

The Resilience of the Population Life Quality in Ukraine in the Coordinates of Economic and Employment Development: Methodology, Priorities for Improving Relationships

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Abstract. *In a globalised world, the key task of policy is to maintain national security and economic competitiveness by optimising the systemic influences of the employment sphere on the quality of life and reproduction of society, which involves assessing the satisfaction of territorial and functional communities and social groups with their living conditions and the institutional framework of the state. The article aims to study the conditions, factors and potential problems involved in ensuring and improving the quality of life of the Ukrainian population, particularly in terms of employment and the national economy. This research requires a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the employment sphere on the reproduction and dynamics of population life quality parameters, indicators and benchmarks in a coordinated policy for establishing and improving socio-economic development resilience potential in the short and long term. It also requires the substantiation of the methodology of systemic interactions and relationships in the employment sphere and the economy in general, alongside assessments and expectations of a range of social groups regarding the possibilities for ensuring, preserving and improving life quality. The study is based on the concepts and theories of socio-humanitarian potential, social capital, sustainable development, and the resilience of the economy and society. It also considers the social state and the welfare state, as well as the inclusion of groups identified according to a spectrum of social vulnerability criteria. The methodology for identifying problems, features and criteria, as well as prospects for ensuring acceptable parameters and enhancing population resilience and quality of life by optimising processes that capitalise on individual, community and nationwide socio-humanitarian potential in the employment sphere and the economy as a whole, combines empirical and theoretical methods (in particular, analysis, induction, extrapolation and synthesis). The prospects for improving Ukrainian socio-economic policy in terms of increasing life quality resilience (particularly in the context of mitigating threats and ensuring public acceptance of results) are largely related to the systematisation of structural changes in ensuring productive employment for the population; optimising the working environment and occupational safety; providing educational and household support for employment and labour mobility; and improving economic, legal and everyday household culture, including promoting legal labour. The main factors influencing population growth and improving quality of life, which are transmitted through the employment sphere and function within it, include institutional, socio-economic, socio-labour, cultural, and educational factors.*

Keywords: *the population life quality, the employment sphere, strategies for the labour potential capitalising, the working life quality, organisational and economic mechanism, the resilience of the economy and society.*

JEL Classification: E61, H41, J17, J24, O15

1 Introduction

The employment sector is the fundamental generator of a complex system of factors and indicators of population quality of life, as well as

the conditions and parameters of its resilience (i.e., stability and resistance to a combination of internal and external negative influences) at nationwide, community and individual levels.

One of the key tasks of effective socio-economic policy aimed at safeguarding national security and enhancing the competitiveness of national business entities in a globalised world remains the optimisation of systemic influences exercised by the employment sector on the level, quality and reproduction of social life. This concerns, in particular, ensuring productive employment; improving the mechanisms and parameters for reproducing and realising the psychophysiological, intellectual and creative potential of the working-age population and the labour force; and strengthening consumer demand. These factors collectively shape the investment attractiveness of economic entities and settlement systems, the effectiveness of long-term “hidden” policies regulating the cross-border migration of the economically active population, the degree to which communities and social groups are satisfied with their living conditions, and the functioning and development of the state’s institutional system.

The question of ensuring quality of life, in general and, more specifically, the quality of working life (based on socio-economic development parameters, employment levels and structure, and other relevant factors) has been the subject of extensive research in scientific and popularised studies in a range of countries worldwide, including Ukraine.

In the realm of pertinent publications, it is noteworthy to acknowledge those that delve into the definition, specification, and methodology of these concepts and processes. These publications encompass research that seeks to justify and classify the factors contributing to their formation and evaluation (Ryndzak, 2021; Halaiko et al., 2020; Stavytskyy & Molokanova, 2020; Palchuk, 2018). These are complemented by studies of factors, criteria and approaches to ensuring and modelling life quality in Ukraine and other countries worldwide. These studies highlight the importance of effective and balanced social reproduction (Andreitseva & Sikora, 2021, 2024; Poliakova et al., 2021; Stavytskyy & Molokanova, 2020; Rybalova et al., 2020). A significant research segment consists of papers carrying out a comprehensive analysis of population life quality in Ukraine, taking retrospective trends and expectations into account (Kyryliuk et al., 2024; Halaiko et al., 2020). Other papers assess life quality in communities and groups identified by place of residence and social vulnerability (Poplavska & Shevchuk, 2020; Shtuler, 2020; Melnychuk et al., 2020). The martial law period in Ukraine has been characterised by an increase in papers evaluating the impact of active military operations and their consequences on the quality of life of the population (Gukalova, 2023; Bielikova et al., 2022).

The aforementioned studies demonstrate the diversity of approaches to systematising factors and criteria for ensuring, reproducing, and improving the population life quality in the system of indicators and benchmarks for socio-economic development sustaining, the principles and practice of balancing long-term socio-economic and investment policies. In order to proceed with this study, it is necessary to provide further substantiation of the methodology for the formation of systemic interactions and relationships in the development processes of the employment sphere and the economy as a whole. This is to be achieved in the context of reproducing and ensuring positive dynamics of the parameters of quality of life (including working life quality), which are to be made accessible and desirable for individuals, a range of social groups, territorial and functional communities.

The primary objective of the present research endeavour is to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the employment sphere on the reproduction and dynamics of parameters, indicators, and benchmarks of population life quality in the context of a coordinated policy for the establishment and enhancement of the socio-economic development resilience potential in both the near and long term. A secondary objective is to substantiate the methodology of systemic interactions and relationships in the functioning of the employment sphere and the economy as a whole, with assessments and expectations of a range of social groups regarding the possibilities of ensuring, preserving, and improving the life quality.

The research methodological grounds comprise concepts and theories of the socio-humanitarian potential and social capital, sustainable development and resilience of the economy and society, the social state, the welfare state, as well as the inclusion of groups identified according to a spectrum of social vulnerability criteria. The methodology for identifying problems, features, criteria, and prospects for ensuring acceptable parameters and enhancing the resilience of the population life quality through optimising the processes of capitalising individual, community, and nationwide socio-humanitarian potential in the functioning of employment sphere and economy as a whole combines empirical and theoretical methods. The scientific papers' analysis is supplemented by substantiating the factors of quality of life and working life, in particular at the collective and individual levels, extrapolating them to organisational and economic mechanisms and dominants for reproducing, increasing the life quality resilience, which are implemented in

the employment sphere and transmitted by it, and generalising the main negative trends in ensuring the population life quality resilience in Ukraine under the influence of a number of internal and external threats to the employment sphere functioning. Consequently, the potential for enhancement of Ukrainian socio-economic policy with respect to enhancing life quality resilience (primarily within the context of mitigating threats and ensuring public acceptability of outcomes) is predominantly contingent upon the systematisation of structural alterations. These encompass the facilitation of productive employment for the population, the optimisation of working environments and occupational safety, educational and household support for employment and labour mobility, and the advancement of economic, legal and domestic household practices, including in the realm of legal labour promotion.

2 The Impact of the Economy and Employment on the Quality of Life and Sustainability of the Population

In the context of the economy and society's resilience (including in terms of the population's overall quality of life and, more specifically, the quality of life for those in employment), it is appropriate to understand formal and informal mechanisms that underpin the viability, resistance, ability to restore and develop of the subjects in question (the population, the labour force, business entities, territorial settlement and business subsystems, and territorial and functional communities). These mechanisms operate in unstable environmental, socio-economic, and geopolitical conditions that are forming and maintaining functionality due to the properties of the specified subjects, embodied in the natural and socio-humanitarian potential, as well as in systemic characteristics of institutional, economic and social interactions. Consequently, the resources, potential, and mechanisms for ensuring resilience are significant features and characteristics of countries' national security and competitiveness in the globalised world.

In the process of transforming the workforce and human resources into key factors of production and social reproduction in neo-industrial and post-industrial economies, the employment sphere has assumed the role of an accumulator and moderator of the socium's potential and resilience mechanisms. It reflects the dynamics of economic development (growth, stagnation, recession) and exerts a strong influence on living standards, life strategies and economic behaviour, consumption patterns, the living environment, and the material well-being of

various social strata (hired workers, entrepreneurs, ultimate beneficiaries and rentiers who derive their main income from shares in enterprises or from real estate and movable-property rentals, people of pre-working age, and pensioners of different categories). In doing so, it shapes the conditions and factors that determine both the objective and subjective assessments of life quality at the community and individual levels (Andreitseva & Sikora, 2024; Stavytskyi & Molokanova, 2020; Rybalova et al., 2020).

In this context, the population life quality should be interpreted as a set of objective and subjective assessments of the conditions, factors, and prospects for comfortable and safe living. It should also include full (including socially acceptable) realization of the psychophysical, intellectual, and creative potential of individuals and communities of various functionality and scale. These opportunities should create chances for achieving desired self-development and consumption benchmarks, preserving and reproducing health, prolonging life expectancy, and productive economic activity (within the framework of its individual and collective strategies).

Reflecting the level of economic development and key macroeconomic indicators, the country's employment structure ensures the reproduction and shapes the dynamics of the level and quality of life not only of employed individuals and their households, but also of the population as a whole. This occurs through both formal and informal social mechanisms governing the distribution and redistribution of produced value (goods and services) and the incomes derived from them; the satisfaction of common public and socially necessary needs, including the reproduction and enhancement of labour, professional and qualification potential, as well as economic, technological and everyday cultural competences; and the social protection of vulnerable groups and the stimulation of socially beneficial productive activity.

Therefore, the direct impacts of a country's economic specialisation and employment structure include:

- The income levels, and the scale and trends of consumption and accumulation across different social groups, as well as the parameters of property- and social stratification (Andreitseva, 2021; Stavytskyi & Molokanova, 2020);
- the level and stability of funding for state and local budgets, compulsory insurance funds, and other state and extra-budgetary programmes and measures of social security and protection;
- the socially acceptable (both formal and informal) mechanisms and strategies for capitalising

labour, professional and qualification potential, as well as social potential more broadly;

- the spectrum of individual and group views on what constitutes a decent standard and quality of life, including lifestyles, the content and extent of socially necessary and private needs and their fulfilment, economic activities, and the need for education, self-education, lifelong learning and professional development (Ryndzak, 2021; Halaiko et al., 2020; Palchuk, 2018);

- the parameters and dynamics of supply and demand in the national labour market and its territorial subsystems, as well as the factors, scale and trends of labour migration (shuttle, interregional, and cross-border).

At the same time, employment parameters determined by the territorial organisation of resources (human, material, technical, financial) and production itself affect the anthropogenic and technogenic quality of the living environment of communities, defining:

- Topical and potential threats to the environment, living conditions, as well as predicted nearest and distant trends of their realisation;

- the crime level of economic activities and living environment.

3 Main Concepts, Mechanisms and Dominants of Ensuring the Life Quality Resilience

The identified areas of influence of employment on social, collective and individual perceptions of quality of life, as well as on the profitability of a number of economic activities and the financing of state and territorial social security guarantees, make it possible to:

- 1) To identify the following concepts in the category of quality of life: quality of working life at the collective and individual levels (among the main factors are employment guarantees and conditions, a set of incentives, including the level of remuneration in relation to perceptions of a decent income, a range of subjective assessments of desired professional and personal self-fulfilment); collective and individual strategies for economic activity as part of a decent life for local communities, social groups and individuals (key factors include the level of education, the competitiveness of the professional and qualification potential of the community/individual, opinions about acceptable mechanisms for capitalising on labour and socio-humanitarian potential, parameters of economic culture, participation in targeted measures to stimulate productive employment) (Ryndzak, 2021; Rybalova et al., 2020; Poplavska & Shevchuk, 2020; Shtuler, 2020; Melnychuk et al., 2020).

- 2) To identify mechanisms for ensuring sustainable quality of life that can be implemented in the field of employment (in particular, through priorities and strategies: diversification, innovative development, modernisation of the national economy across the entire spectrum of its territorial subsystems, support and lobbying for the interests of national economic entities in domestic and foreign markets for goods and services; development of effective national demand and the consumer market; promotion of social protection, social and labour inclusion of a number of vulnerable categories; preservation and reproduction of labour potential, increasing the efficiency of capitalisation and improving its professional and qualification components).

- 3) To divide the main dominants of reproducing and growing up the population life quality resilience, which are transmitted through the employment sphere and function in it, into:

- The institutional ones (legislative and normative principles of labour and employment, as well as access to competitive professional education; practice of their implementation).

- The socio-economic ones (the structure of employment in the context of expanding and reproducing modern production technologies, the comprehensive formation and integration of territorial subsystems of the national economy, the development of production clusters and closed production cycles; policies and mechanisms to overcome a number of processes of shadow employment and illegal labour; functionality of territorial labour markets, in particular through indicators of job search duration and employment incentive programmes; dynamics of unemployment rates, especially in comparison with trends in crime and cross-border labour migration) (Kyryliuk et al., 2024; Poliakova et al., 2021; Halaiko et al., 2020).

- The social and labour (income levels of population groups, as well as wage levels by type of economic activity and employee category compared to the minimum subsistence level, physiological and social components, dynamics of the cost of so-called mandatory services; effectiveness of control over working conditions and occupational safety; range of subjective – corporate, public (by place of residence), individual – assessments of working conditions and wages, accessibility and prospects for labour and professional self-realisation, career growth) (Andreitseva & Sikora, 2021, 2024; Rybalova et al., 2020);

- The cultural and educational ones (level of general and vocational education, professional and qualification structure of the economically active population and employed persons, trends in its

reproduction and optimisation; compliance of the structure of vocational education with state and local orders and within the framework of personal initiatives to meet the needs for stimulating economic growth, balancing regional development parameters related to the quality of life of territorial communities; subjective assessments of the competitiveness of education and acceptable employment).

4 Urgent Threats and Negative Trends in Ensuring Quality of Life in Ukraine

Both in the pre-war years and during the period of martial law, the main threats to ensuring the resilience of the population's quality of life in Ukraine, under the influence of a number of adverse internally and externally generated socio-economic development trends, were represented by: the reduction in the national economy's output and the destruction of its material and technical base; increasing difficulties in the resource provision of certain industries and types of economic activity; systemic and large-scale situational disruptions to logistics chains; the contraction of sales markets (both external and internal); the departure abroad of economically active and able-bodied people and their family members of pre-working age; the deepening gender and age imbalances within the workforce; and the growing mismatch between the real labour needs of the Ukrainian economy and the educational orientations of the population (Kryliuk et al., 2024; Gukalova, 2023; Bielikova et al., 2022; Poliakova et al., 2021; Palchuk, 2018).

In the near future, these threats will intensify the negative trends in the employment sphere functioning, which have been manifesting for a long time, in particular, due to:

- The national economy's predominant specialisation on resources and raw materials in the conditions of vulnerability of both the production infrastructure and available sales markets (in particular, external ones);
- the national economy's significant shadowing, the unjustified stratification of the employed by labour income in the conditions of employees' relatively low remuneration standards, as well as the decrease in the living standards of vulnerable categories (as most dependent on the effectiveness of social mechanisms for the redistribution of benefits and income);
- the destruction of community and individual benchmarks of legal productive employment, including due to the unsatisfactory dynamics of normalised wage standards;
- the expansion of numerous forms of non-standard employment as an environment

that provokes the narrowed reproduction and obsolescence of the employed' professional and qualification potential, socially dangerous dynamics of educational and labour orientations of the population mentioned category and their family members.

According to an analysis of Ukrainian statistics from the pre-war period, the proportion of employed individuals aged 15–70 who were employed as hired workers reached 84%. Furthermore, their labour income remained comparatively low, even in relation to the official subsistence minimum, the content and value of which continue to be the subject of objective criticism (Interfax – Ukraine, 2025). Concurrently, there was a precipitous decline in the number of employed and full-time workers per the resident population. The acute imbalance in the national economy's structure, which is threatening in the context of its competitiveness, as well as formation of the potential for the life quality reproducing in the medium and long term, ensuring its sufficient resilience for the entire spectrum of the population social and income groups, was evidenced through the following.

– The ranking of economic activities by gross domestic product and gross value added per the contingent of employed and full-time workers, where the real estate transactions, mining and quarrying, information and telecommunications, financial and insurance activities, public administration and compulsory social insurance dominated.

– The growth of the rent component of income from the supply of electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning, mining and quarrying, temporary accommodation and catering, information and telecommunications.

5 Conclusions

The dynamics of the employment sphere's functioning processes reflect both the retrospective and current level of substantiation and effectiveness of the state policy for establishing socio-economic development. This ensures the investment attractiveness and competitiveness of territorial economic systems and national business entities. Consequently, this dynamic is characterised by the potential for enhancing the quality of life and reproduction of the population, extending from the individual to the collective and nationwide levels.

The generalisation of methodological and practical principles, features, and issues of formation and dynamics of resilience characteristics of Ukrainian population life quality allows to outline the main threats to its provision, related to:

- The functioning, reproducing, transmitting the legislative and economic grounds for the

– the destruction of public, community, and individual motivations for productive legal employment (primarily, in the parameters and dynamics of: shadow employment and undeclared labour; excessive market landmarks in professional education, obsolescence of educational standards and programmes; crisis of civic and consumer expectations, among the main factors of which are the loss and limitations of community and individual resources for reproducing and improving

– the development of territorial communities' (hromadas') economic, legal, and everyday household culture, focused on increasing the working life quality, promoting productive legal employment.

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