social security;</li> <li>- balanced development of the labor market;</li> <li>- progressive shifts in employment;</li> <li>- improvement of the population's quality of life;</li> <li>- growth of competitiveness.</li> </ul>
Principle of security	
<p>Contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- social and institutional security;</li> <li>- guarantees in remuneration;</li> <li>- the amount of working time;</li> <li>- labor safety;</li> <li>- availability of high-quality jobs.</li> </ul>	<p>Effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- improvement of the system of social and labor relations;</li> <li>- countermeasures against external and internal challenges and shocks.</li> </ul>
Principle of safety	
<p>Contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creation of working conditions without risks to the employee's life and health;</li> <li>- provision of protection against social risks.</li> </ul>	<p>Effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participation in the decision-making process;</li> <li>- improvement of the educational and professional level.</li> </ul>

Principle of labor productivity and employment	
<p>Contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- correspondence of remuneration and labor efficiency;</li> <li>- absence of discrimination in wages;</li> <li>- fairness and equality of employees;</li> <li>- stimulation of the employee;</li> <li>- creation of favorable conditions for work;</li> <li>- guarantees of protection in case of social and professional risks;</li> <li>- employment promotion policy;</li> <li>- regulation of working hours;</li> <li>- professional and educational development;</li> <li>- creative self-realization.</li> </ul>	<p>Effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- effective, productive employment;</li> <li>- highly productive work.</li> </ul>
Principle of social partnership	
<p>Contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- voluntary agreement of the subjects of social and labor relations on cooperation;</li> <li>-preparedness of the parties to employment relations to share risks, liabilities, and outcomes of work activity;</li> <li>-provision of legal security and safeguards of labor rights;</li> <li>-workplace health and safety</li> </ul>	<p>Effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-equitable salary levels;</li> <li>-efficient and secure employment;</li> <li>- balance of the labor market;</li> <li>- gender equality.</li> </ul>
Note – compiled by the author	

To determine priorities intended to ensure the effective employment of young people in the context of digital and technological challenges, we propose to identify interrelated, optional principles of decent jobs that can be tailored to specific sectors and branches of the economy: socialization, stability, safety, efficiency, productivity, equity and fairness, and social partnership.

At present, the country's job market is marked by substantial socio-demographic and structural shifts, among which we can highlight:

- transforming the composition of the labor market, including a growing proportion of the Millennium generation (those born between 1984 and 2000), who will account for a substantial part of the workforce by 2025; a large share of pension-

age workers; and the creation of the NEET class (youth not in work, continuing education or professional development);

- appearance of new kinds of work: it is forecast that 65% of current first-graders in the projected period of the next generation will be employed in careers that do not presently exist; by 2030, over 50% of the jobs will be driven by AI; large-format robotic processes are predicted;

- shifting labor standards: The need for new types of job opportunities, such as gig economy, volunteering, and part-time employment, is becoming increasingly common in today's job market [138];

- technological, structural, social, and demographic changes are a challenge for the education system - reduction of the period for relevance of competencies (knowledge and skills accumulate) and become invalid on average 4 years after completing their studies, compared to about 2.5 years for those graduating from a technical training program. As a consequence, graduates of professional training often lose qualifications and do not satisfy the actual expectations of the new job market. In this regard, the education system and the level of professional training face a new task of ensuring relevant competencies throughout the professional life of specialists—subjects of the labor market, corresponding to the constantly changing demand.

Over the next 5-10 years, major trends in technology - such as artificial intelligence, green technologies, the use of robotic technology and automated transport - will increasingly impact the prospects for employment and participation of young people. In the sense of balancing labor demand and supply, such developments are driving the creation of new occupational areas and the restructuring of traditional professions, strengthening the need for talent with numerical, analytical and engineering competencies. For its part, employers will focus more and more on specialists with expertise in AI, sustainable technologies, advanced robotics solutions and automatic transport control. At the meantime, the young population will have to cope with change through relevant education, skills training and re-qualification schemes. Under such circumstances, the proactive implementation of government policy measures designed to create a workforce that meets the needs of the future technology-oriented labor market plays an important role. In Table 18, we presented employment and engagement possibilities for younger adults based on technological trends in the job sector over the 5-10 years.

Table 18– Opportunities intended to ensure youth employment taking into account technological trends

Technological trends in the labor market for 5-10 years: - artificial intelligence; green technologies; robotization; autonomous transport technologies.		
Employment and youth engagement	Problems of young people's employment	Neutral employment factors
Job offers for young workers		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- energy, mobility, creativity;</li> <li>- professional and career growth;</li> <li>- the period of working life;</li> <li>- susceptibility to innovations;</li> <li>- new forms of non-standard work;</li> <li>- willingness to be employed at a low wage;</li> <li>- work experience gained during the study;</li> <li>- new knowledge;</li> <li>- striving for economic independence;</li> <li>- socialization;</li> <li>- career growth, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- information asymmetry;</li> <li>-poor competitive ability of youth workers;</li> <li>-age disparity in the composition of labor supply among youth;</li> <li>-shortage of vocational expertise;</li> <li>-discontent with work conditions, level of salaries, and the essence of work in the specialization;</li> <li>-low workplace quality and restricted promotion perspectives;</li> <li>-lack of alignment in Generation Y values with the needs and preferences of employers;</li> <li>-misbalance in the job market and other system challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- variability of professional orientation and professional uncertainty;</li> <li>- long adaptation period for primary employment;</li> <li>- time to search for trajectories of becoming a specialist.</li> </ul>
Young professionals' work demand		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-saving the fund of labor payments by employing new professionals with smaller payrolls;</li> <li>-a small degree of qualification, the absence of the necessary professional experience and abilities;</li> <li>-young employees are highly learnable and committed to the training and development process;</li> <li>-new and creative ideas generation by younger professionals;</li> <li>-responsiveness to innovations and quick adaptability to new environments;</li> <li>-strong potential for innovation and proficiency in modern skills and techniques;</li> <li>-informal labor practice and a high rate of employment volatility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-high requirements for standardization of employment procedures;</li> <li>-imbalances in the market of younger adult labor;</li> <li>-lack of adequate level of professional competencies and knowledge;</li> <li>-an imbalance between skill supply and demand for professional competencies;</li> <li>- investments in additional training of a young specialist;</li> <li>-social expenses (housing, kindergartens, schools, medicine);</li> <li>- inertia of the system of secondary and higher vocational education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- period of seeking and creating the career trajectory of a specialist.</li> </ul>
Note – compiled by the author		

The so-called platform economy offers considerable benefits by giving young employees employment possibilities, improving earnings, allowing employment flexibility, and, in some situations, promoting the building of vocational skills. Yet, this form of employment is associated with limitations on welfare, labor rights, and income security, as well as delaying the acquisition of competencies and encouraging the practice of tax avoidance. Platform economics can solve part of the issue of the shortage of quality jobs and scarce opportunities for careers, specifically for youth and females. However, it should be emphasized that the contribution of the so-called platform economy is not a complete solution to the issue of joblessness, as it may be associated with inequitable opportunities to a limited number of good-quality positions. The platform economy will require further strengthening of web infrastructure, formation and enhancement of the necessary digital skills among employees, as well as regulatory tools aimed at managing new types of jobs and providing the necessary social safety nets for those involved in this sphere. The SWOT analysis of the youth platform is given in Table 19.

Table 19 – A SWOT analysis of the young people's platform engagement

Strengths	Weak sides
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expanding job possibilities;</li> <li>- entry of young people into the labor market;</li> <li>- high wages;</li> <li>-in-work skills upgrading through on-line platforms;</li> <li>-flexi-time job placement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-lack of a formal contract of employment;</li> <li>-avoidance of tax obligations;</li> <li>-absence of labor rights social security and</li> <li>-guarantee of employees' labor rights;</li> <li>-volatile (variable) income level;</li> <li>-inability or reduced access to vocational opportunities for further training and qualification;</li> <li>-losing proficiency in carrying out work on field service-oriented platforms.</li> </ul>
Possibilities	Difficulties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- enhance the quality of jobs being created and available;</li> <li>-promotion of job placement of young graduates via on-line freelancing and platform jobs;</li> <li>-inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups in the job market, including persons with disabilities, (return) migrants into the labor market;</li> <li>- development of skills that are in demand in the national and regional labor markets;</li> <li>- reduction of migration and “brain drain” from the country;</li> <li>- recruitment of highly trained labor force migrants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high degree of global competitiveness in on-line job markets and inequitable opportunities in the labor market;</li> <li>-current deficits in the existing digital infrastructure development and restricted accessibility of its capabilities;</li> <li>-inadequate levels of digital, vocational, business and language competences;</li> <li>-lack of acceptance and formalization of new types of jobs.</li> </ul>
Note – compiled by the author	

The benefits of online platform work, as mentioned in the Table 19, include flexi-time working schedules, fewer institutional hurdles to entry into the labor market, and on-time payment of wages. Compared to 2021, the level of overall satisfaction with this format of employment, however, displays a decreasing tendency driven by a number of reasons. These are: poor possibilities to interact with a supervisor and get feedback, low assistance in handling situations of conflict, and a poor level of reward coupled with non-explicit tools for its computation. In particular, the negative impact is caused by the lack of certainty concerning the benefits package and the limited professional development opportunities.

There is a change in the focus of priorities in favor of safety in the context of the “freedom vs. security” problem. Such trends are due to the rising need for retirement accruals through obligatory deductions, ensuring paid yearly and maternity breaks, temporary inability to work, as well as the provision of safety guarantees in case of emergencies. It is important to point out that the potential for platform jobs includes not only younger professionals with poor qualifications but also high-skilled workers, particularly in the IT field, where greater demands are imposed on professional skills and competitive rates of remuneration are foreseen.

While analyzing the possibilities and constraints of youth platform jobs, the following key issues can be outlined: first, this type of job format promotes higher geographical and occupational mobility of youth specialists, enabling them to carry out labor work in one region while keeping their home in a more convenient locality geographically; second, the opportunity to form the first business experience, such as the formation of micro-enterprises with the minimization of entry costs, is offered by the platform; third, it gives an opportunity to control one's individual occupational trajectory, which increases possibilities for professional self-identification; fourth, employment through platform activities facilitates the attainment of an optimum balance between employment and family responsibilities, forming steady models of a balanced combination of vocational and private concerns.

According to research results, high employment is recorded on platforms among Generation Z. To the present day, a major problem in the area of platform employment is the lack of sufficient institutionalization of employment relations facilitated by digital employment platforms. The absence of well-defined legal regulation mechanisms and cooperation between actors involved throughout the labor cycle creates threats of job insecurity, primarily among youth. In the context of the digital platform economies, the implementation of the next strategic steps is required in order to secure stable employment of young workers: firstly, promote the development of cooperative relations between all the subjects of the labor process market, involving employers, training institutions and state bodies, which will set the basis for stable collaboration; secondly, boost the public-private partnership by expanding the relationship between the state employment offices and private sector agencies, which will make it feasible to respond rapidly to shifts in the workforce supply and demand; thirdly, design and launch regional programs to facilitate employment that take into a consideration of young workers' interests via a graded analysis of forms of employment, their health state, level of knowledge, geographical affiliation, vocational



achievements and the actual needs of the job market. Table 20 presents tools for modeling the careers of graduates of technical and vocational and higher educational establishments.

Table 20 – Tools for modeling the career for graduates of technical and vocational education and higher educational establishments

Career Constructor		
Young people have a high labor potential, social and labor mobility, are characterized by energy, quick learning and operational adaptability to new technologies.		
The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a systematic and structured description of the levels of qualifications recognized in the labor market (it consists of 8 levels in the Republic of Kazakhstan).		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-facilitating career self-identification, including selection of specialty, defining the level of skills, creating options for alternate career pathways, and supporting the attainment of established career goals;</li> <li>-analytical data on the expected level of profit, based on the specific nature of the selected career, regions and the trends in demand on the job market.</li> <li>-disclosure of adaptation tools at a new workplace;</li> <li>-familiarization with the employer's requirements and labor functions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-development and implementation of the "Career Modeling" academic discipline (practical course) in the educational program;</li> <li>-the course result is a variable trajectory of professional development for 5-10 years, using digital resources to search for vacancies, compare working conditions by organizations and regions, and identify advantages and deficits as a specialist with a detailed qualification characteristic.</li> </ul>	
New ways of working.		
Professional development program:	Methods and tools	Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-analysis of the requirements of professional standards, qualification characteristics, as well as medical and other health counter-indications, content and terms of labor work characteristics, lifestyle features, as well as reviewing future career prospects in the chosen field of study;</li> <li>-tailoring the subject content of "Career Planning" by developing educational and methodological materials that are structured in accordance with particular occupations and majors;</li> <li>-reasonable choice of the optimum forms, techniques, and training methods and techniques, taking into account current educational practices, as well as mental and cognitive specifics of the new graduate students;</li> <li>- information on the demand for specialists in qualifications, employment, and career prospects;</li> <li>-training in the use of NQF tools and information resources for building and developing a professional career.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-role-playing games;</li> <li>- creative tasks;</li> <li>- work in groups;</li> <li>- thematic brain rings;</li> <li>- discussion clubs,</li> <li>- networking;</li> <li>- online battles, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- trainers;</li> <li>- representatives of executive authorities;</li> <li>-business representatives;</li> <li>- industry experts.</li> </ul>
NQF Information Resources.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "demo exam" service;</li> <li>- online exam platform (theory exam);</li> <li>- social networks, NQF accounts, and training centers – to receive prompt answers to the following questions: NQF tools for career development; career guidance and planning of professional career; study and implementation of best developments in the organization of training; promote youth employability, taking into account current trends.</li> </ul>		

## Continuous of Table 20

Outcome “Career Toolkit” is a guidance tool for youth regarding changes in the work market and the educational system.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- questioning of students;</li> <li>- interviewing graduates;</li> <li>- improvement of the quality of educational programs;</li> <li>- creation of an effective system of professional motivation of students;</li> <li>- interaction with employers.</li> </ul>	Participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- regions of the country;</li> <li>- learning centers, including higher, technical, and vocational institutions;</li> <li>- learners and recent graduates of learning organizations delivering programs of high, vocational, and technical training.</li> </ul>
Note: compiled by the author	

Early career orientation plays a crucial role in ensuring youth employment: a targeted, well-informed choice of the first job and optimization of employment processes. As a mechanism for implementing career orientation work, we propose developing a long-term program, within which the following should be considered:

- development of industrial tourism across the country’s regions to familiarize youth with working at enterprises;
- internship and apprenticeship programs with subsequent employment;
- development of required professional competencies and skills to enable competitive ability for successful employment;
- support for youth entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan’s regions, development of business mentorship clubs, and consultations on financial literacy and legal matters;
- promoting the vocational advancement of youth by analyzing gained experience, discovering professional capacities, and providing conditions conducive to personal progression and informed decision-making on career paths;
- providing tuition-free training programs focused on acquiring in-demand skills or re-training in certain locations, with the goal of decreasing youth out-migration and reinforcing internal labor markets;
- granting subsidies to employers providing job equipment and mentoring programs, among other things, to promote the hiring of youth with limited mobility.

As the main activities to achieve effective youth employment in the regional aspect, it is necessary to:

- predicting likely scenarios for the youth labor market in the middle and long run, based on various economic, demographic, and technological factors;
- introducing and employing modern career guidance technology at all stages of the education system to create an aware professional choice for youth;
- the adaptation of training programs and vocational standards, based on the needs and specifics of labor markets in the region, to enhance the relevance of staff training;
- encourage continued promotion of youth business at the regional level by supporting business initiatives and establishing a supportive environment for the start-up of entrepreneurial projects;
- organizing efficient collaboration between higher and secondary vocational education organizations and businesses that offer practice and internship possibilities in an effort to improve the level of students' practical skills;

- creating conditions for traditional measures to promote youth employment, as well as designing innovative solutions that take into consideration the influence of political, demographic, socio-economic, and institutional factors, migratory trends, the tendencies of digitalization, the growth of remote forms of work, as well as global developments and state policy in the field of youth jobs.

Young people, as one of the main labor resources in the state, form the most active part of the population and determine the country's long-term development. Economic problems, disorder and dissatisfaction of young people result in political protest moods. Successful adaptation of young people to the first job and continuing efficient engagement of youth in the job market, their professional self-fulfillment and socialization are major contributing elements to stable economic performance and social security in any state.

At present, youth employment and the creation of new jobs in Kazakhstan are being promoted within the framework of national projects and State programs. Including:

- project called "Country development via strengthening the regions as a lead force" (2021-2025). It is planned to create 491.1 thousand work-places, including 15.7 thousand stable and 475.4 thousand temporary jobs [139];

- instruction of the Head of Kazakhstan's Government K-J. K. Tokayev to create 100 jobs per 10 thousand persons living in cities and districts, increase vacancies for permanent jobs through the application of such programs, ensure the principle of a "single window" in employment centers for working with youth and vulnerable groups of the society, forming suggestions for enhancing legal norms governing the social guarantees for workers employed on new digital platforms; working out a technique for reliable registration of jobs creation in new labor formats, as well as setting up a performance evaluation system for akims in this field, ensuring permanent employment at the level of at least 60% of participants in subsidized employment programs;

- a pilot project of the Population's Social Protection and Labor Issues Ministry to attract citizens employed on online platforms to the system of social protection of labor and social rights, to increase the terms and wages of participants in youth practice and the "first job" project, to double the size of grants for starting a business (up to 400 MCI), employment through the Electronic Labor Exchange;

- the Social Code of the country on the regulation of platform employment and the procedure for interaction between the parties, their rights and obligations, and the introduction of a new tax regime for the formalization of those employed on online platforms [140];

- provision of proactive services to ensure youth employment using the Digital Family Card with the annual coverage of at least 100 thousand young persons with state support measures for training, employment, and starting their own business;

- promotion of youth employment through digitalization and integration of government systems;

- introduction of non-application forms for promoting youth employment and ensuring the availability of services from smartphones;

- strengthening of public awareness efforts;

- Concept of Labor Market Development of the country for 2024 – 2029. The application of the measures proposed within the framework of the Concept will increase jobs to 3.8 million, improve the employment structure, create a competitive and adaptive labor market, and increase the number of people with incomes exceeding the median by an average of more than 280 thousand [141].

The quality of jobs is sustainable employment (at least 6 months a year), decent wages (not lower than the median wage in the region), safe working conditions, opportunities for professional development and career growth, and ensuring labor rights and social guarantees. In 2022, there were about 1 million platform workers in Kazakhstan with flexible work schedules and the ability to combine with other activities, taking into account the balance of career and personal life. It is obvious that platform employment in the future will spread to the service sector, tourism, IT, trade, construction, real estate, etc.

The concept pays particular attention to the development of labor market infrastructure through digitalization, automation, and the determination of the need for specialists, taking into account educational programs and assessing the effectiveness of economic measures. It is necessary to develop new services for the further development of the enbek.kz portal and the transition to proactive employment, creation of conditions to increase the income of young people through the development of skills, labor mobility, and simplified registration of labor relations, i.e.:

- the use of artificial intelligence in the individual selection of vacancies under skills;
- career development developer and career counselor;
- designer of regional and international labor migration;
- expansion of the availability of online learning for young people;
- independent assessment and certification of skills;
- possibility of concluding electronic employment contracts;
- platform employment.

The state policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan to promote youth employment combines various measures, initiatives, programs focused on job search, including youth practice, the first job, the contract of generations, grants for youth [142]. The main areas of youth employment are given in Table 21.

Table 21 – Directions for youth employment in the Republic of Kazakhstan

Employment of young professionals	Youth business	Creation of the Conditions for the development of professional skills
1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- internships for young specialists;</li> <li>- youth practice;</li> <li>- the first workplace;</li> <li>- exchange of young professionals (national and international labor market);</li> <li>- inter-generational contract;</li> <li>- applying to specialized career advisory centers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- youth business projects;</li> <li>- access to financial resources (loans, grants and subsidies);</li> <li>- consulting support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- technical and vocational education and short-term training;</li> <li>- training at the request of employers;</li> <li>- on-the-job training.</li> </ul>

Continuous of Table 21

1	2	3
<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-acquisition of occupational experience and expansion of the range of work skills;</li> <li>-success in finding regular employment;</li> <li>-access to public jobs for diverse groups of the community;</li> <li>-improving the process of searching for a job that corresponds to skills and professional interests;</li> <li>-development of core professional skills for secondary and higher vocational graduates;</li> <li>-acquiring the required skills for the successful fulfillment of vocational duties;</li> <li>-improving the level of competitive ability of the young professionals on the job market;</li> <li>-creating an environment for further placement on the basis of the institutions where the young people's internship was held.</li> </ul> <p>Minus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- low wages in 30 MCI.</li> </ul>	<p>Result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- business skills;</li> <li>- the number of grants issued to run your own business and credits.</li> </ul>	<p>Result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- quick mastery of skills, relevance of knowledge, flexibility, guaranteed employment in the specialty;</li> <li>- no involvement of the organization's financial sources to support the provision of personnel training;</li> <li>-innovation nature of the gained knowledge, promoting the adoption of the latest technologies and working methods;</li> <li>-increase the level of quality of manufactured products and offered services by applying current professional skills;</li> <li>-quantitative indices of youth trained as part of training programs;</li> <li>- support for young people from socially vulnerable groups (orphans, disabled or low-income families);</li> <li>- for the employer - reimbursement of training costs from the state;</li> <li>- from the employer - replenishment with new personnel;</li> <li>- for a novice employee - the application of practical skills.</li> </ul>
<p>State support for young people for social adaptation in the labor market (free education, organization of subsidized jobs, provision of soft loans and grants to start their own business, as well as finding a suitable job).</p>		
<p>Note – complied by the author</p>		

The mentioned actions aimed at removing the misbalance between workers' qualifications and the demands of the job market imply the implementation of the following steps:

- making updated current information on the pattern of demand and supply in the job market widely available to all interested parties;
- improving the system of occupational training flexibility to enable the system to adapt education curricula to the dynamics of labor market requirements;
- enhancing the monitoring and analysis of the workforce balance by the government employment agencies, as well as establishing an environment for the provision of programs for retraining and upgrading the skills of employees in compliance with the relevant expectations of the state.

Interventions in labor market regulation include anticipating future demand for professional qualifications and competencies, which must be considered in the design of government strategies in the field of education and skills training. It also involves sound individual decision-making based on occupational guidance and advice. Current

policy decisions concerning the selection of an education pathway should be based on the predicted demand for labor competences in the long-term perspective.

Nevertheless, a major challenge remains the time gap in educational activity: the design, implementation, and approval of curricula take considerable time, so the system of vocational education may not keep pace with the changes in labor demand, especially within the context of the introduction of new occupations and the transformations in the needs of existing professions. In this context, the timely availability of accurate data on current and projected vocational competencies needs, as well as the harmonization of educational programs with plans to address these needs, is of special importance. In this respect, the key role is assigned to state labor services, which act as an agency that provides high-quality information accompaniment of employment and helps to reduce the level of information asymmetries in the job market.

In this respect, the timely provision of up-to-date information on demand for existing and forecasted professional skills and qualifications, as well as the harmonization of training and human resources policies with the goals of their fulfillment, is of great value. State employment offices play a pivotal role in ensuring that the job market is supplied with high-quality data to help decrease the level of asymmetry of information and improve the efficacy of career guidance and job placement systems.

The top focus of state policy should be the precise determination of not only the drivers of the mismatch between vocational competencies and qualifications and the current needs of the job market in particular socio-economic contexts but also the creation of efficient tools to address these issues. Policies for the vocational education system should be incorporated into the country's national employment policies, as well as sector, trading, and investing policies, providing a complex system for regulating human labor resources. In particular, these plans should be strongly connected with the processes of implementation of new technology and transformation of the digital economy. To promote the adaptability of the existing education and training system in the conditions of a dynamic job market, it is essential to establish mechanisms of public-private cooperation and dialogue. Their combination will make it necessary to quickly adapt existing educational programs and training standards to the urgent and prospective demands of employers, facilitating the compliance of vocational competencies with the structure changes in the country's economy.

The skills, abilities, and competencies possessed by young people are very important for the development of their potential. After all, experience and relevant skills are of great importance to choose the best place of work and improve well-being. These drive improvements in worker productivity and income levels, eventually leading to growth in the economy. The skills that a prospective employee should have evolved in line with market conditions and comprise a wide range of competencies: general education, strong cognitive abilities, technological competencies, as well as personality traits that determine occupational success.

In most economies, employers tend to favor applicants who possess a well-established set of skills, such as teamwork, high commitment and diligence, high

motivation, a creative mindset, and business competencies, that allow them to respond effectively to the rapidly evolving technological environment. According to a WB report, the list of competencies required for the youth to successfully integrate into the job market is highlighted. It stresses that the occupational success of youth is determined by the level of their skills, competencies, knowledge, and abilities, as well as their capacity to apply them effectively in practice. The importance of developing the key professional and individual qualities at the early levels of development, which helps young people enter the professional sphere successfully, is given special attention in the report.

Additionally, in the face of the transformation of the digital economy, there is an intensive growth of new types of jobs, including gig economy, remote employment, and digital business. These work forms are becoming increasingly appealing to youth, primarily due to the large degree of adaptability, flexibility, autonomy, and the ability to choose their own working conditions [143]. Gig-working is a short-term and independent form of employment in which labor activity is carried out on demand to perform individual tasks. This pattern is usually realized through digital work platforms and mobile apps, ensuring prompt interaction among performers and clients without a sustainable employment relation [144]. Remote work is characterized by the opportunity to perform work activities outside of a typical workspace, such as an existing office, store, or retail store [145]. Workers utilize digital techniques and telecom tools to carry out their responsibilities in any location that is most convenient - at home, in co-working areas, coffee places, or other places with a stable internet connection.

Digital business encompasses both the establishment of new business structures and the upgrading of existing ones through the implementation of digital technologies or the innovative application of already existing solutions [146]. This approach is based on using online platforms, tools, and information systems to design, promote, and expand businesses in virtual markets. Despite the significant benefits, however, new ways of employment bring with them a number of ongoing challenges. First, gig working and remote employment are frequently marked by volatility, lack of social protection, and minimal enforcement of labor rights. Second, the problem of the digital divide persists: not all youth have equal access to the required technological assets, which limits their capacity to participate in the digital economy [147].

Digitalization is driving process automation, which is reshaping the jobs market. New occupations and forms of employment are arising, such as distance work, platform jobs, and hybrid models. Training and education platforms help to meet these changes. As for the influence of global shifts on the Kazakhstani job market, today's job market in Kazakhstan is exposed to the following current global tendencies:

- digitalization and automation;
- the growing use of AI, robotizing of manufacturing, and advancement of Big Data;
- specialists in data analysis, cybersecurity, and AI elaboration;
- expansion of work through digital services (taxi, deliveries, freelance work);
- remote learning - promoting online education and retraining;

- increase in the share of remote and part-time work.

Table 22 shows the mechanism for ensuring employment in the country and the relationship between digitalization and new kinds of employment. With the fast-growing digital economy, the Republic of Kazakhstan is using comprehensive mechanisms to support employment to make the national labor market more responsive and stable.

Table 22 – Mechanisms of provision of employment in Kazakhstan

Mechanism	Description	Application example in the case of Kazakhstan
State policy of employment	Job support schemes, tax benefits, digital initiatives promotion	State Digital Kazakhstan Program, setting up IT hubs
Developing digital skills	IT education, promotion of STEM education, training courses for adults	Alatau Creative Hub, Astana Hub, IT-programming training courses
Support for the platform economy	Freelancers' activity regulation, social guarantees protection	Developing self-engagement, tax breaks for platform organizations
Remote and continuing education	Online education support, staff retraining	EdX, Coursera, and Atameken learning platforms
Flexible forms of employability	Legalizing freelancing, encouraging remote employment	Expanding programs for distant workers and digital nomads
Note – compiled by the author		

One of the main tools is the state employment program, which involves employment support activities, tax stimulus and promotion of digital incentives, such as the Digital Kazakhstan program and the establishment of innovation ecosystems (e.g., Astana Hub). Particular attention is given to shaping digital competencies through the advancement of IT and STEM training, as well as the provision of professional retraining programs for adults on the basis of institutions such as the Alatau Creative Hub. To address the increasing role of the platform economy, efforts are being taken to ensure that freelancers are regulated and socially protected, including tax preferences for digital platforms. Further development of distance and lifelong learning, such as the EdX, Coursera and Atameken learning platforms, is also being implemented to foster a dynamic and highly competitive workforce. At the similar time, efforts are being made to promote the institutionalization of flexible forms of work, including remote work and freelancing, which enhances employment prospects for the precariously employed and mobile workers. In combination, these actions form the foundation for making Kazakhstan's labor market more socially inclusive, adapting and connected technologically in the context of digital transition.

Digitalization has a changing impact on the employment structure, resulting in the development of new work organization models and the reallocation of professional responsibilities. The main factors driving this process are the adoption of big data technologies, machine learning, block chain and other components of artificial



intelligence, which contribute to the automate routine tasks in various sectors of the business. As a consequence, conventional labor is being replaced by computerized solutions, such as the use of chatbots in the field of services and auto-piloting systems in vehicles (Table 23).

Table 23 – Schematic relationship between digitalization and changing patterns of employment

Drivers of digital transformation	Description and features	Example	Economic value and implications
1	2	3	4
Digitalization (Core Component)	Large scale implementation of digital technologies, including automatization, use of AI, data storage and handling infrastructure advancements (Big Data), expansion of cloud solutions and cloud-based platforms and ecosystems.	Big data solutions, blockchain, cloud platforms (AWS, Azure), machine learning.	Greater efficiency of production and administrative processes; change of focus from manual to intellectual work; appearance of new employment types (gig-economy, project employment).
Automating and AI	Substitution of routines and manual activities by smart systems, robots, and machine learning algorithms. Expansion of the use of automated solutions in the fields of logistics, client service, finances, and etc.	Chatbots in e-commerce and banking, automated warehouses (Amazon Robotics), auto-pilots (Tesla Autopilot).	Shrinking low-skilled workplaces, rising demand for experts to support AI systems; the necessity to retrain staff.
Introduction of new careers	Shaping demand for new careers not previously available in the economy, including ICT, analytics and safety.	Specialist in cybersecurity, data scientist, digital marketer, data analyst.	Shifting employment patterns: higher share of skilled personnel, necessity to modernize the educational programs.

Continuous of Table 23

1	2	3	4
Platform occupations	Greater participation of digital platforms in the economy, covering freelancing, transport, delivery and micro-jobs. Improved resilience, but also the potential risks of income volatility and social protection.	Uber, Yandex.Pro, Upwork, Fiverr, Kaspi.kz.	Rise in self-engagement, distortion of the job market, problems in terms of taxes and social security.
Remote training	Use of online learning platforms for both mass and individualized training, even within the corporate sector. Adapt the skills of employees to the changing requirements of the digital economy.	Coursera, edX, corporate LMS-systems (SAP SuccessFactors, Moodle), OpenEdu national platform.	Lower time and finance expenditures for study, increased availability of education, and increased mobility of the workforce.
Flexible working	Creation of non-typical forms of working relations: distant employment, flexi-time, project work, short-term agreements.	Freelance, hybrid working office, and remote project teams.	Improved worker autonomy, greater productivity, but also difficulties in the regulation of workers' rights and job-life balance.
Note – compiled by the author			

Employment transformation influenced by digitalization is becoming one of the key trends of the modern job market. As shown in the table above, the main driving forces of digital change cover both technological innovations and structural changes. The fundamental component is wide-scale digitalization, driving the automated processes, the expansion of artificial intelligence and the platform solutions. Automating and using AI is pushing out routine processes, driving up the call for workers with digital capabilities. At the similar time, new jobs oriented towards working with big data, cybersecurity, digital marketing and the implementation of AI solutions are emerging. This necessitates the adaptation of national systems of vocational education and the development of life-long training tools.

The platform job is becoming a new phenomenon of the job market, allowing for the expansion of self-employment and the fracturing of conventional labor relationships. Under the conditions, the significance of distance education, which facilitates rapid re-qualification of personnel, is rising. The expansion of forms of flexible jobs, which provide workers with a higher level of independence but also contribute to economic insecurity, is also growing. Thus, in addition to changing the

character of employment, the transformation of the digital economy is also placing new needs on socio-economic policies, training systems and labor governance tools.

At the forefront of the digital economy, new career paths are emerging, including in data analysis and cybersecurity. A substantial role is being played by the rise of platform-based employment, which implies the execution of labor functions through digital platforms, thus facilitating the growth of self-employment. There is also a strong adoption of remote forms of training and skills development that increase the flexibility and mobility of the labor pool. The expanding practice of remote and project-based jobs, as well as the expansion of flexible forms of work, shows a trend towards decentralization of labor and personalization of labor patterns. Taken all together, these trends are evidence of the structure transition of the labor market and the growing demands for qualification compliance of employees in the conditions of the digital economy [148].

In the contemporary digital environment, platform employment has a lot of significant strengths, especially in relation to the professional and entrepreneurial potential of youth. This format of employment promotes the creation of new skills and entrepreneurial and managerial abilities, which in this perspective, can be the basis for the establishment of one's private business (Table 24). This, in turn, intensifies not only the implementation of young professionals' entrepreneurial capacity but also promotes their effective adjustment in the context of the transforming socio-digital environment.

Table 24 – In-demand occupations and required skills

Profession	Key requirements	Required skills	Educational pathways	Prospects on the job market
1	2	3	4	5
Data Analyzer	Strong proficiency in programming tools, knowledge of machine learning algorithms, big data experience	Python, SQL, Power BI, skills in statistical analysis	Astana IT University, Coursera (Data Science Specializations), Nazarbayev University	Very high demand in the sectors of finance, marketing, telecoms; perspectives for growth to data scientist, chief data officer
Cybersecurity expert	Awareness of principles of information security, familiarity with cryptographic protocols, skills in threat analysis	ISO 27001, working with SIEM systems, skills in Ethical Hacking	Higher education institutions in Kazakhstan (e.g. KBTU), courses on platforms (Coursera, Udemy)	Growth in cyber risks is creating a strong demand; career in finance, government, IT firms

Continuous of Table 24

1	2	3	4	5
AI Developer	Advanced knowledge of neural networks, deep learning algorithms, expertise in TensorFlow or PyTorch	TensorFlow, PyTorch, OpenCV, model optimization abilities	Astana Hub startup development program, Almaty Management University (Data Science direction)	High-potential capabilities in start-ups, large IT companies, research centers; high-salary cap
Web designer	Handle HTML, CSS, JavaScript; basics of UI/UX design; mastery of Figma or Adobe XD instruments	HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript (basic level), prototyping, graphic design	Prog.kaz (education projects), IT-Academy, online courses on Behance, Dribbble	Steady demand in the site and mobile application developing sector; growth in the number of freelancing jobs
Note – compiled by the author				

This table shows a systematized review of the most in-need careers in the digital transformation of Kazakhstan's economy, focusing on key qualifications and affordable educational options. The table highlights four key areas – data analytics, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence development and web design – illustrating the current challenges of technology and priorities in the job market. Each profession is supported by a list of necessary competences, such as programming languages, data security, neural networks and web designing, as well as an overview of institutions and online platforms that deliver the relevant skills. Thus, the table reveals a close link between the growing demand for digital occupations and vocational training opportunities, acting as a guide to the development of human resources in the conditions of rapid digitalization.

Platform employment provides a meaningful opportunity for youth to engage in the digital job market, delivering a broad range of advantages that enhance their socio-economic sustainability. One of the main factors is the ability to enter the job market early, which facilitates faster achievement of financial independence and economic engagement, flexible working time allows for optimizing work schedules in line with individual choices and needs, thereby fostering a stable balance between the occupational and personal life spheres. The main benefits of platform jobs for young professionals in a digitalized environment are shown in Figure 12.

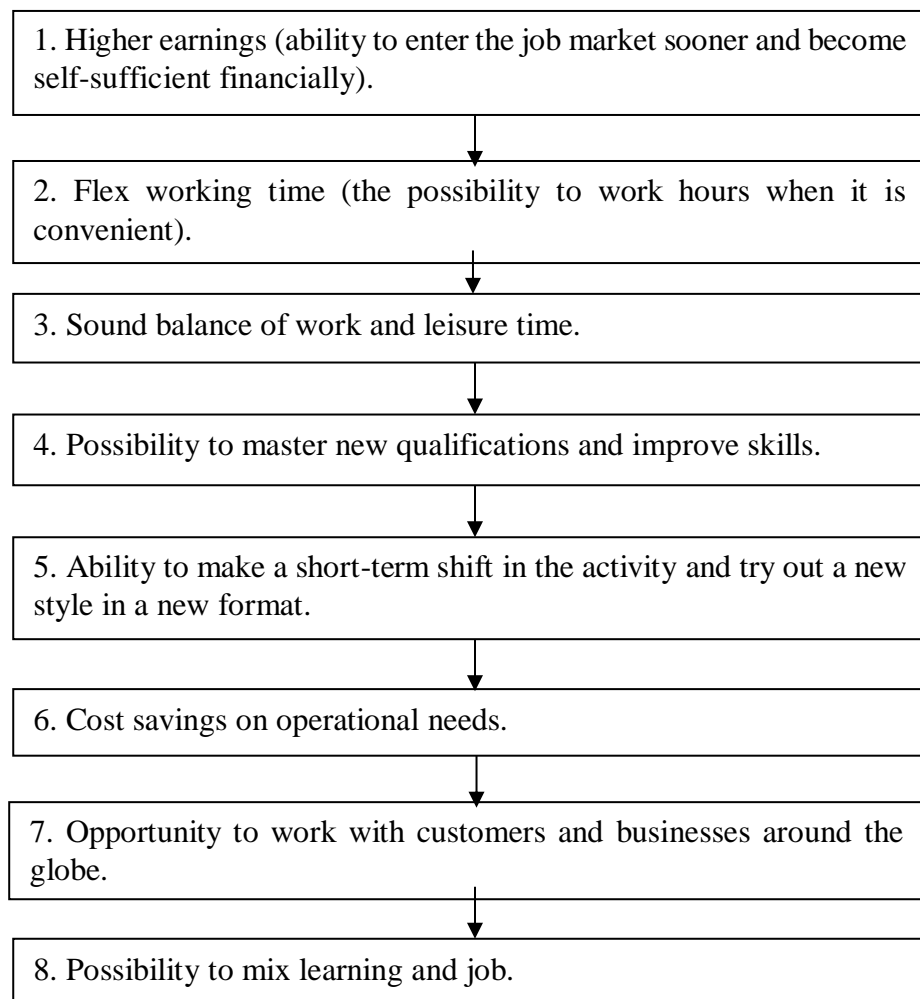


Figure 12 – Key advantages of platform-based work for today's youth in a digitalized context

Note – compiled by the author [44]

The platform employment model offers access to a wide range of professional paths, stimulating the development of plural competences, experimenting with job formats and ongoing professional training. A further advantage is the lowering of transaction and operational costs, as well as the chance to enter world markets by working with foreign customers and businesses. An essential feature of this type of employment is its integral function, allowing to mix professional work with education, which helps to form an adaptive, more competitive and innovative youth workforce.

Contemporary employment arrangements involve the use of hybrid work, support for digital career paths, and adaptation of the education system to the modern job market's needs. The main tools in this respect are government regulation, the enhancement of the public's digital competencies, and the incorporation of innovative employment patterns through platform applications. The country is demonstrating active adaptation to trends in the global workplace through the development of the economy's digitalization, the creation of new occupational areas, platform

employment, and the implementation of distance learning. To improve the effectiveness of employment, the government implements national IT projects, takes steps to stimulate greater interest in digital jobs, and provides support for flexible forms of employment that correspond to the conditions of digital transition.

So, in addressing the issues of youth employability in a complex manner, it is advisable to fulfill the following strategic directions:

- increasing the competitive ability of young experts by means of creating conditions for the acquisition by graduates of practical work experience in the actual sector of the national economy;
- implementing obligatory employment of a specific share of graduates of academic institutions on a regulatory basis, which will ensure their incorporation into the labor market;
- quota wages and the creation of a partly financed mechanism: during six months, 50 % of a graduate's salary is paid by the labor employer and 50 % by special agencies for employment. Such a policy is particularly appropriate for areas with low remuneration, including farming, medicine, education, and science;
- greater investment in science and training to improve the level of salaries of educators and researchers, which will favor the development of the country's research potential;
- designing a mechanism to provide clarity in the allocation of R&D work grants in order to promote and support the scientific activity of young professionals;
- creating a common job vacancy information database for young professionals, ensuring prompt access to current labor market offers;
- analysis and tracking of key indicators of youth employment, including unemployed and employed people, level of unemployment, pattern of employment, as well as consideration of socially disadvantaged groups: self-working rural students, long-term job seekers, youth with disabled persons, orphaned children and other vulnerable groups;
- enhancing the youth's social and civil position by engaging them in social activities, volunteering activities, and participating in events designed to develop their individual qualities and their cultural and spiritual level;
- improved institutions to enhance the mechanisms for regulating the employment, welfare support, and professional growth of young adults.

### **3.2 Strategic directions for strengthening the attractiveness of employers in the context of labour market transformation**

In current socio-economic conditions, ensuring youth employment in Kazakhstan is one of the priority tasks of government policy and the most urgent area of work market growth. The young generation is characterized by high degree of mobility, special expectations from the employers and intensive use of advanced communication tools when searching for a job. In this respect, the formation of a favorable image of the employer and awareness of the factors influencing the young specialists' perception

of the firm are of particular relevance. The actuality of the chosen issue is further enhanced by the fact that the study centers on a certain sector that is suffering from an acute shortage of highly qualified personnel. The selected industry is driven by its high demand for promising young employees, as well as its substantial economic capacity for steady growth and diversity of Kazakhstan's national economy. The growth of this sector can help to create new jobs, raise added value and make the country more competitive in the world arena.

This study seeks to discover and review the key factors that promote the formation of employer's positive perceptions among young people, which is an essential condition for providing effective job placement for young professionals in the context of growing competition and dynamics of Kazakhstan's job market. In the conditions of growing labor market dynamics, investigations of the factors influencing the attractiveness of an employer among young people are of particular relevance. This research contributes towards expanding the scope of scientific knowledge on this issue by proposing a complex evaluation of the impact of company identity, confidence in the source of information and conduct of recruiters on the level of the employer's acceptability. The seven hypothesized key relationships found in the second chapter enable a comprehensive review of the positive employer image formation mechanisms and its influence on the behavior of young job applicants.

The empirical data analysis allows to determine that high corporate appeal has a positive influence on the level of spreading good word-of-mouth (WOM) among staff, as well as on the level of their loyalty to the organization. The research substantially widens the scope of the theoretical framework of the concept of employer attractiveness by including trust in the origin of information, firm identity and employer hiring behavior as independent variables. This way of thinking allows for a deeper insight into the interaction dynamics of the drivers of the perception of a firm as a desired employer, particularly among the younger personnel.

The findings indicate a significant correlation between the company's image and the young job candidates' perception of its attractiveness ( $\beta = 0.547$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), which supports the value of building a strong and positive image of the employer. We also found statistically considerable correlations between a firms recruiting policies and its appeal ( $\beta = 0.235$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), as well as between information source reliability and the company's level of attractiveness ( $\beta = 0.071$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). These results highlight the strategic role of hiring policies and communication networks in shaping the competitive advantage in the labor market (Table 25).

Table 25 – Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Variable	Attractiveness	Commitment	CRB	Image	Source credibility
Employee commitment	0.727				

Continuous of Table 25

Company recruitment Behavior (CRB)	0.696	0.754			
Company image	0.880	0.775	0.723		
Source credibility	0.582	0.827	0.793	0.623	
Employee WOM	0.639	0.800	0.689	0.657	0.852
Note – compiled by the author					

The study paid special attention to examining the effect of information source credibility, firm identity and WOM distribution across the workforce. Despite the fact that trust in the source of information demonstrated lower correlation intensity compared to other factors, its importance was proved, which points to the relevance of transparency and trustworthiness of corporate communications for the employees' perception of the employers' appeal. In the meantime, the outcomes supported a positive correlation between organizational image and the rate of positive WOM across staff ( $\beta = 0.269$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), underlining the necessity of working systematically to enhance the corporate identities and the internal brand of the organization. The empirical findings also indicated that firm likeability has a strong positive effect on younger employees' engagement ( $\beta = 0.381$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) as well as on the spread of favorable employer feedback ( $\beta = 0.341$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), which is aligned with previous research in this field. Given that WOM is by far one of the best forms of communication for promoting positive impressions of an employer, a greater focus on improving the appeal of the company emerges as a strategic focus for organizations concerned with young talent retention (Table 26).

Table 26 – Structural model assessment

Hypotheses	Relationship	$\beta$	T-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Attractiveness $\rightarrow$ Commitment	0.381	5.389	0.000	Supported
H2	Attractiveness $\rightarrow$ WOM	0.341	3.462	0.001	Supported
H3	CRB $\rightarrow$ Attractiveness	0.235	2.850	0.004	Supported
H4	CRB $\rightarrow$ Commitment	0.445	6.688	0.000	Supported
H5	Image $\rightarrow$ Attractiveness	0.547	7.762	0.000	Supported
H6	Image $\rightarrow$ WOM	0.269	2.489	0.013	Supported
H7	Source credibility $\rightarrow$ Attractiveness	0.071	1.035	0.301	Not supported
Note – compiled by the author					



The received empirical data demonstrate the strong value of young employees' impression of the company's appeal, which confirms the existing theoretical and experimental basis in the field of human resource management and branding of the employer. The established positive effect of attractiveness of the organisation on young people's work engagement suggests that an attractive employer image builds young professionals' internal motivation, feeling of belonging and readiness to make attempts to achieve the objectives of the company. In furthermore, the revealed correlation between employers' attractiveness and employee propensity to distribute positive feedback word-of-mouth emphasises the importance of intangible drivers in shaping a company's lasting reputation in the job market. Given that recommendations and feedback from staff are often perceived as more reliable than official channels of communication, it is these that are key in attracting fresh young graduates. Thus, the attractiveness of an employer serves not only as a key factor of individual commitment, but also as an item of strategic human capital management. For those companies that focus on long-term retention of talent and developing a good image, focused investment in creating an appealing employer - be it by means of corporate culture, social liability, career prospects or innovative approaches - becomes an integral element of their competitive strategy in the job market.

The practical value of the research results is particularly high for firms operating in the field of hospitality, tourism and hotel business (HTTL), where high staff turnover is traditionally observed. The factors identified - corporate identity, recruiting strategies and trust in the information source - are key determinants in building an employer's appeal to young people. A solid and consistent firm identity acts as a strategic asset to promote the involvement of skilled professionals, lower employee turnover, and improve employee fulfilment. Therefore, businesses in the industry should proactively work to develop a unique and recognisable identity brand that will contribute to:

- hire trained and qualified employees;
- keep young staff in the team;
- ensuring minimum staff turnover;
- improve staff engagement and satisfaction.

Business identity managing is of special concern for new ventures and start-ups in the industry of hospitality and tourism. In an attempt to effectively compete in the market, they should actively work on improving their image, which will help them: hire high quality talent, maintain a superior level of customer service, and maintain the company's overall financial stability and profitability. Hence, HTTL companies should focus on developing their employer brand, improving their recruiting strategy, and increasing trust in the company's data sources. These steps combine to decrease employee turnover and make the company more effective in the job market.

In this context, the adaptation of corporate culture to the socio-cultural specificities of the country is of great significance. In the national Kazakhstani framework, a strong corporate identity is based on the harmonization of institutional values with the national values of respect, collective spirit and corporate social justice.

Companies that integrate these concepts into their staff management policies greatly increase their appeal in the eyes of younger professionals. In Kazakhstani culture, three essential elements - corporate profile of the entity, hiring conduct and confidence in the source of information - play an influential role in forming the likability of the company.

1. Development of a stable good corporate reputation:

- a solid corporate image is formed by harmonising a company's company culture with the national values of the country, including respect, command spirit and a sense of social balance;

- those companies that integrate these values into their corporate culture and HR policies create a better working environment for Kazakhstani employees.

2. Optimise recruitment policies to meet regional norms:

- correcting hiring practices to meet the socio-cultural needs of the Kazakhstani labour market improves staff motivation and satisfaction;

- complying with internal employment norms allows job recruiters to boost trust among job applicants and current workforce, which has a clear impact on their involvement and commitment.

3. Enhancing Confidence in the Source of Information:

- improving the visibility and trustworthiness of sources of organisation information is in line with the Kazakh principle of trust, which is a fundamental value of the national culture;

- establishment of an open dialogue environment within the enterprise contributes to a good corporate climate and promotes employee orientation and loyalty.

Firms operating in developing markets, such as Kazakhstan, can raise their profile and improve their brand image by adopting a range of strategies, including:

1. formulating a strong identity for the company based on local culture values;

2. streamlining hiring strategies in line with employees' cultural standards and aspirations;

3. developing clear and trustworthy channels of company communication.

By linking these elements, companies can create a work climate that takes into consideration the cultural diversity of Kazakhstan and facilitates the inclusion and retention of employees, creating a stable competitive edge in the labour landscape. To strengthen attractiveness of an employer and foster a favourable and unique corporate identity, especially in the Hospitality, Travel, Tourism and Leisure (HTTL) industry, firms need to take a three-way approach:

1. Staff investment and improving wellbeing of the workforce:

- businesses must invest in staff involvement and workplace development to drive employee involvement and build a positive impression of the workplace and the employer;

- continuous career path development and staff satisfaction decrease employee retention and improve the company's standing in the labour market.

2. Managing digital presence:

- with increasingly digitalised environments, it is necessary for corporations, and in particular those within the HTTL market, to take a proactive approach to managing their presence on social media channels;

- this will enable them to even further minimise reputation risks arising from adverse feedback from staff or rivals;

- a well-defined social media strategy is important, as well as providing staff with training on efficient data management and emergency response;

- these tools will not only help protect the company's brand image, but will also make it more engaging to potential job hunters.

3. Using modern technological advances to build a firm's brand image:

- in the meta universe and digitisation times, it is crucial to implement innovative practices to enhance the appeal of the company;

- every single organisation in the HTTL industry should make an investment in creating a digital spokesperson with an eye-catching appearance, voice and identity;

- this new virtual representative can serve as the company's official spokesperson in the online space, helping to engage young job seekers, increase greater brand recognition and retain existing employees through better interactivity.

When evaluating the appeal of an organisation, the perception of attributes perceived by young staff and senior management personnel can differ widely across a range of items. Young talent, particularly those in the early stages of their professional careers, tend to place a strong focus on such intangible qualities as:

- capacity for career advancement;

- training and learning and growth patterns;

- work-life style balance;

- favourable corporate culture.

These dimensions are the crucial selection criteria for employers who are newcomers to the occupation. In comparison, those who have achieved higher levels of career advancement pay more emphasis on the tangible and long-term job aspects, which include:

- compensation rates and reward packages;

- welfare benefits and job security;

- reputation of the firm;

- stability of the organisation and internal placement opportunities.

For Executive roles, long-term safety and the ability to grow their career within the company were the favoured drivers for assessing the appeal of an employer. Different ambitions and value points of young workers and executives lead to various views on the attraction of the company [97]. This underlines the necessity of a distinguished approach to personnel administration, which accounts for the complexity of career stimulus and priorities of the staff at various stages of their professional development. The hospitality sector is experiencing an accelerating shift in sustainable practices as corporate social responsibilities and green efforts emerge as key parts of a company's corporate strategy. As Forbes notes, global climate concern, with climate change at the top of the agenda, makes climate sustainability a vital business imperative. This question is specifically relevant to the HTTL sector, as its

long-term stability is directly linked to the state of the environment and its deterioration.

Governments can play a crucial role in fostering and incentivizing sustainable business success [97]. For instance, embracing a culture of corporate social responsibility (CSR) at the country level, creating and implementing initiatives to provide motivation for sustainability-oriented companies, and developing a favorable working environment for sustainable business. Such adopting programs not only help to improve the reputation and standing of companies, but also build a positive image of the entire country both nationally and internationally.

It is in addition to a firm's corporate identity that makes a firm attractive, the hiring behavior of the company and related HR practices - from staff selection procedures to on-the-job performance training, in-house remuneration systems, progression and fair dealing - also have key roles to play in creating a firm's likeability. HTTL firms in Kazakhstan therefore require to upgrade their recruitment and selection processes and strategies, taking into account:

- the specificities of the regional culture;
- tools of digitalization, including the use of the social media and AI to automation and optimization of recruiting practices.

The credibility of the data source is also an influential factor in creating a good perception of an entity's employers. To this extent, companies should concentrate on building greater trust in organic and genuine sources of information, such as staff reviews and references:

- feedback and staff reviews and testimonials;
- the views of customers and associates who actually interface with the entity.

Such channels of communication are extremely reliable and can greatly enhance a company's corporate appeal. The study results showed that improving corporate attractiveness leads to two strategic effects:

1. an increase in employee loyalty: the staffs who think highly of the initiator show stronger loyalty to the firm, which helps to lower employee turnover;
2. distribution of a favorable word of mouth (WOM) campaign: staff who are loyal to a business are much likely to spread favorable feedback about the company, thereby building the company's reputation.

The main task of managers is to minimize the opportunity cost of high employee turnover, which is especially prevalent in the hospitality and tourism industries [96]. Thus, an comprehensive approach that incorporates improved recruitment and hiring strategies, corporate sourcing management and active promotion of corporate branding will strengthen the founder's attractiveness, help to optimize staff turnover and increase the company's marketability. This study has a set of limitations that can be addressed in further investigations. The focus of the research was on the inner attractiveness of the employer only for middle-aged workers. Future studies should take a more holistic approach, examining both internal and external factors of attractiveness. The perceptions of both current and prospective staff should be studied, analyzing antecedents and the impact of internal corporate appeal in order to reach more valid points.

The present study concentrates solely on the HTTL industry, which limits its validity to other parts of the wider economy. In the following, it is necessary to expand the focus of the organization's analysis by looking at the effects of corporate likeability in different areas such as manufacturing and service sectors. This would enable a deeper evaluation of the usability of the universality and the specifics of the examined factors to various career settings.

The obtained conclusions have only a limited ability to summarize, as they are only based on data for one single country. In the coming future, it is necessary to verify the proposed theoretical model in other Central Asia nations. Cross-cultural studies would enhance the structural validity and applicability of the obtained findings. Pre-testing survey instruments and cross-sectional sampling design were used for collecting data, which may result in some possible biases. Study respondents were from different sub-areas of HTTL, which may influence the interpretation of the results. In future, it may be advisable to focus on particular sectors, such as retail or the industry of hospitality and tourism, in an effort to obtain more detail and relevance to the findings. The utilization of more targeted sampling would provide higher quality data and increase the overall summation power.

The exploration of met view and shared virtual worlds is a prospective area for future studies, as such techniques are gaining influence in different economic sub-sectors. Many businesses are now including virtual personas as key parts of management strategies, their business models and for a marketing mix. In the face of digitalization and the changing priorities of young workers, the HTTL industry can use virtual personalities in the role of sounding boards, allowing:

- expand corporate visibility in the digital space;
- improve a company's corporate image;
- increase employer awareness at local and global levels.

The implementation of digital spokespeople is especially timely given the shifts in the mindsets, ambitions and lifestyles of younger workers, for whom digitalization is critical to their selection of employers. The aim of future research may be to explore the perceived strengths and shortcomings of using virtual representatives in a company context, and to evaluate their efficacy in increasing engagement and improving a company's overall market profile. With growing competition for the workforce, universities have a major obligation to provide students with the right qualifications for employment. This allows young talent to meet the demands of a fast-changing job market.

Current virtual revolution is a main factor in the availability of new skills, with many of the existing qualifications no longer required in various industries, such as the HTTL industry. A prospective area for future study is therefore to explore how developing country universities are adjusting academic programs to incorporate systematically skills that increase the ability of recent graduates to be employed in the job market. Exploring policies to incorporate numerical skills, cross-disciplinary knowledge and application skills into academic curricula will enable the design of effective training models that respond to the needs of employers.

Building on current research literature and theory of employer attraction, this study makes a contribution to understand the youth employment problems faced by young workers, particularly in the early stages of their professional lives in developing nations. The scope of the study was to identify the key factors that determine the attractiveness of an employer and to examine their impact. To achieve this goal, the following studies were conducted:

- a hypothesis set has been defined;
- the relationship correlations between the main explanatory variables were examined;
- consistency of factors influencing the perception of company attractiveness was analyzed;

The main focus of the study was Millennials involved in the HTTL Industry in Kazakhstan, with a view to their:

- digital Natives status;
- opportunity to influence government policy;
- importance in transforming the job market and setting new expectations for employers.

The outcomes obtained serve as an empowering empirical basis for upcoming research on the evolving human resources policies, adapting talent engagement policies and improving the labor market conditions for youth employment in the context of the digital economy. The study presented made a significant set of theoretical contributions by including source credibility, hiring practice and firm image as key influential explanatory variables. This perspective provided a deeper insight into their collective impact on perceptions of employer likeability.

The study underlined the importance of recruiter attitudes and the worth of recruiter interactions with prospective and existing young recruits. In addition, the results of the study supported that there is a strong correlation between:

- firm appeal;
- young employees' loyalty;
- word-of-mouth (WOM) arrangements.

Taken all together, this evidence provides further insights into the drivers of the attraction of employers to younger generations. They underline the crucial importance of:

- building and maintaining a favorable firm image;
- adoption of effective recruitment policies;
- establishing a favorable condition for the long-term placement of employees.

The study findings are of great importance for the Kazakhstani authorities, regulators and the industry, in particular for the tourism and hospitality industry. Using the findings, it can be used to develop:

- efficient marketing and promotion strategies to help bring in businesses, tourists and qualified labor force migrants;
- policy aimed at fostering labor market development and supporting employment of young people.

Therefore, this study provides valuable insights for designing and improving human resource development policies, improving the competitiveness of Kazakhstani job recruiters and fostering a stable job market. Investing in the development of human capital, managing corporate identities and enhancing the clarity of information processes become the most critical factors in increasing the appeal of an employer. Their regular implementation helps to consolidate the position of the employer in the job market, reduce labor turnover, boost staff commitment and promote sustainable long-term competitiveness.

To sum up, in today's conditions of global transformation of the job market and increased competition for talent, the development of an employer's attractiveness becomes a key element of an organization's strategic development. Employers oriented towards sustainable growth and human capital improvement should go beyond conventional recruitment methods and emphasize the formation of long-term relations with potential and current employee. This calls for a holistic approach to building an employer's value offering that integrates both material incentives and non-material aspects of employment.

One of the main directions in this area is to establish an open and encouraging corporate culture, where each staff member is provided with possibilities for professional growth, self-fulfillment and active involvement in organizational decision-making. The importance of transparency of career possibilities and the presence of clear tools for growth and promotion is of particular relevance, which is extremely important for young people who are focused on dynamic professional progression. The shaping of an attractive reputation of an employer in the market is unrealistic without the qualitative advancement of the external communication networking strategy. Today's digital platforms give a broad opportunity to promote an organization as a highly socially responsible and innovative employer. Proactive work with the brand of the employer in the on-line environment should be focused not only on facilitating the promotion of jobs, but also on forming a good perception of the corporate cultures, accomplishments in the field of corporate social responsibilities, and successful career stories of the employees.

In the perspective of youth employment, a special role is to involve students and graduates in the early participation in professional work through work internships, mentoring initiatives and joint programs with educational facilities. These efforts not only create a positive attitude towards the company within young professionals, but also help to create effective mechanisms for attracting the personnel reserve. Boosting trust in the organization requires an objective and consistent internal line of communication, where the staff are considered to be equal parts of the organizational progression process. Taking employee feedback into the consideration, introducing inner entrepreneurship practices, and the recognition of employees' achievements form a high level of commitment and inclusion, which reduces staff fluctuations and strengthens the sustainability of the team. Hence, the mechanisms for raising the attractiveness of the employers should be based on a mix of strategic planning, organization's internal resources development and efficient use of external positioning opportunities. A comprehensive approach to solving this task makes it possible not

only to attract and retain young specialists, but also to create a foundation for the company's consistent development in the fast-changing requirements of the job market.

The given study, based on modern theoretical and methodological aspects of studying the employers' appeal, has made a substantial contribution to the academic literature in the field of personnel recruitment and human resource planning and quality management in the hospitality, tourism and hotel business (HTTL) sector. The focus of the study was on youth employment problems, in specific, young specialists starting their career in the conditions of the developing Kazakhstani economy. The analysis of drivers of perceptions of attractiveness of the employer allowed us to suggest and validate empirically the hypotheses that there are strong links between corporate image, confidence in information sources, recruitment practices and young workers' perceptions of the appeal of the firm. Special focus was placed on Millennials as a generation with a great level of digital literacy and capable of making an impact on the processes of transformation of the labor market and the shaping of the state policy on youth.

The theoretical value of the research is the justification of the joint effect of company image, the behavior of recruiters and trust in information sources on the adherence of young staff to the entity and the propagation of good employer information (the WOM effect). The finding of strong relationship between these factors deepens the knowledge of the mechanism of formation of attractiveness of the founder and determines the directions towards further academic research in the sphere of labor incentive and integration of young people in the job market. The findings of the present investigation are of considerable practical value in the context of the employment of young Kazakh people, especially in terms of new global challenges, such as accelerated digitalization, shifting job structure, volatile global economic environment and evolving requirements for professional competencies. The results of the conducted research can be used to work out the efficient strategies for positioning firms as attractive recruiters, creating special programs to promote the employer brand in the HTTL area, as well as enhancing the state's support mechanisms for youth employment.

It especially follows that the formation of a favorable corporate image, the establishment of modern advertising practices and the development of communication channels of collaboration with a youth should become the top priorities of the public policy and commercial strategies in order to motivate the economic participation of young people, to raise the level of their labor orientation and to assure the sustainable developments of the job market. In the course of the study, the results of the work done have not only theoretical and practical applicability, but also can contribute to the development of effective actions to adapt young people to the new work market needs in Kazakhstan, to support the formation of an integrated and competitive knowledge economy oriented to the development of human capital in the conditions of global changes.



## CONCLUSION

As a result of the dissertation work on ensuring youth employment in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the conditions of modern global challenges the following findings were obtained:

1. It was defined that the theoretical foundations of youth employment serve as a basis for understanding the content of the concept of “public employment” revealing the views of representatives of different scientific schools depending on the particular socio-economic conditions of society development and allows to analyze the existing definitions taking into account modern trends. Emphasis was placed on practical models of the labor market, in part, the liberal model of labor market development and the socio-oriented model, which deals with state regulation of employment at the micro-, macro-level, promotion of labor mobility, the use of flexible mechanism of employment. The study reviewed the existing methodological approaches to the interpretation of employment and effective employment, and the criteria and indicators of effective employment, which enables to resolve a range of significant social and economic problems. Drawing on the various views of economists, the author has identified the attributes of effective employment and proposed the author's definition as employment that allows providing young professionals with a decent income to realize the professional and intellectual potential obtained in the process of learning, growth and improvement.

2. The study of world experience in youth employment has highlighted the need to use institutional mechanisms in the area of youth employment in the foreign countries to develop suggestions directed at the well-balanced development of the labor market at the national and regional levels, as well as the effective measures and instruments for the realization of effective employment in Kazakhstan. Such tools should include programs to support job creation, self-employment and entrepreneurship, training and retraining, as well as regulating staff reductions and dismissals, programs to enhance social labor security and material support schemes for the jobless, facilitating the creation of forms of leased labor, co-financing programs for the reintegration of social dependents and individuals with disabilities, and co-financing work retention programs. The practice of such countries as Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland in adopting the ‘dual system of training of professional personnel’, which involves combining education with practical training at an enterprise, is relevant to Kazakhstan. The support measures for the young labor market of such countries as Norway, Sweden, Finland, Austria, and Poland, involving the concept of youth guarantees, the development of online employment services and, in the future, the system of labor market analysis made it possible to identify the main directions for the advancement of youth employment in the Republic of Kazakhstan, which will be used in designing the concept of ensuring effective employment in the country.

3. The regulatory and legal base that forms the institutional framework of state regulation of employment is considered. On this basis, the conceptual model of employment is proposed, which contains targets, tasks, principles of realization and

strategic priorities. The main object of the model is the reproduction of labor potential of the region, which involves the rational use of the skilled labor force. It is emphasized that the employment policy should be carried out through the combination of market mechanisms and administrative tools of regulation. The need to develop a mechanism of regional control over employment is grounded due to its system character, close interconnection with the reproduction of labor potential and the effect of the territorial development specifics. The strategic goal of regional employment policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan is to attain a steady and effective employment status, to provide economic growth at the regional level and to enhance the quality of life of the population. The implementation of the Concept of employment includes the following areas: raising the efficiency of the utilization of labor resources; promoting business demand for workforce; improving occupational and vocational qualification characteristics of the labor force; fostering productive employment; ensuring the protection of citizens' labor rights; establishing innovation-oriented forms of employment, particularly in science-intensive and high-tech branches; shifting from piecemeal support measures to complex systemic solutions designed to support the development of the labor force; and developing the conditions for the creation of new jobs. The focus is also on creating an environment for the self-realization of individuals and strengthening the social protection of the jobless population.

4. As an investigation of the current state of youth employment in the labor market of the Republic of Kazakhstan, data obtained from statistical materials available from the Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan was analyzed. These statistical data covers indicators of youth employment both at the national and regional levels. A complex analysis of the main features of the youth segment of the labor market was conducted, in particular, the structure of self-employed youth, the dynamics of distribution of youth employment by sectors of the economy, the rate of youth unemployment by regions, as well as the proportion of youth not covered by employment, education and vocational training (NEET-youth). Specific attention is given to evaluating the influence of state program initiatives aimed at stimulating youth employment. On the base of the revealed regularities, practical-guided recommendations have been developed that are relevant to the enhancement of existing employment programs and the formulation of new ones. The recommendations are focused on creating both temporary and permanent jobs, improving the effectiveness of employment promotion agencies, upgrading public policy tools and increasing the level of youth participation in economic activity.

5. As a result of the analysis conducted to determine the set of determinants influencing the youth labor market and the challenges of youth employment in the Republic of Kazakhstan, data from the Centre for Human Resources Development of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as analytical evaluation by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and UNESCO were reviewed. The study highlighted the key factors shaping the current state of the young people's sector of the labor market, among which are: shifting demographic patterns, the degree of professional training of youth, the proportion of

informal employment, the incidence of young people not included in education, work and vocational training (NEET), the change in demands for working conditions, the expansion of non-standard forms of employment, the availability of professional development and retraining schemes, and the need to improve the skills of young people. Special attention is paid to the significance of staff training able to adapt to future challenges, as well as to the priorities of the creation of qualified labor force for certain regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In part, the task of preparing professionals in the sphere of tourism has been raised: despite the existence of a wide range of training programs in tourism, there is still a deficit of a systematic practice-oriented approach to the training and professional development of specialists in this industry. In the view of promoting stable employment of young people in priority branches of the economy, including the tourism sector, the work formulates specific recommendations directed at enhancing the labor training mechanisms and raising the efficiency of the state employment policy in the regions of Kazakhstan.

6. A theoretical model of employer attractiveness is created based on three functional components: corporate image, characteristics of the organisation's behaviour in the recruitment process, and the degree of trust in sources of information in the context of HTTL (hospitality, tourism, transport and logistics). The study reflects the influence of these drivers on the formation of two critical youth behavioural responses - the positive word-of-mouth (WOM) effect and the degree of commitment of young employees, which in turn effects their employment. The suggested model has implications both for employers interested in creating effective strategies for attracting and retaining skilled young employees and for government authorities involved in regulating the national labour market. It is mentioned that the results of the study are of relevance to policymakers and strategy planners taking decisions focused on the development and enhancement of human capital in the conditions of labour market transitions. The findings can serve as a base for the generation of targeted initiatives in the sphere of youth employment, facilitate the creation of a supportive institutional framework and strengthen the influence of public policies directed at improving employment opportunities and fostering the stability of the labour sector in the Republic of Kazakhstan. In the course of the study, a three-level strategy to enhance the attractiveness of the employer, directed to the formation of a favorable organizational climate, was developed. The present strategy enables the development of a labor environment that takes into account the diversity of the population of the Kazakhstan and contributes to an improvement in the staff engagement and retention rate. The proposed strategy makes it possible for employers to strengthen their stable competitive edge in the job market by forming a good image of the founder and enhancing the loyalty of workers.

7. In view of the transformational changes in the labor market and the multiple factors influencing youth employment in the conditions of digitalization and challenges of technology, key priorities for ensuring youth employment have been identified. The study provides a set of interconnected and complementary principles of decent work, tailored to different regions and sectoral settings. These comprise: socialization, sustainability, security, productivity, fairness, safety and the promotion of social

partnership. On the basis of the analysis of present and projected tendencies of the labor market on the period of 5-10 years, priority directions of young people's employment were formulated, oriented to the advancement of such tech industries as artificial intelligence, "green" technologies, robotization and autonomous vehicles. These trends are structured in terms of the balance of labor supply and demand. In an attempt to assess the future prospects of platform employment, a SWOT analysis was conducted, which revealed a considerable involvement of Gen Z members in these forms of labor relations. In particular, tools of career modelling for young graduates of technical, vocational and higher education institutions have been designed, taking into account the trends of technological changes in the labor market. In all, the strategic need to form flexible, stable and comprehensive system of youth employment support capable of responding efficiently to the challenges of the digital economy is underlined. It has been established that in the emerging digital platform economy, ensuring sustainable youth employment requires the introduction of a set of key strategic actions: fostering the development of institutional forms of collaboration between major actors of the labor market - employers, academic institutions and state authorities, activating the public-private partnership mechanisms by extending collaboration between public employment agencies and privately owned recruitment centers, elaborating and launching regionally specific programs to facilitate youth employment, including gradual analysis of different factors: types of employment, health state, level of training, vocational qualifications, geographical location, as well as the ongoing needs of local labor markets.

In the framework of the study, the priority lines of youth employment in the Kazakhstan Republic are worked out, along with detailed steps to ensure their effective realisation. It is found that strategies for the system of vocational education and professional training should be incorporated into the national policy of employment, as well as harmonised with the sectoral, trade, investment and technological state policies. The need to institutionalise public-private partnership and mechanisms of social dialogue in the education and vocational training system is underlined, which will make it possible to react to the changing requirements of the labour market in a timely and responsive way. A holistic mechanism to encourage youth employment has been designed, taking into account the effects of global structural transitions, including digitalisation, automation, advancement of artificial intelligence, as well as the expansion of new forms of employment: gig-economy, remote and platform employment. As a consequence of the analysis, key skills have been identified that meet the necessary requirements of emerging careers and non-standard forms of employment, including skills for remote, hybrid and platform jobs. On the basis of the obtained findings, strategic areas of systemic solutions to the problems of youth employment are offered, directed at the formation of a stable, flexible and inclusive employment model, able to function efficiently in the conditions of technological and socio-economic transformations.

8. The study found that employer appeal among young adults is formed under the influence of employer's reputation, confidence in the information source, and the company's recruitment policy conduct. Meaningful positive relationships were found

between the reputation of the employer and the perception of its appeal by young candidates, as well as between hiring policy and firm appeal. Source credibility has a favourable effect on perceptions of the company, which underscores the significance of the transparency of company communications. A strong degree of firm image contributes to employee commitment and the promotion of favourable word-of-mouth. A solid corporate image reduces employee staff turnover and increases staff contentment, which is specifically significant for the HTTL industry. Based on the research conducted, the recommendation was formulated as to: actively build corporate image, harmonizing it with the national and socio-cultural values of the nation, in particular in the Kazakhstani perspective; tailor recruitment policies to the regional characteristics of the job market, enhancing the confidence of applicants in the recruitment procedure; improve the visibility and credibility of corporate channels of communication to build the confidence of young people; control the digital media presence of the firm in order to reduce the reputational effects of the hiring campaign; and promote a positive image of the employer among youth. The recommendations will enable companies to improve their employability in the job market, enhance their human resources capabilities and create a stable and positive corporate image among younger generations.

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## APPENDIX A

### Respondents' Information

Characteristics	N (%)
Male	113 - 51.8%
Female	105 - 48.2%
Total	218
Income	
KZT 1,000,000–5,000,000	142 - 65.1%
KZT 5,000,001–10,000,000	52 -23.9 %
KZT 10,000,001–20,000,000	16 - 7.3%
Characteristics	N (%)
Over KZT 20,000,001	8 - 3.7%
Total	218
Employee's Status	
Employee's	133 – 61%
Characteristics	N (%)
Private Entrepreneur (own business)	40 -18.3%
Employer	21 -9.6%
Retired person	---
Self-employed person	20 -9.2%
Unemployed person	4 -1.8%
Total	218
Experience	
1–3 years	128 -58.7%
4–6 years	60 -27.5%
7–9 years	20 -9.2%
≥10 years	10 -4.6%
Total	218
What is your company's field of activity?	
Travel company	45 -20.6%
Transport company (logistics)	77 -35.3%
Tour operator (foreign/local)	23 -10.6%
Hotel/restaurant	48 -22%
Transportation (Taxi etc.)	25 -11.5%
Total	218
Does your main education match your current job?	
Yes	127 - 58.3%
No	91 -41.7%
Total	218
Is your current job your primary source of income?	
Yes	180 -82.6%
No	38 -17.4%
Total	218
Note – compiled by the author	

