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CONTACTS

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ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND CRIME (CASE OF UZBEKISTAN)

Khusniddinova Gulnoza

“Demography. Labor Economics” specialty basic doctoral student

Tashkent State University of Economics

Email: xusniddinovagulnoza@gmail.com

Abstract: This article analyzes the relationship between youth employment and crimes committed by young people in Uzbekistan. During the study, youth employment and crime indicators were examined based on statistical data from recent years. The results of the analysis show that despite the increase in youth employment, the level of crime has not decreased. This indicates that youth crime is not only related to employment but also to other social and economic factors.

Keywords: youth employment, crime, labor market, social factors, economic activity, youth policy, employment rate.

Annotatsiya: Mazkur maqolada O‘zbekistonda yoshlar bandligi va yoshlar tomonidan sodir etilgan jinoyatlar o‘rtasidagi bog‘liqlik tahlil qilingan. Tadqiqot davomida so‘nggi yillardagi statistik ma‘lumotlar asosida yoshlar bandligi hamda jinoyatchilik ko‘rsatkichlari o‘rganildi. Tahlil natijalari shuni ko‘rsatdiki, yoshlar bandligi oshganiga qaramay, jinoyatchilik darajasi pasaymagan. Bu esa yoshlar jinoyatchiligi faqat bandlik bilan emas, balki boshqa ijtimoiy va iqtisodiy omillar bilan ham bog‘liqligini ko‘rsatadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: yoshlar bandligi, jinoyatchilik, mehnat bozori, ijtimoiy omillar, iqtisodiy faollik, yoshlar siyosati, bandlik darajasi.

Аннотация: В данной статье анализируется взаимосвязь между занятостью молодежи и преступлениями, совершаемыми молодыми людьми в Узбекистане. В ходе исследования на основе статистических данных последних лет были изучены показатели занятости молодежи и уровня преступности. Результаты анализа показывают, что, несмотря на рост занятости молодежи, уровень преступности не снизился. Это свидетельствует о том, что молодежная преступность связана не только с занятостью, но и с другими социальными и экономическими факторами.

Ключевые слова: занятость молодежи, преступность, рынок труда, социальные факторы, экономическая активность, молодежная политика, уровень занятости.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, ensuring youth employment is of great importance not only economically but also socially. Since young people constitute the most active and dynamic segment of society, their proper integration into the labor market directly affects the country’s sustainable development. Therefore, in many countries, increasing youth employment is considered one of the priority directions of state policy.¹

At the same time, the issue of crime among youth remains relevant. In recent years, the increasing share of crimes committed by young people requires deeper study of this problem. Youth crime is not only a legal issue but also a process closely related to socio-economic factors.

In economic theories, particularly in the approach proposed by Gary Becker, individuals make decisions based on economic benefits¹. If opportunities to earn income through legal activities are limited, in some cases the likelihood of engaging in illegal activities increases. From this perspective, ensuring youth employment is considered one of the important factors in reducing their tendency toward crime. According to the author, this approach explains crime as an economic choice. In my opinion, this approach is relevant in explaining certain cases of youth crime, as limited income opportunities may push some young people toward illegal activities. However, it is not sufficient to explain all youth behavior solely by economic motives.

However, practical observations show that the relationship between youth employment and crime does not always appear in a simple and direct form. In some cases, even during periods of increasing employment

1 National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Data. – Tashkent, 2023.

levels, crime indicators do not decline. This indicates that the issue is complex and multi-factorial.

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between youth employment and crime based on statistical data and to identify the factors influencing this process.

Review of literature on the subject

The issue of the relationship between youth employment and crime has been widely studied in economic and social sciences. International studies consider high youth unemployment as one of the factors contributing to increased crime rates. In particular, reports published by the International Labour Organization indicate that the exclusion of young people from economic activity may negatively affect their social behavior.²

Similarly, studies by the World Bank emphasize that the lack of stable employment among youth increases the likelihood of facing social problems.³

Local studies suggest that increasing youth employment can reduce crime; however, some research also highlights that this relationship is complex and influenced by multiple factors.

The problem of youth crime is closely related to social factors. As noted by John Muncie, social exclusion, low social activity, and weak control mechanisms increase the tendency toward crime among young people.⁴ In particular, unemployed youth are more vulnerable to negative social influences. According to the author, exclusion from society increases the likelihood of criminal behavior.

I agree with this view, as in practice it can be observed that unemployed and socially inactive youth are more likely to fall into risk groups. Weak social control and unfavorable environments further intensify this process.

Social environment plays a crucial role in explaining crime. According to Frank E. Hagan, criminal behavior is often associated with an individual's environment, upbringing, and social conditions.⁵ If young people are not engaged in stable activities, their likelihood of being influenced by negative environments increases. According to the author, crime is shaped by the individual's social environment. In my opinion, this approach is highly important in explaining youth crime, as not only employment but also family, friends, and living conditions play a significant role. Therefore, the problem cannot be solved solely through economic measures.

Economic research has also extensively examined the relationship between unemployment and crime. Studies conducted by Richard B. Freeman indicate that crime rates may be higher in areas with high unemployment.⁶ However, it is also emphasized that this relationship is not constant and is formed in conjunction with other factors. In my opinion, this approach is important in explaining youth crime, as employment alone is not sufficient; social environment also plays a key role.

Developmental factors are also important in studying youth crime. According to David P. Farrington, individuals who experience social and economic difficulties during youth are more likely to engage in criminal behavior later in life.⁷ Therefore, ensuring youth employment at an early stage has preventive significance. According to the author, problems arising in youth can lead to crime in the future. I support this view, as early intervention and employment of young people play a crucial role in preventing negative outcomes.

Research methodology

In this study, statistical and comparative analysis methods were used. Open statistical data served as the basis for the analysis. In particular, the number of young people, their employment level, and the share of crimes committed by youth were examined.

The data were compared across years to identify trends in their changes. In addition, the relationship between employment levels and crime indicators was assessed based on logical analysis.

In this study, both local and international scientific sources, including economic and criminological literature, were extensively reviewed.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Looking at international experience, the relationship between youth employment and crime has been studied in many countries. In particular, according to data from the International Labour Organization, it is observed that crime rates tend to be relatively higher in regions where youth unemployment is high.⁸

For example, studies conducted in European countries show that stable employment of young people

2 Becker, G.S. *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993

3 International Labour Organization. *Global Employment Trends for Youth*. – Geneva, 2022. – 180 p.

4 World Bank. *World Development Indicators: Youth employment and unemployment statistics*. – Washington, DC: World Bank, 2023.

5 Muncie, J. *Youth and Crime*. – London: SAGE Publications, 2009.

6 Hagan, F.E. *Introduction to Criminology: Theories, Methods, and Criminal Behavior*. – Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010.

7 Freeman, R.B. "The Economics of Crime". In: *Handbook of Labor Economics*. – Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1999.

8 Farrington, D.P. "Childhood Risk Factors and Risk-Focused Prevention". In: *Oxford Handbook of Criminology*. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

leads to their active participation in social life, which contributes to a reduction in crime rates.

At the same time, research by the World Bank emphasizes that not only employment itself but also its quality—namely stability and income level—plays an important role. Social problems may persist among young people who are engaged in low-income or temporary jobs.

In some countries, special programs aimed at reducing crime through increasing youth employment have been implemented. For example, through vocational training and the involvement of young people in entrepreneurship, their economic activity has been increased. This, in turn, has had a positive effect on reducing crime rates.

Within the framework of this study, statistical data were analyzed to determine the relationship between youth employment and crimes committed by young people in the Republic of Uzbekistan. First, the dynamics of youth crime were examined (Table 1).

Table 1. Share of Individuals Aged 13–30 Identified as Having Committed Crimes in the Republic of Uzbekistan (as a Percentage of Total)⁹

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
as a percentage of the total population aged 13–15	0,5	0,6	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,4	0,3	0,4	0,6	0,8	0,8	0,6
as a percentage of the total population aged 16–17	2,3	2,1	1,9	1,7	1,7	1,7	1,6	2,2	2,7	2,7	3,2	5
as a percentage of the total population aged 18–24	16,8	16,9	17,5	16	15,9	15,5	15,5	15,2	15,5	14,1	15	0
as a percentage of the total population aged 25–30	18,2	18,1	18	18,3	18,1	18,7	19,3	19,2	19,3	19,5	19,6	37,7
as a percentage of the total population aged 13–30 <ulushi< td=""> <td>37,8</td> <td>37,7</td> <td>37,9</td> <td>36,5</td> <td>36,2</td> <td>36,3</td> <td>36,7</td> <td>37</td> <td>38,1</td> <td>37,1</td> <td>38,6</td> <td>43,3</td> </ulushi<>	37,8	37,7	37,9	36,5	36,2	36,3	36,7	37	38,1	37,1	38,6	43,3

This table presents the share of crimes committed by individuals aged 13–30 in the total number of crimes in the Republic of Uzbekistan during the period 2013–2024. The results of the analysis reveal specific dynamics of crime indicators across different age groups.

First, considering the overall indicator, the share of crimes committed by individuals aged 13–30 was 37.8 percent in 2013. In subsequent years, this indicator remained relatively stable, fluctuating within the range of 36–38 percent. However, starting from 2023, an upward trend is observed, with the indicator reaching 43.3 percent in 2024. This demonstrates a significant increase in the share of youth crime.

When analyzed by age groups, the share of crimes committed by individuals aged 13–15 remained relatively low, fluctuating between 0.3 and 0.8 percent throughout the entire period. This indicates that the level of crime in this age category is low.

In the 16–17 age group, although a decline was observed in the initial years, an increasing trend has been recorded since 2020, reaching 5 percent by 2024. This suggests that crime among adolescents is increasing.

Among individuals aged 18–24, the share of crime was relatively high in 2013–2015 (around 16–17 percent), but gradually declined in subsequent years, stabilizing at approximately 14–15 percent in 2022–2023. This indicates a certain degree of positive change in this age category.

In contrast, the 25–30 age group shows a steady upward trend. The share of crime in this group increased from 18.2 percent in 2013 to 19.6 percent in 2023, followed by a sharp rise to 37.7 percent in 2024. This

⁹ International Labour Organization (ILO). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Investing in transforming futures for young people. – Geneva: ILO, 2022.

situation requires special attention, as the sharp increase in crime among the working-age population may indicate the presence of socio-economic problems.

Overall, the table results show that youth crime is not uniform but varies across different age groups. In particular, the sharp increase observed in the 25–30 age group may indicate issues related to employment, income, and social stability.

At the same time, the significant increase in the overall indicator in 2024 suggests that the factors influencing youth crime have intensified. This situation cannot be explained by a single factor; rather, it should be considered in the context of a combination of economic, social, and institutional factors (Figure 1).

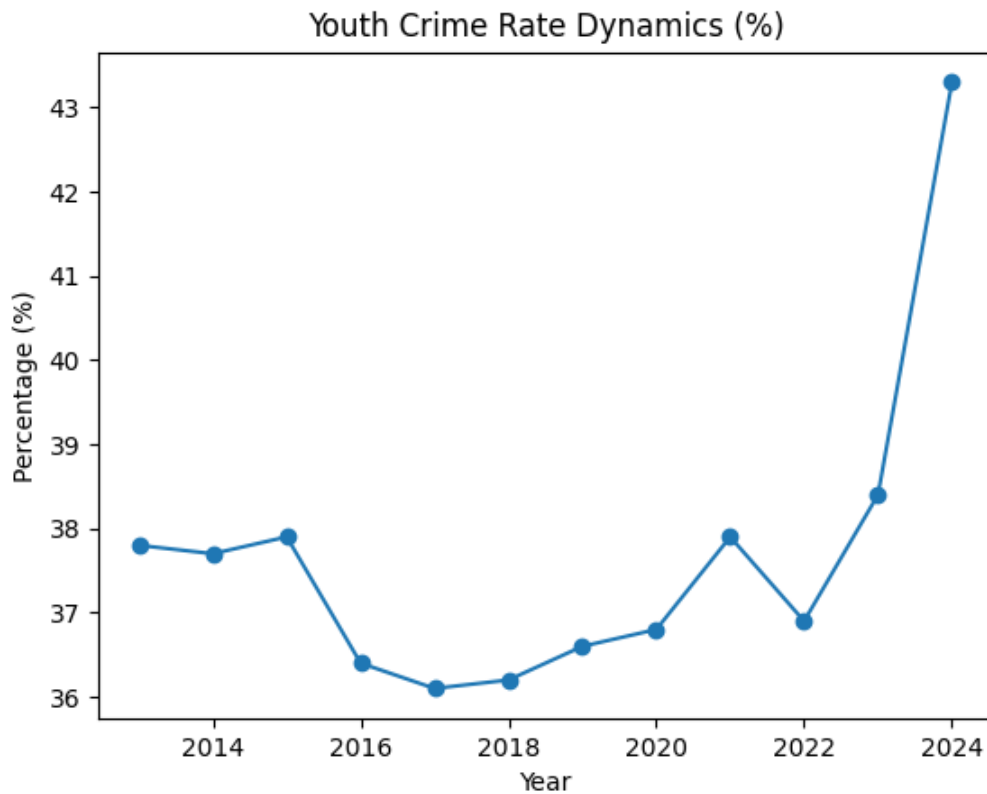


Figure 1. Dynamics of Youth Crime Rate in Uzbekistan¹⁰

According to the data, during the period 2013–2020 in the Republic, the share of crimes committed by young people remained relatively stable, staying at around 37 percent. However, in subsequent years, an upward trend was observed in this indicator, and it is particularly noteworthy that it reached 43.3 percent by 2024.

This situation indicates that the problem of youth crime remains relevant. At the same time, youth employment indicators were also analyzed separately (Table 2).

Table 2. Employment rate of youth in the Republic of Uzbekistan¹¹

Years	Share of employed youth in the total youth population (percent)
2022	68.2
2023	68.9
2024	69.2
2025	69.3

This table reflects the changes in the youth employment rate in the Republic of Uzbekistan during the period 2022–2025. According to the results of the analysis, a gradual upward trend in youth employment indicators can be observed throughout this period.

In particular, youth employment accounted for 68.2 percent in 2022, increased to 68.9 percent in 2023,

10 Prepared by the author based on data from the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

11 Prepared by the author based on data from the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

and reached 69.2 percent in 2024. By 2025, this indicator is reported to have reached 69.3 percent. This indicates that youth employment has been increasing year by year. However, this growth is not significant, as it is occurring at a relatively slow pace.

The increase in youth employment can be considered a positive development; however, its rate is not sufficiently high. In other words, no substantial changes are observed in the short term. This suggests the need to further strengthen measures aimed at increasing youth employment.

At the same time, it is important to assess employment not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. This is because employment does not always imply that young people have stable incomes.

When comparing the data from the two tables, it can be observed that the relationship between youth employment and crime is complex and not unidirectional.

Moreover, factors such as social environment, upbringing, level of education, and the organization of leisure time also have a significant impact on youth crime. Therefore, increasing employment alone does not always lead to a reduction in crime.

In addition, employment indicators should also be evaluated qualitatively. This means that not only employment itself but also job stability, income level, and working conditions directly affect the behavior of young people. Those engaged in low-income or temporary jobs may still belong to socially vulnerable groups.

From this perspective, the relationship between youth employment and crime is complex and multi-factorial in nature. To fully understand this relationship, it is necessary to consider not only statistical indicators but also social and psychological factors in a comprehensive manner.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the conducted analysis, it has been determined that the relationship between youth employment and crimes committed by young people in the Republic of Uzbekistan is complex and multi-factorial in nature. These findings highlight the need not only to increase youth employment but also to improve its quality and to take social factors into account in a comprehensive manner. In my opinion, youth crime is not only determined by economic factors, but is also closely related to the social environment, upbringing, level of education, and the way young people organize their leisure time. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is required to address this issue.

Based on the scientific analysis, the following recommendations have been developed:

1. Improving the quality of youth employment. When ensuring youth employment, attention should be paid not only to quantitative indicators but also to job stability and income levels.
2. Developing vocational training and entrepreneurship. It is necessary to increase the economic independence of young people by training them in modern professions and involving them in startups and small businesses.
3. Effective organization of leisure time. Expanding programs in sports, culture, and education can help prevent young people from being exposed to negative social environments.
4. Strengthening the system of social prevention. It is important to improve mechanisms for working individually with young people, especially those belonging to risk groups.
5. Improving regional programs. It is necessary to develop targeted and region-specific programs aimed at increasing youth employment, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region.
6. Enhancing the monitoring of employment and crime. Regular analysis of these two indicators will make it possible to better understand their interrelationship.

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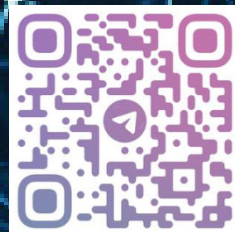
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