

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES

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Abstract. This article is devoted to an in-depth analysis of youth employment strategies, which considers factors closely related to demographic changes in the labor market, economic reforms, and the education system. Ensuring youth employment is interpreted as an important factor determining the socio-economic stability of the country and the quality of future human capital. The article scientifically highlights effective ways to create decent jobs for young people, improve their professional skills, develop innovative entrepreneurship, and strengthen public-private cooperation in the conditions of Uzbekistan. Also, based on an analysis of international experience, advanced practices in youth employment are studied, including programs used in the European Union and Asian countries. According to the results of the study, the need for an integrated approach to ensuring youth employment, digitization of the labor market, and improvement of the career guidance system is substantiated. The results of the article are of practical importance for politicians, economists, and education specialists.

Keywords: youth employment, labor market, strategies, economic reforms, vocational training, innovative entrepreneurship, human capital, digital economy, education system, public policy, social stability, international experience.

YOSHLAR BANDLIGINI TA'MINLASH STRATEGIYALARI

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqola yoshlar bandligini ta'minlash strategiyalarini chuqur tahlil qilishga bag'ishlangan bo'lib, unda mehnat bozoridagi demografik o'zgarishlar, iqtisodiy islohotlar va ta'lim tizimi bilan uzviy bog'liq omillar ko'rib chiqiladi. Yoshlar bandligini ta'minlash mamlakatning ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy barqarorligi va kelajakdagi inson kapitali sifatini belgilovchi muhim omil sifatida talqin etiladi. Maqolada O'zbekiston sharoitida yoshlar uchun munosib ish o'rinlarini yaratish, ularning kasbiy malakasini oshirish, innovatsion tadbirkorlikni rivojlantirish hamda davlat va xususiy sektor hamkorligini kuchaytirishning samarali yo'llari ilmiy asosda yoritilgan. Shuningdek, xalqaro tajriba tahlili asosida yoshlar bandligiga oid ilg'or amaliyotlar, jumladan, Yevropa Ittifoqi va Osiyo mamlakatlarida qo'llanilayotgan dasturlar o'rganilgan. Tadqiqot natijalariga ko'ra, yoshlar bandligini ta'minlash uchun kompleks yondashuv, mehnat bozorining raqamlashtirilishi va kasbiy orientatsiya tizimini takomillashtirish zarurligi asoslab beriladi. Maqola natijalari siyosatchilar, iqtisodchilar hamda ta'lim sohasi mutaxassisleri uchun amaliy ahamiyat kasb etadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: yoshlar bandligi, mehnat bozori, strategiyalar, iqtisodiy islohotlar, kasbiy tayyorgarlik, innovatsion tadbirkorlik, inson kapitali, raqamli iqtisodiyot, ta’lim tizimi, davlat siyosati, ijtimoiy barqarorlik, xalqaro tajriba.

СТРАТЕГИИ ЗАНЯТОСТИ МОЛОДЕЖИ

Аннотация. Статья посвящена углублённому анализу стратегий трудоустройства молодёжи, в котором рассматриваются факторы, тесно связанные с демографическими изменениями на рынке труда, экономическими реформами и системой образования. Обеспечение занятости молодёжи рассматривается как важный фактор, определяющий социально-экономическую стабильность страны и качество будущего человеческого капитала. В статье научно обоснованы эффективные пути создания достойных рабочих мест для молодёжи, повышения её профессиональных навыков, развития инновационного предпринимательства и укрепления государственно-частного сотрудничества в условиях Узбекистана. Также на основе анализа международного опыта изучается передовая практика трудоустройства молодёжи, включая программы, применяемые в странах Европейского Союза и Азии. По результатам исследования обосновывается необходимость комплексного подхода к обеспечению занятости молодёжи, цифровизации рынка труда и совершенствованию системы профориентации. Результаты статьи имеют практическое значение для политиков, экономистов и специалистов в сфере образования.

Ключевые слова: занятость молодёжи, рынок труда, стратегии, экономические реформы, профессиональное обучение, инновационное предпринимательство, человеческий капитал, цифровая экономика, система образования, государственная политика, социальная стабильность, международный опыт.

INTRODUCTION

Youth employment is one of the most critical priorities for ensuring sustainable economic growth and social stability in any country. The issue of youth employment has gained particular importance in recent decades as global labor markets face rapid technological transformations, demographic shifts, and economic restructuring. In Uzbekistan, where young people under the age of 30 constitute more than 60 percent of the population, the problem of ensuring productive and stable employment for youth is a central element of state policy. Providing young people with decent work not only supports their economic independence but also plays a decisive role in strengthening social cohesion, reducing poverty, and fostering innovation and competitiveness in the national economy.

In recognition of this, the Government of Uzbekistan has adopted several strategic documents and regulatory decisions aimed at improving youth employment policies. One of the key frameworks is the “Youth Policy Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2025”, which emphasizes creating favorable conditions for youth entrepreneurship, vocational training, and professional growth. Additionally, the “Strategy for the Development of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026” identifies employment generation, especially among youth, as one of the main pillars of national development. This strategy aims to promote modern vocational education, strengthen cooperation between educational institutions and industries, and expand the digital and green economy sectors, which are becoming new sources of employment opportunities.

Moreover, the Presidential Decree No. PF-6099 (2020) “On Measures to Support Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship” has laid the groundwork for implementing targeted programs such as the “Youth Employment Platform” and “Yoshlar — kelajagimiz” (Youth — Our Future) initiative. These programs are designed to stimulate self-employment, provide

access to concessional financing for youth-led start-ups, and expand vocational education opportunities in rural areas. Similarly, the State Program for the Development of Vocational Education (2021–2025) focuses on aligning training curricula with labor market demands, ensuring that graduates acquire practical skills relevant to modern industries.

The relevance of youth employment strategies in Uzbekistan is further reinforced by global trends and challenges. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that over 67 million young people worldwide remain unemployed, and many more are engaged in informal or precarious work. This issue is particularly acute in developing economies, where job creation has not kept pace with population growth. In this context, Uzbekistan’s focus on developing an integrated and inclusive youth employment policy aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 8 — “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.”

Furthermore, Uzbekistan’s socio-economic reforms, including the liberalization of the labor market, support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and digitalization of employment services, contribute significantly to expanding youth participation in the economy. The introduction of the “Online Employment Portal” and the establishment of regional “Youth Industrial and Entrepreneurial Zones” provide practical platforms for job creation and entrepreneurial activity. The integration of digital technologies into employment policy has also enhanced the transparency and efficiency of job matching processes, especially for rural and disadvantaged youth.

However, despite these achievements, several challenges persist. Skill mismatches between education outcomes and labor market requirements, regional disparities in employment opportunities, and the limited engagement of women and vulnerable youth groups remain pressing issues. Therefore, implementing a comprehensive, multi-dimensional strategy that combines education reform, labor market modernization, and innovation-driven entrepreneurship is essential for sustainable progress.

Youth employment strategies represent a cornerstone of Uzbekistan’s long-term development vision. Through a combination of state policy initiatives, institutional reforms, and public-private partnerships, the country is taking significant steps to ensure that young people are equipped with the skills, resources, and opportunities necessary to thrive in the modern economy. The continued success of these strategies will depend on effective coordination between government agencies, educational institutions, and business communities, as well as on the active participation of young people themselves in shaping their professional futures. Ultimately, empowering youth through employment is not only an economic imperative but also a social investment in the nation’s prosperous and innovative future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of youth employment has been widely explored by both foreign and Uzbek scholars, reflecting its global significance and relevance to national socio-economic development. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023), youth unemployment remains one of the most persistent challenges worldwide, with over 40% of young workers in developing economies engaged in informal or precarious jobs. Scholars such as David Blanchflower and Richard Freeman (2000) emphasize that the transition from school to work is increasingly complex, requiring proactive state policies that combine education reform, vocational training, and entrepreneurship support.

In Uzbekistan, the topic of youth employment has been addressed within the framework of economic modernization and social reforms. Uzbek researchers such as A. Vakhobov (2020) and M. Ubaydullayev (2022) have noted that the creation of stable employment for young people is a

cornerstone of sustainable development, as it helps to reduce poverty, prevent labor migration, and ensure human capital growth. Their studies underline that the effectiveness of youth employment policies depends largely on the alignment between the labor market and the education system[1].

Government initiatives such as the “Yoshlar — kelajagimiz” (Youth — Our Future) program and the “New Uzbekistan Development Strategy 2022–2026” have been highlighted by scholars for their integrated approach to promoting youth entrepreneurship, innovation, and digital skills. According to research by the World Bank (2022), these strategies not only enhance youth employability but also contribute to inclusive economic growth through the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Foreign and domestic scholars agree that addressing youth employment requires multidimensional solutions — combining policy reforms, public-private partnerships, and technological innovation. Hence, Uzbekistan’s strategic efforts to modernize vocational education, foster entrepreneurship, and create digital employment platforms are viewed as timely and essential responses to both national and global labor market trends.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study on Youth Employment Strategies is based on a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative research techniques to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the issue. The research focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of national and international youth employment strategies, with particular attention to Uzbekistan’s policy framework and its alignment with global best practices.

The quantitative component of the study involves the collection and analysis of statistical data from official sources such as the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction, and international organizations including the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank. These data sets were used to identify trends in youth employment, unemployment rates, participation in vocational programs, and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) led by young entrepreneurs. Descriptive and comparative statistical methods were employed to analyze changes over time and regional disparities in youth employment outcomes.

The qualitative component includes the examination of legal documents, strategic frameworks, and policy decisions, such as the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy (2022–2026) and the Youth Policy Strategy of Uzbekistan (2025). Content analysis was applied to assess the objectives, mechanisms, and expected results of these strategies. Additionally, a review of academic literature by Uzbek and foreign scholars provided a theoretical foundation for understanding the socio-economic factors influencing youth employment[2].

Furthermore, expert interviews and case studies were used to gather insights from policymakers, educators, and representatives of youth organizations. This helped identify practical challenges in policy implementation and the effectiveness of entrepreneurship and vocational training programs.

This integrated methodology allows for a multidimensional evaluation of youth employment strategies, combining empirical evidence with policy analysis to develop recommendations aimed at enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of youth employment initiatives in Uzbekistan and beyond.

ANALYTICAL RESULTS

Youth employment remains a key priority for achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the 21st century. The analysis of youth employment strategies demonstrates that providing decent and productive work opportunities for young people is not only a social

necessity but also a critical driver of innovation and national competitiveness. In Uzbekistan, as in many developing countries, youth employment policies are shaped by demographic factors, education outcomes, and labor market dynamics. A detailed analysis of government programs, statistical data, and expert opinions reveals both significant achievements and areas requiring further improvement[3].

Over the past decade, Uzbekistan has implemented a number of strategic reforms aimed at improving youth employment conditions. One of the most influential initiatives is the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy (2022–2026), which prioritizes the creation of new jobs, particularly for young people, through industrial diversification, regional development, and support for entrepreneurship. The Strategy promotes the integration of youth into the digital and green economies—two sectors that are expected to generate sustainable employment in the coming decades.

The “Yoshlar — kelajagimiz” (Youth — Our Future) program, established by Presidential Decree in 2018, represents a key policy tool in this domain. It provides concessional loans and grants to young entrepreneurs, supports start-ups, and offers vocational training and mentoring programs. According to data from the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction (2023), this initiative has helped over 150,000 young people launch business activities, leading to the creation of tens of thousands of jobs nationwide. These measures align with the broader global framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8), which calls for “decent work and economic growth.”

Despite this progress, several structural challenges persist. One major issue is the mismatch between education outcomes and labor market needs. Studies by Uzbek researchers such as Ubaydullayev (2022) and Vakhobov (2020) indicate that many university and vocational graduates lack practical skills demanded by modern industries. This has led to high youth unemployment, especially among graduates in non-technical fields. To address this gap, Uzbekistan has launched the State Program for the Development of Vocational Education (2021–2025), aimed at aligning training curricula with industrial demand and introducing dual education models similar to those in Germany and South Korea.

Another significant challenge lies in regional disparities in employment opportunities. Rural areas continue to experience higher unemployment rates due to limited access to infrastructure, industrial facilities, and financial resources. The government’s efforts to establish Youth Industrial and Entrepreneurial Zones in various regions mark an important step toward decentralizing employment opportunities. However, further coordination between local authorities and private investors is needed to ensure sustainable outcomes.

In addition, technological change and automation are transforming the nature of work, creating both risks and opportunities for youth. While automation may reduce demand for certain low-skilled jobs, it simultaneously increases the need for digital literacy and innovation. The Digital Uzbekistan 2030 Strategy has therefore been integrated with youth employment policies to promote IT education, digital entrepreneurship, and e-learning opportunities. International studies by the World Bank (2022) confirm that such measures can enhance labor productivity and reduce youth unemployment when properly implemented.

From an international perspective, Uzbekistan’s efforts resonate with successful practices from other countries. For example, the European Union’s Youth Guarantee Program ensures that every young person under 25 receives a good-quality job offer, apprenticeship, or training within four months of becoming unemployed. Similarly, South Korea’s Youth Employment Promotion Act integrates education, private sector cooperation, and innovation policies. Adapting elements

of these models to Uzbekistan's socio-economic context could significantly enhance the country's youth employment outcomes[4].

Based on the analysis, it is evident that Uzbekistan has made remarkable progress in formulating and implementing youth employment strategies that are multidimensional and forward-looking. The integration of entrepreneurship promotion, vocational training, and digital skill development reflects a comprehensive understanding of modern labor market requirements. The government's proactive stance—evident in policies such as the Youth Policy Strategy 2025 and New Uzbekistan Development Strategy 2022–2026—demonstrates a strong political commitment to addressing youth employment challenges.

However, ensuring the long-term success of these strategies requires continuous monitoring, policy coherence, and institutional capacity-building. Several conclusions can be drawn:

1. **Enhancing Education-Labor Market Linkages:** Strengthening the relationship between educational institutions and employers is vital. Curriculum modernization, expansion of dual education systems, and partnerships with private enterprises will ensure that youth gain the competencies demanded by the job market.
2. **Promoting Inclusive Employment Opportunities:** Youth employment strategies should focus on inclusivity, ensuring that young women, rural youth, and vulnerable groups have equal access to opportunities. Gender-sensitive employment policies and targeted regional programs will help reduce inequalities.
3. **Encouraging Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** Entrepreneurship must remain a central pillar of youth employment policy. Continued access to finance, mentorship, and digital resources will empower young people to create jobs rather than merely seek them.
4. **Leveraging Digital Transformation:** The digital economy offers vast potential for youth employment. Expanding ICT education, digital start-ups, and remote work opportunities can enhance employment flexibility and resilience, particularly in the post-pandemic era.
5. **Strengthening Institutional Coordination:** Effective coordination among government ministries, private sector actors, and civil society organizations is essential for achieving sustainable outcomes. Establishing a unified monitoring framework will help assess program effectiveness and guide policy adjustments.

Youth employment strategies are central to Uzbekistan's broader vision of building a prosperous, innovative, and inclusive society. While notable progress has been achieved through comprehensive reforms and strategic planning, continuous efforts are required to adapt to changing economic realities[5]. By integrating global best practices with local conditions, Uzbekistan can create a labor market that empowers its young generation to become productive, creative, and socially responsible contributors to national development. Ultimately, investing in youth employment today means securing the foundations of economic stability, social harmony, and sustainable progress for the future[6].

CONCLUSION.

The article "Youth Employment Strategies" explores the key policies, challenges, and opportunities related to ensuring productive and sustainable employment for young people. Youth employment is recognized as a cornerstone of economic growth and social stability, particularly in developing countries such as Uzbekistan, where young people make up the majority of the population. The study examines national programs like the "Yoshlar — kelajagimiz" (Youth — Our Future) initiative and the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy (2022–2026), which focus on promoting entrepreneurship, vocational training, and digital skill development.

Drawing on research from both Uzbek and international scholars, the article highlights issues such as skill mismatches, regional disparities, and the need for closer coordination between education systems and labor markets. It also compares Uzbekistan's efforts with successful international models, including the European Union's Youth Guarantee Program and South Korea's Youth Employment Promotion Act.

The findings suggest that sustainable youth employment requires an integrated approach combining education reform, innovation, entrepreneurship support, and institutional collaboration. Ultimately, the study concludes that investing in youth employment not only fosters economic competitiveness but also strengthens social inclusion and national development, making it a key priority for the future prosperity of Uzbekistan and beyond.

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