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## Factorial features of NEET youth socialisation in Kazakhstan in the context of forming a new quality of human capital

### Abstract

**Object:** The purpose of this study is to determine the significance of factors influencing the success of young people's socialisation based on the results of a sociological survey of three focus groups: NEET youth; school, college and university graduates; and government institutions and organisations.

**Methods:** Sociological survey methods for 3 focus groups. Structural equation method and second generation multivariate data analysis (SEM) using Smart PLS 3 software.

**Findings:** The results of structural equation modelling (SEM) based on a sociological survey of three focus groups (NEET youth; school, college and university graduates; state institutions and organisations) revealed the factor specifics of NEET youth socialisation in Kazakhstan – public youth support institutions have a significant impact on the reduction of the NEET segment, state youth policy is a determining factor in the reduction of the NEET segment.

**Conclusions:** As a result of the study, material was obtained, the analysis of which led to the conclusion that the problems of NEET youth, require the active use of institutional and financial mechanisms to support young people, as well as the development of measures to minimise NEET youth in Kazakhstan, as young people are the main source and driving force of socio-economic development of the country.

**Keywords:** youth, NEET youth, youth employment, economic activity, youth unemployment, NEET indicators, Smart PLS, modeling, human capital.

### Introduction

Young people are an important part of a country's human capital and determine the potential supply of labour. In the modern interdisciplinary understanding, the human capital of a country is their knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation, intelligence and health embodied in intellectually developed citizens, allowing them to participate in the process of social reproduction and create both their own and national income. In this regard, young people should be considered as promising human capital, since it is a potential quantitative and qualitative resource for staffing the national economy, and secondly, the most active, creative and reflective part of society, which is more flexible and receptive to innovative changes. From an economic point of view, young people are a factor of production, and the productivity of the national economy depends on their qualifications (Youth Labour Market Analysis: A Training Package on Youth Labour Market Information, 2015). The rapid development of advanced technology is structurally changing the labour market. And in this new reality, young people are the most vulnerable group. And in this context, the NEET indicator, which is a relatively new indicator for measuring the effectiveness of state youth policy, is considered a better measure of current youth labour market potential compared to the youth unemployment rate. It includes that part of young people who are not in the labour force and in education and thus cannot be regarded as unemployed (Sakoshev et al., 2021).

Of particular concern today is NEET youth, i.e. young people who are not employed and engaged in education, as they are vulnerable to marginalisation, social exclusion, poverty, etc. In 2020, the International Labour Organisation estimates the proportion of NEETs among 15-24 year olds at 22.4%, with twice as much for girls (31.2%) as for boys (14%).

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The relevance of the research topic is related to the emphasis on the problem concerning youth, which presents certain difficulties today (Khusainova et al., 2022). Therefore, based on Kazakhstan realities, it is important to investigate the socio-economic reasons for young people entering the NEET segment.

While in NEET status, young people are insufficiently or not at all involved in the normal channels of human capital formation, which is the basic essence of human capital (Shestakova et al., 2020). This necessitates a factor diagnosis of NEET youth socialisation in Kazakhstan.

### *Literature Review*

The expression “NEET” (Not in Education, Employment or Training), “NEET youth” or “NEET generation” for such youth was first used in the UK (Sociological portrait of NEET youth in Kazakhstan, 2019). British researchers, including G. Williamson, were the first to draw attention to the emerging adolescent crisis and were the first to quantify in their study the number of 16 to 17 year olds without education, training or employment (Williamson, 2010).

The term NEET quickly gained significance outside the UK. At the beginning of the new millennium, similar definitions were adopted in almost all EU member states; similar concepts referring to this category of young people have appeared in discourse in Japan, New Zealand, Taiwan, Hong Kong and, more recently, in China (Pacheco & Dye, 2014). Some of these new concepts have gone beyond the original meaning of NEET. For instance, hikikomori in Japan means “detachment” and is used to refer to young Japanese NEETs, usually young men who live with their parents, spend time alone in their rooms, without friends and watch only online events or films (Wang, 2015). NEET youth is an integral part of Generation Z, all characteristics of Generation Z apply to NEETs, except that this part of the youth tend to lack the material or social opportunities to fully realise them. Perhaps this is why Spanish researchers prefer to use the term “Nini” to refer to this group (Bulanova, 2019). Thus, although the NEET concept originated in the UK, it has gradually gained acceptance in a number of other economically developed countries.

Two areas stand out among foreign NEET studies for young people. First, analyse the factors that increase the risk of falling into a particular group. At the individual level, such factors include low levels of education, health problems, early motherhood (before the age of 20), single motherhood, involvement in gangs, maladjustment and other psychological problems (Green et al., 2001; Coles et al., 2002; Cusworth et al., 2009; NEETs – Young People not in Employment, Education or Training, 2012). Risk factors can also be characteristics of the parental family: low parental education, low household wealth, poor housing conditions, large family size, etc. (MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; Cassen & Kingdon, 2007).

The second strand is comparative research, which focuses on the study of inter-state differentiation in NEET indicators and the analysis of the factors that explain it. Macroeconomic, demographic and institutional factors are distinguished.

Institutional provision of youth employment policy, including the NEET category, in Kazakhstan is linked to the formation of a legal block that provides a legislative framework for the development of youth activity, as well as the development of specific forms of institutional provision: institutions and support programs that facilitate both youth employment and the independent development of traditional and innovative youth entrepreneurship.

Legislative and regulatory legal acts in the field of youth employment and education in our country include the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Labor Code, the Law “On Employment”, the Law “On State Youth Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan”, the Law “On Education”, the Order of the Minister of Health and Social Development “Rules for conducting social professional orientations”.

Specific institutions for the employment of young people in Kazakhstan include: 1) support institutions that are operators of programs to ensure the employment of young people, including the NEET category: employment centers, regional chambers of entrepreneurship “Atameken”, Youth Initiatives Fund, Entrepreneurship Development Fund “Damu” (implements special programs: the project “Support for the opening of a new business”, the project “Support for entrepreneurial initiatives student youth”); 2) Youth employment promotion programmes in a complex regional environment: an employment through microcredit programme for residents of mono-cities with low and medium potential, a programme to promote entrepreneurship of the self-employed, unemployed and low-income population in each mono-city, a programme to establish business support centres in mono-cities that provide information and advisory support; 3) special programmes to promote the employment of young people, including the NEET category.

### Methods

The logic of the research included several steps. At the beginning of the work, sociological surveys were conducted in 3 focus groups, for each of which special questionnaires were developed:

1) NEET youth aged 15-29 (currently unemployed and out of school) (for the first focus group, respondents were selected randomly at their place of living. The use of the random selection method is based on the advantages of this method in that it provides optimal timing of the survey and efficient logistics. A total of 362 NEET youth representatives participated in the survey. This selection criterion ensured a high level of data with a maximum statistical error of no more than 5%);

2) College and higher education graduates (potential NEETs) (for the second focus group, 6,977 school, college and higher education graduates participated in the study. This category of participants in the survey was chosen due to the fact that they are likely to be part of the NEET category of young people in the foreseeable future);

3) Authorised state bodies that determine youth policy in education and employment (for the third focus, 104 respondents from state institutions and organisations took part in the study).

In the second step of the research, based on the sociological research conducted in three focus groups, the results were modelled using structural equations and second generation multivariate data analysis (SEM), using Smart PLS 3 software. This method is often used in socio-economic research, as it can test linear and additive causal models with theoretical justification.

Six key hypotheses were advanced in this part of the research: 1) the field of activity is a determinant in the successful employment of young people; 2) employment barriers are the dominant factor in the expansion of the NEET youth segment; 3) public institutions supporting youth have a significant impact on the reduction of the NEET segment; 4) state youth policy is a determinant in the reduction of the NEET segment; 5) there are specific age traps that influence the NEET youth segment; 6) education issues are the dominant factor in the expansion of the NEET youth segment in Kazakhstan.

Data on the internal hypotheses were collected through a social survey in three focus groups. The study analyzed 6 exogenous and 1 endogenous variable for all focus groups. Tables 1 and 2 show the indicators of the independent factors and 1 variable.

Table 1. List of indicators for assessing the variable

Abbreviations	Indicator description
Youth socialisation	
CM1	Education
CM2	Appropriateness of the profession for the job
CM3	Personality
CM4	Work experience
CM5	Language skills
CM6	Has knowledge of IT technology, computer programmes, modern technology
CM7	State, authorised governmental bodies
CM8	Professional internships
CM9	Personal networks, acquaintances

*Note – compiled by the authors*

Table 2. List of indicators for assessing the independent factors

Abbreviations	Indicator description
SD	Scope of activity
BT	Employment barriers
OIMP	Community youth support institutions
GMP	State youth policy
SVL	Special age traps
PO	Educational problems

*Note – compiled by the authors*

### Results

In order to build a strategy to minimise the number of NEET youth, it is necessary to identify the factors that have a significant impact on the career success of young people. In order to carry out this analysis, a structural model is constructed in Smart PLS data analysis software for all focus groups. Figures 1, 2, 3 show the results of the PLS analysis performed in the Smart PLS software package.

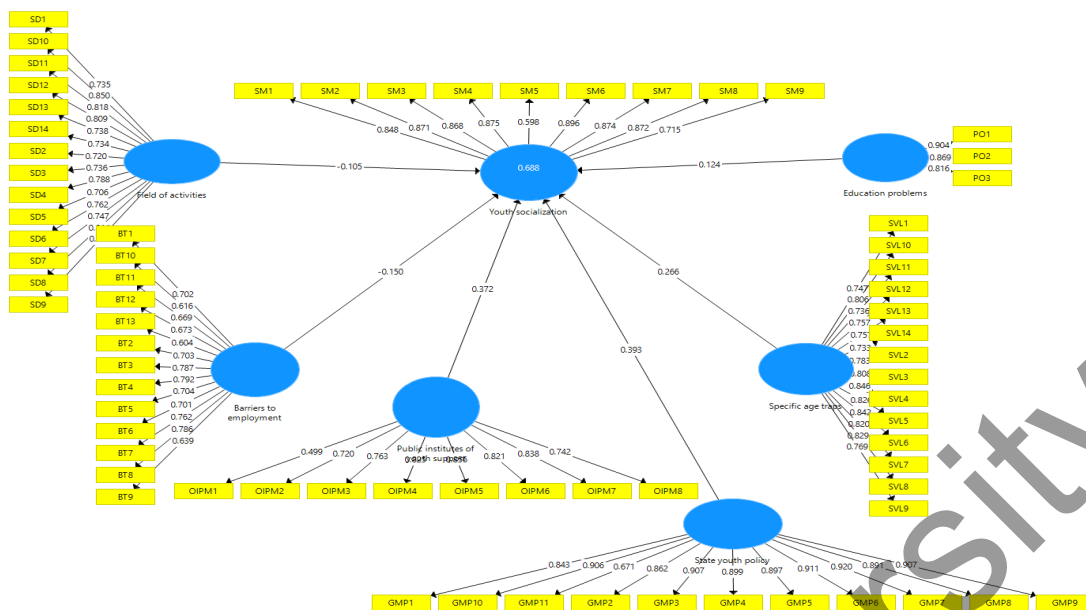


Figure 1. Adequacy and significance of the structural model for the first focus group – NEET youth

Note – compiled by the authors

Analysis and hypothesis testing of the first focus group – NEET youth. According to Figure 1, factors such as public institutions of youth support, state youth policy, specific age traps and educational issues have a direct impact on the career success of young people, especially public institutions of youth support and state youth policy have a significant impact on the future of young people.

The research conducted on the first focus group resulted in 2 hypotheses being confirmed out of the 6 hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3. Community youth support institutions (0.372) have a significant impact on youth socialisation.

Hypothesis 4. State youth policy (0.393) is a determinant of young people's successful labour activity.

Hypothesis 1. The field of activity is not a determinant, but rather has a negative effect (-0.105) on the employment success of young people.

Hypothesis 2. Barriers to employment (-0.150) negatively affect young people's socialization.

Hypotheses 5 and 6 were not confirmed, as their coefficients of determination are low. Thus, the special age traps of young people and educational problems do not affect the socialization of young people.

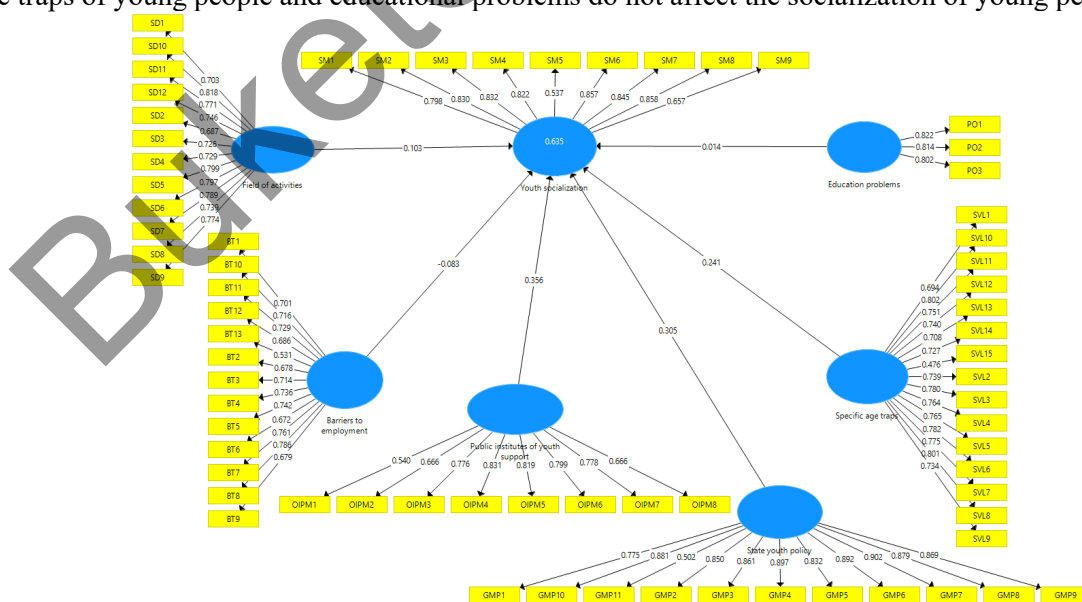


Figure 2. Adequacy and significance of the structural model in the second focus group – school, college and university graduates

Note – compiled by the authors

Hypothesis analysis and hypothesis testing on the second focus group – school, college and university graduates. According to Figure 2, factors, such as public institutions of youth support, state youth policy, specific age traps, field of activity and educational problems have a direct impact on the career success of the younger generation.

The results of the second focus group research confirmed 2 out of the 6 hypotheses proposed:

Hypothesis 3. Community youth support institutions (0.356) have a significant impact on youth socialisation.

Hypothesis 4. State youth policy (0.305) is a determinant of young people's employment success.

Hypothesis 2. Employment barriers (-0.083) negatively affect youth socialization.

Hypotheses 1, 5 and 6 were not confirmed, as their coefficients of determination are low. Thus, sphere of activity (0.103), special age traps of youth (0.241) and education problems (0.014) have no impact on youth socialization.

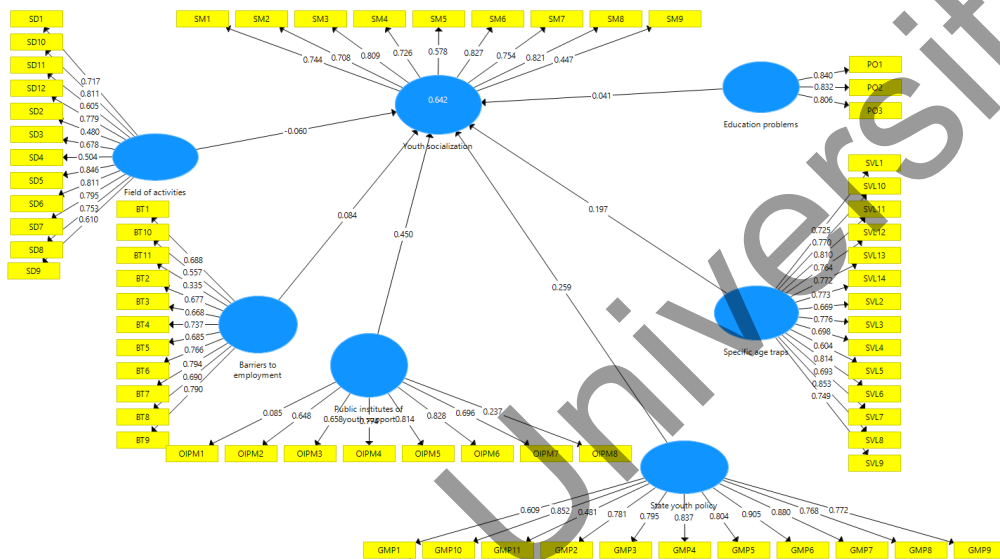


Figure 3. Adequacy and significance of the structural model according to the third focus group public institutions and organisations

Note – Compiled by the authors

Hypothesis analysis and hypothesis testing for the third focus group – public institutions and organisations. According to Figure 3, factors such as public youth support institutions, state youth policy, have a direct impact on the career success of young people, especially public youth support institutions have a significant impact on the future of young people.

As a result of the third focus group research, out of 6 hypotheses, 1 hypothesis was confirmed: Hypothesis 3. Public youth support institutions (0.450) have a significant impact on youth socialisation.

Hypothesis 1. The field of activity is not a determinant, but rather has a negative impact (-0.060) on the employment success of young people.

Hypotheses 2, 4, 5 and 6 were not confirmed, as their coefficients of determination are low. Thus, employment barriers (0.084), special age traps of youth (0.197), state youth policy (0.259) and education problems have no impact on youth socialization.

### Discussions

Thus, the results of the study in three focus groups (NEET youth; graduates of schools, colleges and universities; state institutions and organisations) using structural equation modelling (SEM) identified factors that influence the success of young people's careers – public institutions supporting young people and state youth policy. Consequently, the sphere of activity, the specific age traps of young people, and educational problems are not the determining factors influencing the NEET segment and the successful socialisation of young people.

The results of the sociological survey showed the existence of problems and readiness to solve them in all the focus groups participating in the survey. The problems of NEET youth, identified in the survey, require active use of institutional and financial mechanisms to support youth.

An analysis of the determinants influencing the level of NEETs seems extremely important, as understanding the determinants, and thus the risk factors that can predict this phenomenon, will consequently enable policy makers to implement measures to combat the social and economic consequences of the social and labour exclusion of young people.

The following strategic risks of further development of NEET youth in Kazakhstan were identified: a decrease in the level and quality of the human capital of the nation as a whole and youth, in particular, an increase in regional differentiation of social capital and income; inefficient allocation of society's resources and underemployment; a decrease in overall labor productivity and youth labor productivity, a slowdown in economic growth; a decrease in indicators in the reproduction of the population; criminalization of the youth environment in regions with youth unemployment, the growth of antisocial behavior of young people and the use of drugs, alcohol; the growth of social tension, the threat of extremist activity of youth groups and youth participation in mass riots; the growth of negative relations between young people from more developed regions and underdeveloped regions; a decrease in public health indicators in the youth segment.

### **Conclusions**

The youth labour market segment is a part of an economic system that is experiencing changes in the economy (Gazizova et al., 2021). Furthermore, it should be noted that these characteristics of the factors affecting the socialisation of NEET young people are not permanent; they only indicate the scale of the problem at the current moment. The reasons for the emergence of NEETs vary from country to country. At the same time, the specifics of the socio-economic environment do not shift the direction of youth development in general (youth dominated by intellectual capital as a labour market modification, education as a system of growth of post-industrial competences, inclusive economy as a platform for social equalisation and realisation of individual opportunities).

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**Ж.С. Хусаинова, М.Р. Газизова, Ж.М. Жартай, А.Н. Ламбекова, Г.М. Абауова**  
**Адами капиталдың жаңа сапасын қалыптастыру контексінде Қазақстандағы**  
**NEET-жастарды әлеуметтендірудің факторлық ерекшеліктері**

**Аңдатпа:**

*Мақсаты:* Зерттеудің мақсаты үш фокус-топ бойынша: NEET-жастар; мектептер, колледждер мен жоғары оқу орындары түлектері; мемлекеттік мекемелер мен ұйымдар бойынша әлеуметтік сауалнама нәтижелері негізінде жастардың әлеуметтенуінің табыстылығына әсер ететін факторлардың маңыздылығын айқындау.

*Әдісі:* Құрылымдық тендеулердің 3 фокус-топтық әдісі бойынша әлеуметтанулық сауалнама жүргізу және Smart PLS 3 бағдарламасы арқылы екінші буынның көп өзгермелі деректерін талдау (SEM) әдістері.

*Қорытынды:* Үш фокус-топтың (NEET-жастар; мектептер, колледждер мен жоғары оқу орнының түлектері; мемлекеттік мекемелер мен ұйымдар) әлеуметтік сауалнамасы негізінде құрылымдық тендеулерді (SEM) модельдеу нәтижелері Қазақстандағы NEET-жастарды әлеуметтендірудің факторлық ерекшелігін анықтады, яғни жастарды қолдаудың қоғамдық институттары NEET сегментін қысқартуға айтарлықтай әсер етеді, мемлекеттік жастар саясаты NEET сегментін қысқартудағы анықтаушы фактор болып табылады.

*Тұжырымдама:* Зерттеу нәтижесінде NEET-жастар мәселелері жастарды қолдаудың институционалдық және қаржылық тетіктерін белсенді пайдалануды, сондай-ақ Қазақстанда NEET-жастарды барынша азайту жөніндегі шараларды әзірлеуді талап ететінін қорытындылауға мүмкіндік беретін материал алынды, өйткені жастар елдің әлеуметтік-экономикалық дамуының негізгі көзі және қозғаушы күші болып саналады.

*Кілт сөздер:* жастар, NEET-жастар, жастардың жұмыспен қамтылуы, экономикалық белсенділік, жастар жұмыссыздығы, NEET көрсеткіштері, SMART PLS, модельдеу, адами капитал.

**Ж.С. Хусаинова, М.Р. Газизова, Ж.М. Жартай, А.Н. Ламбекова, Г.М. Абауова**  
**Факторные особенности социализации NEET-молодежи в Казахстане в контексте форми-**  
**рования нового качества человеческого капитала**

**Аннотация**

*Цель:* Целью настоящего исследования является определение значимости факторов, влияющих на успешность социализации молодых людей на основе результатов социологического опроса по трем фокус-группам: NEET-молодежь; выпускники школ, колледжей и вузов; государственные учреждения и организации.

*Методы:* Методы социологического опроса по трем фокус-группам, метод структурных уравнений и анализа многомерных данных второго поколения (SEM) с использованием программы Smart PLS 3.

*Результаты:* Результаты моделирования структурных уравнений (SEM) на основе социологического опроса трех фокус-групп (NEET-молодежь; выпускники школ, колледжей и вузов; государственные учреждения и организации) выявили факторную специфику социализации NEET-молодежи в Казахстане — общественные институты поддержки молодежи оказывают существенное влияние на сокращение сегмента NEET, государственная молодежная политика является определяющим фактором сокращения сегмента NEET.

*Выводы:* В результате исследования был получен материал, анализ которого позволил заключить, что проблемы NEET-молодежи требуют активного использования институциональных и финансовых механизмов поддержки молодежи, а также разработки мер по минимизации NEET-молодежи в Казахстане, так как молодежь является основным источником и движущей силой социально-экономического развития страны.

**Ключевые слова:** молодежь, NEET-молодежь, занятость молодежи, экономическая активность, молодежная безработица, показатели NEET, Smart PLS, моделирование, человеческий капитал.

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