

Youth unemployment - as a socio-economic problem and ways to solve it (based on the example of Georgia)

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Abstract — The article reviews the youth unemployment rate in Georgia, its causes and impact on the country's socio-economic factors such as economic growth, innovation, loss of labor resources, and deepening of psychological problems of the future generation. Research indicates that youth unemployment rates are higher in nearly every country. However, it is more difficult for countries with developing economies to ensure sustainability and create a relatively stable environment, so the rates are higher here, often due to the lack of communication and coordination between different systems and a delayed reaction to changes. Youth employment is closely related to labor market policy, economic structure, quality of education and its compliance with market needs.

The paper aims to identify and study the socio-economic problems associated with youth unemployment in Georgia and to find ways to solve them, as well as to study the consequences of unemployment on young people. For this purpose, a quantitative survey was conducted among 399 respondents aged 15-29. Various statistical methods were used to process the data using SPSS software. Considering the results, it is clear that the youth unemployment rate is quite challenging for Georgia, which certainly affects business development and economic progress, besides, it has a negative impact on the psycho-emotional state of young people, their motivation and performance, especially in the case of long-term unemployment. Taking into account the complexity and difficulties of the issue, recommendations have been developed at the end of the paper, the consideration of which is important for improving the situation.

Keywords: Youth Unemployment, Labor Market, Developing Country, Socio-Economic Factors, Sustainability

JEL Classification: J13, J21, J64

I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern global economy, youth unemployment is not only a determinant of economic but also of a social crisis. Economically, it is a “degradation of human capital”, as unused skills become worthless over time. According to the International Labor Organization, high youth unemployment leads to the so-called “Scarring Effect” — a phenomenon where prolonged unemployment at the beginning of a career negatively affects an individual’s entire future income, performance and mental health even decades later. This creates a vicious circle of low well-being, which directly affects the country's GDP due to the underutilization of real potential. Young people (15-24 years) are three times more likely to be unemployed compared to the adult population. In Georgia, this issue is even more complicated, as it is closely linked to the country's demographic stability, migration patterns, and economic growth. [1]

From a social perspective, youth unemployment is closely linked to social exclusion and the demographic crisis. Studies by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development confirm that the lack of employment leads to social apathy and mass emigration. [2] This is especially critical for countries with transition economies like Georgia, as a “brain drain” occurs, which depletes the country’s intellectual resources. Reports indicate that the growth of the NEET category is directly proportional to the increase in social vulnerability and poverty rates in the country, which requires additional fiscal expenditures from the state in the form of social benefits. In Georgia, the NEET rate among young people aged 15-24 ranges from 23% to 26.5%, and among the 15-29 age group, it often exceeds 30%. Georgia remains one of the leading countries in the region with a high share of NEET youth, which is more than twice the EU average (approximately 11-12%). [3]

Young people’s transition from the educational sphere to the labour market constitutes one of the fundamental issues in contemporary socio-economic research. Unemployment, as a multidimensional social determinant, extends beyond purely economic paradigms and encompasses the complex interaction of structural barriers, social isolation, and individual expectations. Although macroeconomic indicators often describe the general picture of unemployment, less attention is paid to the subjective perceptions of young respondents themselves and to the cognitive models on the basis of which they assess their own position in the labour market.

The scientific novelty of the present paper lies in the analysis of the interrelationship between young people’s socio-demographic profile and their professional behaviour. The theoretical framework of the study is based on the assumption that a certain structural consensus exists in the understanding of the causes of unemployment (H1); however, individual characteristics - such as level of education, marital status, and economic capital - operate as moderating variables that significantly differentiate and prioritize these perceptions (H2).

Particularly relevant is the issue of young people’s professional mobility and adaptive readiness. In the context of human capital theory, we examine the extent to which the respondent’s demographic status determines their willingness to invest in re-profiling and retraining programmes (H3). At the same time, the study addresses the “duration effect” of unemployment, which implies examining how an individual’s perceptions of the factors guaranteeing employment transform over time - from social connections to objective qualifications (H4).

The quantitative research methodology employed in the paper (SPSS analysis) enables us to carry out the statistical validation of these relationships. The findings will make an important contribution to the optimization of youth employment policy, implying a shift from general approaches toward more segmented and individual-oriented strategies.

II Methodology

The present paper employs a quantitative research method, which makes it possible to conduct a statistical analysis of the interrelationship between young people’s socio-demographic characteristics and their professional perceptions.

Sampling method and data collection. The study was conducted in Georgia, and the target group consisted of young people aged 15–29. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire.

- **Sample size:** A total of 399 respondents participated in the study, ensuring the representativeness and statistical reliability of the findings.
- **Instrument:** The questionnaire included both closed-ended questions (Likert scale) and semi-structured questions aimed at examining the causes of unemployment, readiness for professional mobility, and barriers to employment.

Data analysis. The collected primary data were processed using the statistical software package SPSS Statistics. The following procedures were applied to test the research hypotheses:

- **Descriptive statistics:** used to characterize the demographic profile of respondents (frequencies and percentage distributions).
- **Nonparametric tests:** since the data were not normally distributed, the Kruskal–Wallis H test ($S_p < 0.05$) was used to identify differences between groups. This method makes it possible to determine the extent to which socio-demographic variables (age, education, and marital status) influence respondents' positions.

Within the framework of the study, the following independent and dependent variables were analysed:

- **Independent variables:** age category (15–20; 21–24; 25–29), level of education, marital status, and economic status.
- **Dependent variables:** prioritization of the causes of unemployment, readiness for professional retraining, and perceptions of the factors determining successful employment.

Throughout the research process, the principles of anonymity and confidentiality were observed. Respondents were informed about the aims of the study and about the use of the data exclusively for scientific purposes.

III Literature Review

In recent years, youth unemployment and its socio-economic consequences have become one of the main challenges for many countries, and are therefore the subject of observation and study by international organizations and scientists. Studies confirm that unemployment is directly related to anxiety and depressive symptoms. Young people are especially vulnerable in this regard, because for them work is not only a source of income, but also the main mechanism for gaining social identity and “adulthood” status. [4] When this mechanism is violated, the individual experiences social alienation, which often leads to a complete loss of motivation and a state of so-called “learned helplessness”, which further complicates their integration into the labor market. The impact of unemployment on a person’s self-perception has been widely studied in the psychological literature. M. Jahoda in his “deprivation model” indicates that employment provides an individual not only with material income, but also with social status and a collective purpose. Its absence leads to a feeling of inferiority, [5] which is also confirmed in our study, where respondents equate unemployment with “shame and humiliation” (H1). Unemployment also affects self-esteem, especially if it is long-term, and the level of education of young people also matters. For young individuals who have invested considerable time and resources in their education, failing to achieve their career aspirations due to unemployment can have particularly negative effects. [6] The term “scarring effect” has been established in the economic literature, implying that long-term unemployment experienced at an early age leaves a permanent mark on an individual's future career trajectory. [7]

Studies of the relationship between unemployment and social isolation have shown that unemployed people are more likely to experience loneliness, which intensifies the longer they remain without work. [8] Unemployed young people, who experience a decline in relationships, reduced well-being and social isolation, frequently turn to the virtual world as a coping mechanism to reduce the stress associated with their “unwanted” social status, but excessive online activity can cause additional stress. [9] It is worth noting that they use the virtual world less often to find a new job or enhance their professional skills. [10]

Ultimately, the stress caused by unemployment hinders personal development at the most critical age. Research shows that cognitive and social skills deteriorate much faster in young people who are NEET. This creates a “negative spiral”: low motivation leads to a loss of competitiveness, which in turn increases the duration of unemployment and deepens the psychological crisis, which often makes mass emigration the only alternative. [11]

The impact of youth unemployment on the socio-economic situation of a country is particularly severe in developing nations. In these contexts, additional challenges arise, making the situation more complex and difficult to address. The Georgian labor market is characterized by an imbalance between demand and supply, [12] and existing management mechanisms are not fully consistent with modern trends. [13] One of the challenges is “Skills Mismatch”, which means that the education system is unable to provide the market with the personnel for which there is a real demand. Georgian researcher E. Kharishvili notes that the integration of young people in Georgia is hampered precisely because labor market demands change faster than academic programs. [14] This theoretical approach supports our H3 hypothesis, which studies the readiness for vocational retraining and its pragmatic nature. According to the annual report of the European Business Association, due to the lack of qualified labor, businesses in Georgia lost a total of 55.6 billion GEL in unrealized business income. The shortage of qualified personnel directly affects the country's economy, with an annual loss of GDP of approximately 26%. [15] While the unemployment rate is highest among young people [16], this problem is exacerbated by the phenomenon of “voluntary unemployment”; R. Abesadze and I. Beraia argue that some young people prefer to remain unemployed rather than be employed in a low-paid position that does not provide them with a decent social status (H2). [17] The emigration rate is also highest in the 25–29 age category, [18] according to L. Tsuladze, long-term unemployment in Georgia is becoming the main reason for outflow (migration). [19] This directly resonates with our research (H4), where unemployment lasting more than 3 years radically changes the perception of employment guarantees and prioritizes social ties. The number of people with higher and vocational education is high among the unemployed, which once again indicates that the education system is less oriented towards the demands of the labor market. [20] Graduates are often not given the opportunity to undergo internships in various organizations, as they prefer to retrain personnel who already have certain qualifications. [21] Therefore, it is crucial that courses must be more practical and reality-oriented to respond to the demands of employers [22], and that institutions have appropriate equipment and infrastructure. [23] It is also important to consider that “the transformation of the labor market requires that education systems prepare young people in accordance with the standards of a knowledge-based economy.” [24]

IV Discussion

Within the framework of the study, we formulated the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Regardless of age, education, marital status, and income, unemployment is associated in the same way for all young people.

Hypothesis 2. The perception of the main causes of youth unemployment depends on individual factors, namely age, education, marital status, and income.

Hypothesis 3. The age, education, and marital status of unemployed individuals influence their willingness to participate in retraining courses and to change their profession for the purpose of employment (35–41, 42, 48).

Hypothesis 4: Unemployment and its duration influence young respondents' perceptions of the key factors that determine guaranteed employment.

Hypothesis 1. In this hypothesis, both the factors and the dependent variable are nonparametric. Specifically, the factors—age, education, and income—are ordinal variables, while marital status is a nominal variable. The dependent variable, A2: “What is unemployment most strongly associated with for you?”, is also a nominal variable, with the following categories:

- humiliation and the violation of dignity;
- shame and a sense of inadequacy;
- freedom and the opportunity to find oneself;
- the chance to start a new life;
- the incentive to move toward more active action;
- poverty and the deterioration of material well-being.

The existence of a statistical relationship between the nonparametric variables was determined using the Kruskal–Wallis test. The resulting table (Table I) showed that no marked differences were observed among the categories of age, education, marital status, and income in associating unemployment with humiliation and the violation of dignity, shame and a sense of inadequacy, freedom and the opportunity to find oneself, the chance to start a new life, the incentive to move toward more active action, and poverty and the deterioration of material well-being. For all the above-listed dimensions of unemployment association, the level of statistical significance in relation to the influence of each individual factor - age, education, marital status, and income - exceeded 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis is retained; accordingly, Hypothesis 1 is valid.

TABLE I. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results: Association of Socio-Demographic Factors with Perceptions of Unemployment

	A40 age	A41 education	A43 Marital Status	A49 income
Chi-Square	5.054	4.514	3.963	2.020
df	5	5	5	5
Asymp. Sig.	.409	.478	.555	.846

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: A2 What is unemployment most associated with for you?”,

Source: Authors' research result

The crosstabulation table (Table) shows the factors with which unemployment is most associated, where the column headings are numbered (1,2,3,4,5,6) referring to the categories of the A2 variable: 1. Humiliation and loss of dignity; 2. Shame and feelings of inferiority; 3. Freedom and the possibility of not finding oneself; 4. A chance to start a new life; 5. Stimulus to more active actions; 6. Poverty and deterioration of material condition.

TABLE II. Frequency Distribution of Variable A2 - "What is unemployment most strongly associated with for you?" -by Individual Factors

		A2 What is unemployment most strongly associated with for you?					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Age	16-20	14%	18%	26%	8%	8%	27%
	21-24	5%	14%	22%	11%	8%	40%
	25-29	10%	20%	18%	7%	5%	40%
Education	Secondary	6%	14%	42%	6%	3%	31%
	Vocational	13%	7%	13%	7%	7%	53%
	Incomplete higher education	14%	17%	18%	8%	7%	35%
	Higher education	7%	18%	21%	9%	8%	38%
Marital Status	Unmarried	8%	17%	21%	9%	8%	37%
	Married	12%	17%	24%	7%	3%	37%
	Divorced	0%	33%	0%	33%	0%	33%
Income	Till 300	11%	23%	19%	7%	2%	39%
	301- 600	13%	13%	28%	8%	8%	31%
	601-900	6%	19%	21%	9%	10%	36%
	901-1200	3%	17%	32%	8%	8%	32%
	1201 +	11%	16%	17%	9%	7%	41%

Source: Authors' research result

Across all age groups, unemployment is most strongly associated with poverty and the deterioration of material well-being. Among young people aged 16–24, it is next associated with freedom and the opportunity to find oneself (18%), whereas in the 25–29 age group, with a slight difference from the younger groups, it is associated with shame and a sense of inadequacy (20%). Perceptions of the causes of unemployment differ among young people with different educational backgrounds. In particular, for respondents with secondary education, unemployment is most strongly associated with freedom and the opportunity to find oneself (42%), followed by poverty and the deterioration of material well-being (31%). For the remaining three educational groups (secondary, vocational, and incomplete higher education), unemployment is associated primarily with poverty and the deterioration of material well-being (31%), and then with freedom and the opportunity to find oneself. According to marital status, for both unmarried and married respondents, unemployment is most strongly associated with poverty and the deterioration of material well-being, followed by freedom and the opportunity to find oneself, and shame and a sense of inadequacy.

Across all income groups as well, unemployment is most strongly associated with poverty and the deterioration of material well-being. For respondents earning up to 300 GEL, unemployment is associated with shame and a sense of inadequacy. For the remaining groups (those earning more than 300 GEL), unemployment is associated with freedom and the opportunity to find oneself.

Hypothesis 2. Young people's perceptions of the main causes of unemployment depend on such factors as age, education, marital status, and income.

In this hypothesis, the categories of the variable A3 - In your opinion, what is the main cause of youth unemployment? - are as follows:

1. The low level of work motivation among young people
2. The lack of information on vacancies available in the labour market
3. Low wages that cannot ensure a decent standard of living for young people
4. The low level of economic activity
5. The government's inappropriate employment policy regarding youth employment
6. Employers' unwillingness to hire young specialists without work experience

Due to the qualitative nature of both the factors and the dependent variable, we used the **Custom Table** procedure, with the chi-square test included, in order to determine the statistical relationship between them.

The frequency distribution of the main causes of youth unemployment by age, education, marital status, and income was obtained in the following form (Table III):

TABLE III. Youth Perceptions of Primary Causes of Unemployment: A Cross-Tabulation Analysis

Independent Variable:		Dependent Variable: AA3. In your opinion, what is the main cause of youth unemployment?					
Title	Categories	1	2	3	4	5	6
Age	16-20	10%	11%	34%	7%	13%	24%
	21-24	13%	10%	26%	7%	20%	25%
	25-29	11%	9%	37%	12%	13%	18%
Education	Secondary	15%	15%	35%	5%	5%	25%
	Vocational	19%	19%	13%	9%	22%	19%
	Incomplete higher education	9%	7%	30%	10%	21%	23%
	Higher education	13%	10%	34%	9%	14%	21%
Marital Status	Unmarried	13%	10%	30%	9%	15%	24%
	Married	10%	10%	39%	10%	18%	14%
	Divorced	0%	24%	27%	0%	24%	25%
Income	Till 300	5%	7%	25%	7%	21%	34%
	301- 600	7%	15%	37%	11%	11%	19%
	601-900	11%	15%	32%	10%	11%	21%
	901-1200	14%	5%	37%	7%	16%	21%
	1201 and more	14%	9%	31%	10%	15%	20%

Source: Authors' research result

As can be seen from Table III, according to the age variable, the main reason for youth unemployment in all three groups is named by the majority as low wages, which cannot ensure a decent standard of living for young people. The second main reason is the unwillingness of employers to employ young specialists without experience. In the 21-24 age group, factors such as the government's incorrect employment policy towards youth employment are also significantly mentioned. In addition to vocational education, the main reason for youth unemployment in the education variable groups is also named by the majority as low wages, which cannot ensure a decent standard of living for young people. In the vocational education group, the majority also names the government's incorrect employment policy towards youth employment. In the education variable groups, the second main reason is also named by the employers' unwillingness to employ young specialists without experience. According to marital status, the main reason for youth unemployment in all groups is low wages, which cannot ensure a decent standard of living for young people. According to unmarried and divorced people, the second reason is also the unwillingness of employers to employ young specialists without experience. According to married people, the second reason is the incorrect employment policy implemented by the government towards youth employment.

Among the income variable groups, the majority of the group with the lowest salary names the main reason for unemployment as the unwillingness of employers to employ young specialists without experience, followed by low wages. The remaining groups name low wages, which cannot ensure a decent standard of living for young people, first. Mainly, according to all factors, two main reasons for unemployment are identified: low wages, which cannot ensure a decent standard of living for young people, and employers' unwillingness to employ young specialists without experience. The results of the chi-square test (Table IV) confirm hypothesis 2: all four factors individually have a very significant statistical impact on the variable of perception of the main causes of youth unemployment, with maximum statistical reliability, $P < 0.001$. According to the chi-square test, the largest difference between the main causes is observed according to income, then according to education, age, and finally according to marital status.

TABLE IV. Pearson Chi-Square Tests: Statistical Significance of Demographic Impact on Perceived Causes of Unemployment

		A40 Age	A41 Education	A43 Marital Status	A49 Income
AA3. In your opinion, what is the main cause of youth unemployment?	Chi-square	51.676	62.465	48.764	66.386
	df	12	18	12	24
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000

Source: Authors' research result

Hypothesis 3. The age, education, and marital status of the unemployed affect their willingness to participate in retraining courses and change their profession for the purpose of employment. In this hypothesis, age, education, and marital status are factors, and the variable - Are you ready to change your profession and participate in retraining courses? - is the dependent variable, with the following categories: 1. I disagree, 2. I agree, only with a guarantee of employment, 3. I agree. Due to the qualitative nature of the variables, we used the Kruskal Wallis Test to determine the statistical relationship between the factors and the dependent variables, the results of which are shown in Table V. It was shown that all three individual factors have a very significant statistical impact on the dependent variable, thereby confirming hypothesis 3. Thus:

- Education has a significant impact on the respondent's willingness to change profession and participate in retraining courses. There is a statistical significance level of 0.001 between education and the dependent variable ($P < 0.001$);
- Age and marital status also determine the respondent's willingness to change profession and participate in retraining courses. The dependent variable has a very significant statistical relationship with the age and marital status variables at the 0.01 level ($P < 0.01$);

These findings confirm that the motivation for professional adaptation is not uniform but is strategically moderated by the individual's socio-demographic background.

TABLE V. Kruskal-Wallis Test: Influence of Demographic Variables on Readiness for Professional Re-qualification

	Age	Education	Marital Status
Chi-Square	13.272	23.014	12.868
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.001	.000	.002

a. Kruskal Wallis Test
b. Grouping Variable: Are you ready to change your profession and participate in retraining courses?

Source: Authors' research result

The variable - Are you ready to change your profession and participate in requalification courses? The relationship with individual factors is presented in the Figure 1, Figure 2 And Figure 3.

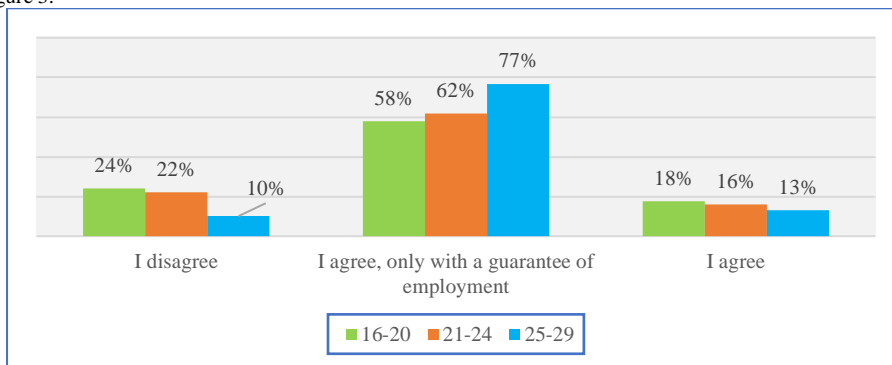


Fig. 1. Relationship of the age variable with the variable - A35 Are you ready to change your profession and participate in requalification courses?

Source: Authors' research result

As can be seen from Figure 1, there is a sharp difference between the categories of the A35 variable across age groups: a very large proportion of all three age groups agree to change their profession and participate in requalification courses if they have a guarantee of employment.

According to age groups, as we can see, the following ratio is:

- 16-20 - 24% - do not agree, 18% - agree, 58% - agree only with the request for employment;
- 21-24 - 22% - do not agree, 16% - agree, 62% - agree only with the request for employment;
- 25-29 - 10% - do not agree, 13% - agree, 77% - agree only with the request for employment.

In the group of those who do not agree with changing their profession and participating in requalification courses, the youngest age groups (16-20) stand out the most, 16-20 age group - 24%, and 21-24 age group 22%.

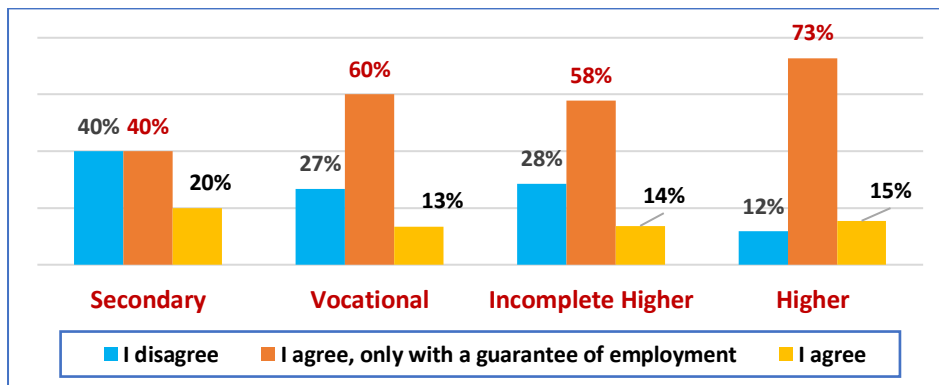


Fig. 2 Relationship of the education variable with the variable - Are you ready to change your profession and participate in requalification courses?

Source: Authors' research result

As can be seen from Figure 2, the majority of all education groups, if they had a guarantee of employment, agree to change their profession and participate in requalification courses. Higher education graduates stand out the most. Also, the fewest people who do not want to participate in requalification courses are those with higher education.

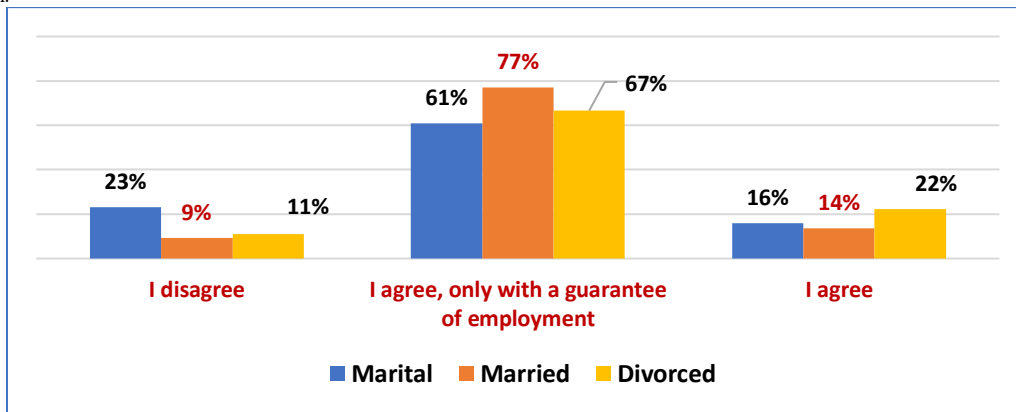


Fig. 3 Relationship of the marital status variable with the variable - Are you ready to change your profession and participate in requalification courses?
 Source: Authors' research result

As can be seen from Figure 3, in all categories of marital status, the majority agree to change professions and participate in requalification courses if they have a guarantee of employment, and the most prominent are married people. Also, the fewest people who do not want to participate in requalification courses are married and divorced people.

H4: Unemployment and its duration influence young respondents' perceptions of the key factors that determine guaranteed employment.

To test this hypothesis, the Kruskal–Wallis Test was applied due to the non-parametric nature of both variables involved. The Kruskal–Wallis test results (Table VI) indicate a highly significant statistical association between unemployment duration and the variable “perceived guarantee of employment”, with a p- value not exceeding 0.0001. This confirms that unemployment and its duration significantly influence young respondents' views on the key factors determining guaranteed employment, thereby supporting the validity of Hypothesis H4.

TABLE VI. Statistical Results of the Kruskal–Wallis Test

	A47 If you are not currently employed, what is the duration of your unemployment?
Chi-Square	18.733
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

Source: Authors' research result

For a more detailed analysis, Table VII presents the frequency distribution of perceived employment guarantee factors across different categories of unemployment duration, while Fig. 4 offers a graphical representation of this relationship. In Table VII, columns 1,2, 3, 4 correspond to the categories of variable A33. In your opinion, what determines the guarantee of obtaining employment? 1 - Candidate's level of education and qualifications; 2 – Ability to present oneself and one's capabilities; 3- Personal and family connections; 4- information on vacancie posted on employment agency websites

TABLE VII. Frequency Distribution: Guaranteed Employment Factors Categorized by Unemployment Duration

		A33 In your opinion, what determines the guarantee of obtaining employment?			
		1	2	3	4
A47 If you are not currently employed, what is the duration of your unemployment?	Less than 6 months	31.2%	39.4%	11.9%	17.4%
	Up to 1 year	33.3%	28.9%	18.9%	18.9%
	Up to 2 years	26.6%	34.4%	25.0%	14.1%
	Up to 3 years	24.6%	31.6%	29.8%	14.0%
	More than 3 years	20.3%	22.8%	35.4%	21.5%

Source: Authors' research result

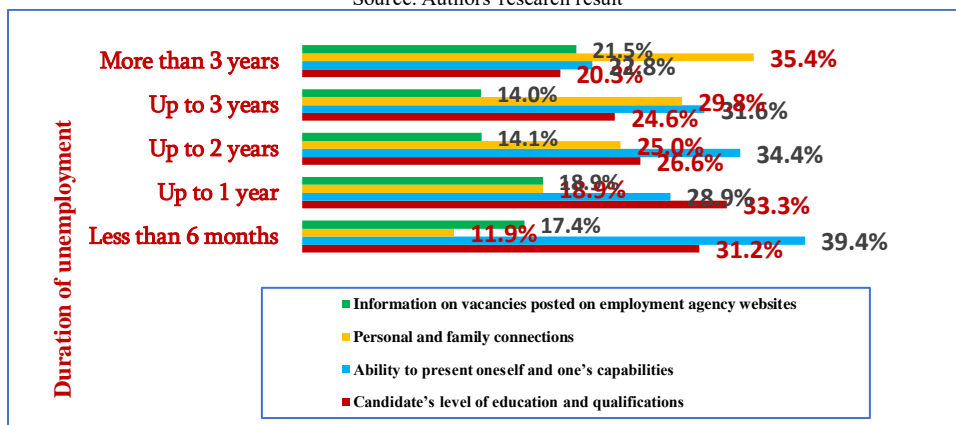


Fig. 4. Relationship Between Unemployment Duration and Young Respondents' Perceptions of Factors Determining Guaranteed Employment
 Source: Authors' research result

As illustrated in Table VII and Figure 4, among young individuals unemployed for less than six months, the majority (39%) consider the ability to present oneself and one's capabilities as the most important factor in securing employment. This is followed by the candidate's level of education and qualifications (31%), information provided by employment agencies (17%), and - though with a smaller but still notable share - personal and family connections (12%).

Among youth unemployed for up to one year, the majority (33%) view the candidate's education and qualifications as the primary factor, followed by self-presentation skills (29%). A significant proportion (19%) also cite personal and family connections, and an equal percentage (19%) refer to information from employment agencies.

In the group of respondents unemployed for up to two years, the majority again emphasize self- presentation skills (34%) as the key determinant, followed by

education and qualifications (27%), while a substantial share (25%) cite personal and family connections. For those unemployed for up to three years, a similar pattern is observed: the majority (32%) prioritize self-presentation abilities, followed by personal and family connections (30%), education and qualifications (25%), and employment agency information (14%). A marked shift becomes evident among respondents unemployed for more than three years. Unfortunately, the majority (35%) now view personal and family connections as the primary factor guaranteeing employment. This is followed by self-presentation skills (23%), information from employment agencies (22%), and lastly, education and qualifications, cited by only 20%.

V Conclusion

The conducted complex research and statistical analysis (Kruskal-Wallis $p < 0.05$) clearly showed that youth unemployment in Georgia is not only a result of economic imbalance, but also represents a multi-layered socio-psychological crisis. The trends identified within the framework of the research allow us to formulate the following fundamental conclusions:

Age segmentation and crisis of social realization. The research revealed the so-called "perception paradox", which manifests itself differently depending on age groups. If unemployment is perceived as a temporary phase at the age of 16-20, then in the 25-29 age group, psychological pressure and a sense of social shame sharply increase. This indicates that with increasing age, employment ceases to be only a source of material well-being and transforms into a critical instrument of social identity and self-realization. This finding emphasizes that employment policies should be strictly segmented and tailored to the specific needs of each age group.

Long-term unemployment and the "disappointment effect". One of the most striking findings of the study concerns the destructive impact of long-term unemployment (more than 3 years) on the worldview of young people. Statistically, it is confirmed that over time, a significant part of respondents (35%) lose faith in education and personal competencies. Instead, "personal connections and nepotism" are named as the main guarantee of success. This trend indicates a nihilistic attitude towards the labor market, which in the long term threatens the meritocratic development of the country and contributes to the "erosion of human capital".

Pragmatism and readiness for professional transformation. Despite negative trends, the study showed a high level of pragmatism among young people. Especially among married and higher educated people, there is a readiness for professional retraining, but only if there is a solid guarantee of employment. This finding indicates that the "skills gap" between the education system and the labor market cannot be filled by strengthening theoretical education alone; it is necessary to introduce "study-employment" models integrated with the business sector.

Based on the research results, the following interventions are advisable:

- Differentiated approach: State programs should focus on career orientation of young people aged 16-20, while direct subsidized employment and internships should be prioritized for the 25-29 age group.
- Business partnership: It is necessary to create legislative and tax incentives that encourage the private sector to get involved in the professional training of students from an early stage.
- Psychological rehabilitation: Long-term unemployed youth need not only technical skills training, but also psychological support programs to restore their motivation and confidence in their professional abilities.

In conclusion, it can be said that overcoming youth unemployment in Georgia requires a complex approach that combines economic incentives, modernization of the education system, and socio-psychological support. Otherwise, we will end up with a "lost generation," whose potential, instead of developing the country, will be directed towards social exclusion and nihilism.

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