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Youth Unemployment: Comparison of Influence and Policy Factors in The Baltic Countries and East Asia on The Example of Lithuania and South Korea

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Abstract- This study examines the factors that influence the youth unemployment market in the Baltic States and East Asia. The study identifies the main factors that influence youth unemployment in the two regions, such as urbanization, education, and average annual wages. The comparative analysis reveals the commonalities and unique similarities that are characteristic of the two regions. The aim of the study is to analyze the influencing factors and, using regression analysis, establish the relationship between the factors and youth unemployment. The results highlight the importance of understanding the factors that influence youth unemployment in Lithuania and South Korea and combating them.

Keyword- Blended Learning, Prospective Teachers, Comprehension, Conventional Approach, and Traditional Approach.

I. INTRODUCTION

Korea faces a challenge that includes a significant proportion of NEET (not in education, employment, or training) youth, reflecting cultural differences that make it difficult to find a job Unemployment among youth aged 15 and above is a serious problem compared to older generations in both Lithuania and South Korea. In Lithuania, structural unemployment is a persistent problem, with 68% of respondents engaged in informal employment due to huge competition (Krasnopjorovs, 2020; Gasparėnienė, Remeikienė & Williams, 2022). At the same time, South (Park et al., 2020). This article examines the underlying causes of youth unemployment in these two regions, focusing on key socioeconomic factors such as average earnings, educational attainment, and urbanization trends (Choi, 2020; Lim & Lee, 2019). This study examines the practical issues of youth unemployment using multiple regression analysis methodology. After analyzing the data, practical recommendations are proposed on potential policy measures aimed at improving the employment prospects of young people. Based on this, the results of this study demonstrate that new strategies need to be developed in Lithuania and South Korea when combating youth unemployment.Problem.

II. THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

Working people are people who receive wages for the work and tasks performed. While the unemployed are people who do not have a place of work and do not receive funds (wages) from the employer. Young people, in turn, are people over the age of 15 who

work or study in educational institutions. Currently, the labor market is contemplating a significant increase in youth unemployment. Young people with or without higher education compete for vacant and limited places on the labor market. To get a place, they need to compete not only with peers but also with older colleagues, because employers tend to hire people with experience faster than young people without work experience.

Studies identify several causes of youth unemployment that affect their success in finding work and stable employment. One of the reasons is structural unemployment, as there is a mismatch between young people's skills and labor market offers. Such conditions make it difficult for young people to find work in comparison with the older population. Structural unemployment is a constant problem for the Baltic countries even in the best economic years (Krasnopjorovs, 2020). Another reason is the prevalence of informal employment among the population in the Baltic States. According to the study, 68% of respondents are engaged in informal employment or have a desire to move to it. Such a significant share indicates that young people will choose informal employment and the shadow market on recommendation, in contrast to the competing environment and the inability to get a job in the usual way (Gasparėnienė, Remeikienė & Williams, 2022).

The main causes and problems for youth unemployment in South Korea are NEET and cultural factors. NEET, or in other words, not in education, employment, or education is a common problem among youth and university graduates in Korea. The trend of increasing this share of the population is a significant factor influencing the level of unemployment among young people and their ability to find permanent work in the labor market (Lim & Lee, 2019). Cultural factors are important influencing factors in the Baltic States and South Korea. Mursa et.al. (2018) singles out cultural factors as one cause of youth unemployment. As the family's role of tradition and strong financial support in European countries plays a crucial role for young people in finding work and raises youth unemployment (Claudiu & Maria, 2018). Park et.al., (2020) also supports the opinion of previous researchers. The Korean culture of family, resources, and family relationships slows the job search among young people and increases unemployment (Park et.al., 2020).

Governments try to influence various policies and laws with factors affecting unemployment. In Lithuania, there are several policies affecting youth unemployment. The first is the policy of the Youth Labor Center (YLC); their policy is focused on reducing the unemployment rate among young people by providing advice on professional skills and opportunities in the labor market. Their consultations and policies are aimed at solving the social, economic, and cultural problems faced by young people (Acieneda & Tandzegolskieneda, 2018). The next government policies are the “Youth Guarantee Initiative” initiative from 2014 (Rauckieneda-Michaelsson & Acieneda, 2019) and the National Youth Policy Action Plan (Kvieskieneda et.al., 2021), which aim to create a connection between young people and the labor market by helping with the improvement of education and professional training. In South Korea, the government is also introducing policies to combat youth unemployment. Tsunekawa & Todo (2019) argue that the government is implementing the following policies: (1) a policy on comprehensive education and training aimed at improving

technical and professional education; (2) cooperation with the private sector, which establishes partnerships between educational institutions and companies and provides opportunities for internships and employment for students. Scholars also identify the following policies in South Korea as employment activation policies and targeted youth programs aimed at enhancing youth technical skills and support in internships or vocational training (Kim & Shi, 2020). Also, as a major challenge among young people is improving socio-economic conditions for creating families and addressing employment issues, the government has established the Third Basic Plan for a Low Fertility and Ageing Society 2016-2020 (Kang, Lim & Kim, 2022).

Based on all the analyzed studies, the following variables affecting the unemployment of young people in Lithuania and South Korea were identified: average salary, level of education, and level of urbanization. The average wage has a significant impact on the youth unemployment rate since the lower the wage, the less attractive young people find positions. According to researchers in Lithuania, lower wages in the villages and suburbs of Lithuania lead to less involvement of young people in work. This situation contributes to high youth unemployment in the region (Skučieneda & Brazieneda, 2024). While Mursa et.al. (2018) say that the policy of raising the minimum wage to the level of the average wage harms young people because employers do not see the need to hire low-experience workers for high wages. However, with competitive wages, the demand of young people for work increases, and the level of unemployment among young people decreases (Mursa et.al., 2018). At the same time, the Korean labor market shows that higher average and minimum wages encourage young people to accept market offers and change jobs less often. Which gives greater stability and reduces youth unemployment (Park et.al., 2020). This opinion is confirmed by Shin (2019); he claims that competitive wages attract young people to the labor market, while low wages lead to an increase in youth unemployment.

Krasnopjorovs (2020) assures that the level of education and its availability have a significant impact on the level of youth unemployment. Because people with higher education face unemployment in only 5% in Lithuania compared to young people with basic education, who face unemployment in 30% of cases (Krasnopjorovs, 2020). This dynamic is also observed by another study that reveals the importance of education among young people as one of the guarantors of reducing unemployment. According to the article, young people with higher education face unemployment in only 4.1% of cases. While young people with basic education face unemployment in the EU in 13.3% of cases (Zainea et.al., 2020). However, Choi (2020) argues that higher education in South Korea usually creates a gap between job expectations and the education of young people, leading to the spread of unemployment. One of the exits is professional education, which provides better employment and higher employment compared to young people with basic education (Choi, 2020).

Another important factor that the researchers singled out is the impact of urbanization or the so-called migration of young people to large cities. Lim & Lee (2019) found that urbanization has both positive and negative consequences for youth employment. Since big cities are developing, they need workers, but usually the labor market is overcrowded, and it is difficult for young people without work experience to find a job. Therefore, they postpone the search for work or agree to low-paid, nonprofessional

work to preserve city life (Lim & Lee, 2019). Other authors also find positive and negative consequences of urbanization, arguing that urban growth leads to increased youth unemployment. As young people try to leave for larger cities in search of education and employment and face significant competition and increased standards for employment (Kvieskieneda, Kvieska & Celiešieneda, 2020).

Thus, the theoretical analysis of the article focuses on the analysis and understanding of the dynamics of youth unemployment, focusing on the age group of 15 years and two countries. Several causes of youth unemployment in Lithuania and South Korea are highlighted in the study. These reasons are cultural factors such as family values and traditions. Also, in Lithuania, the choice of young people is largely influenced by structural unemployment, and in South Korea, it is NEET. The study lists several variables affecting youth unemployment in both countries: average wages, level of education, and level of urbanization. Consequently, preliminary studies and conclusions will help to formulate hypotheses for the paper, as they all investigate the influence of factors and variables on youth unemployment. Several policies aimed at combating and improving the youth unemployment situation were also highlighted. Among them are the "Youth Guarantee Initiative," the National Youth Policy Action Plan in Lithuania, and the Third Basic Plan for Society 2016-2020 as employment activation policy and targeted youth programs in South Korea.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This part presents the research methodology based on the data of Lithuania and South Korea. Data are collected from 1992 to 2022 (time series) for South Korea and 1995 to 2023 for Lithuania.

The data span for South Korea was chosen due to the lack of data on all criteria after 2022. The data span for Lithuania was chosen based on the following reasons: after independence, most data were only examined from 1995, and post-2023 data are missing from most indicators. To determine education, data on school enrollment, primarily in the selected countries, were taken since there is no data on the percentage of young people with higher education.

A collection of data on a variable's values at different times is called a time series. Data for the time series are collected in agreed time periods; in our case, the data are collected annually. The following factors are used for analysis: Dependent variable: youth unemployment (unempl; Q). Independent variables: average annual wages (wage; W), education (educ; E), and urbanization (urban; U). A multiple regression analysis was conducted on these variables to assess the assumptions of a linear regression model. Table 1 presents the model's variables and their corresponding measurements.

Table 1. Variables and Their Measurements

Variable	Measurement	Data source

Youth unemployment	%	Macrotrends (n.d.a.); Macrotrends (n.d.c.).
Average annual wages	US$ and million won	OECD (n.d.a.); OECD (n.d.b.).
Education	% gross	World Bank Group (n.d.a.); World Bank Group (n.d.b.).
Urbanization	% of total	Macrotrends (n.d.b.); Macrotrends (n.d.d.).

Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is a commonly used approach for estimating the coefficients of linear regression equations that describe the connection between one or more independent quantitative variables and a dependent variable. OLS minimizes the sum of squared residuals and seeks to identify regression model coefficients (Majka, 2024). This strategy has been utilized in prior studies on young unemployment, including those by G. Uslu and H. Tatli (2024) and D. M. Bojadjieva et al. It is also used in this investigation. When running a regression model, it's critical to check for outliers. Outliers are uncommon observations that deviate dramatically from the rest of the data. In regression analysis, an outlier is an observation that has a greater residual than the other observations. Outliers are identified using the standardized residuals approach, which has a critical value of |3|. It is also essential to ensure that the residuals are normal. P-P plots are used to verify normality.

The other test looks for multicollinearity, which happens when two independent variables are strongly associated. This generates duplicate data and confuses the regression model's findings. This problem has to be addressed. Bivariate correlation is used to identify multicollinearity. If the coefficient of bivariate correlation, |r_i j|, is more than 0.8, the regression model shows multicollinearity between the x_i and x_j variables. If the model has multicollinearity, the answer is to change it using the PCA transformation. This transformation shows a common socioeconomic factor that is represented by a linear combination of average annual wages, education, and urbanization. When the model is retested with the VIF test, the multicollinearity has been removed, so the model now interprets the complex socioeconomic factor rather than individual variables such as average annual wages, education, or urbanization.

Autocorrelation is another regression assumption that has to be confirmed. Autocorrelation describes the relationship between each value of an error in an equation. Specifically, it refers to the degree of correlation between values of the same variable across different data points. This idea is most often addressed in the context of time series data, which includes observations made at various times in time. The Durbin-Watson (DW) d statistic is the most common method for identifying serial autocorrelation. The d value is always between zero and four. The closer the d-value gets to zero, the stronger the evidence for positive autocorrelation. Conversely, the closer the d value is to 4, the stronger the evidence for negative autocorrelation. The Durbin-Watson test determines two crucial values for the d statistic based on the sample size and number of independent variables: d_L and d_U, also known as the lower and upper limits, respectively. If the estimated d value is less than the lower limit, more than the higher limit, or between the two limits, the existence of autocorrelation may

be determined. If there is autocorrelation in the model, the approach is to add a delayed dependent variable as an independent variable and use the Durbin h statistic to detect second-order autocorrelation.

The p-value is the probability of having an outcome similar to or more extreme than what was seen under the null hypothesis. If the p-value is above 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. The Fisher's test (F-test) is used to determine the model's statistical significance. If a parameter's p-value is less than 0.05, it is statistically significant and interpretable. A Student's t-test is used to determine the statistical significance of a parameter. Another metric is the coefficient of determination (R^2). It assesses how well a regression model predicts an outcome. In other words, it assesses the model's fitness. The model's R^2 will be closer to 1 as it predicts more accurately. A multiple regression model was used:

$$ln\_unempl_t = b_0 + b_1 ln\_wage_t + b_2 ln\_educ_t + b_3 ln\_urban_t + u_t, \quad (1)$$

$$unempl_t = b_0 + b_1 wage_t + b_2\, educ_t + b_3 urban_t + u_t, \quad (2)$$

where: unempl – youth unemployment, wage – average annual wages, educ – education, and urban – urbanization; t indicates time series data, while ln shows natural logarithm.

On the basis of the analyzed factors affecting youth unemployment, the following hypotheses were formulated:
Hypothesis 1: The lower the average annual wages, the higher the youth unemployment.
Hypothesis 2: The higher the level of education, the lower the youth unemployment.
Hypothesis 3: The higher the level of urbanization, the higher the youth unemployment.

All hypotheses are based on the study findings presented in the literature review section.

In summary, this methodology allows to build a multifaceted model to investigate the influence of certain factors on the unemployment of young people. The dependent variable is youth unemployment, while the independent variables are GDP growth, young people's education, youth migration, and average European Union earnings. The coefficients of the linear regression equation are calculated via the ordinary least squares approach.

IV. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for the study variables. As shown in the table, the average value of the main variable for the first model, youth unemployment, is 8.9%, indicating the average level within the sample. The standard deviation of 1.9% indicates high variability around the mean. The minimum and maximum values are 6.01% and 15.72%, respectively, showing the range of the observed values. For the second model, the average value of the main variable, youth unemployment, is 20.81%, and the standard deviation of 7.89% indicates high variability around the mean. The minimum and maximum values are 35.74% and 8.39%.

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Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variable	Minimum value	Maximum value	Mean	St. deviation
Model 1 (South Korea):				
Youth unemployment	6.01	15.72	8.94	1.95
Average annual wages	8.5	44.6	26.7	10.74
Education	36.0	103.0	82.53	21.64
Urbanization	74.92	81.94	80.31	1.92
Model 2 (Lithuania):				
Youth unemployment	8.390	35.740	20.812	7.893
Average annual wages	13193	51290	31544.62	11241.928
Education	95	106	101.76	2.400
Urbanization	66.640	68.690	67.220	0.561

The regression analysis for the first model starts with the detection of outliers. No outliers were found in this model. Only data with normal distribution may be utilized in multiple linear regression models. In this example, the P-P test indicated that they are not regularly distributed. In order for the data to be normally distributed, a natural logarithm was introduced for all variables (see Formula 1). The problem of the normality of data distribution was solved. The next step is to check for multicollinearity using bivariate correlation. The value is higher than |0.8| between all pairs of independent variables: wage and education (0.908), wage and urbanization (0.923), and education and urbanization (0.982). To solve the problem of multicollinearity between all independent variables and preserve all variables in the model, the principal component analysis (PCA) method was used by creating a common variable from three independent variables (see formula 3):

$$ln\_unemplt = b0 + b1FAC1\_1t + ut, \qquad (3)$$

The next step is to check for autocorrelation. Based on the results of the Durbin-Watson (DW) d test in the first model, d = 0.913, dL = 1.363, and dU = 1.496. Since d < dL, there is probably evidence of positive autocorrelation, indicating the model's errors are associated. As a result, a lagged dependent variable was used in a regression model (autoregression), and the Durbin-d statistic was calculated. The results indicated that the autocorrelation issue had been solved. Based on the results of the first model, this model can be interpreted. It is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), but the significance of the individual parameters differs: FAC1_1 is statistically insignificant ($p = 0.966$), while lagged youth unemployment is statistically significant ($p = 0.003$) (see Table 3). Therefore, the overall model can be interpreted as a whole and not only the lagged dependent variable separately.

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For the second model, the regression analysis began with an outlier detection. None were found. Only data with normal distribution may be utilized in multiple linear regression models. In this situation, the P-P test showed that they are regularly distributed. When checking for multicollinearity in the model, the value is less than |0.8| between all pairs of independent variables. The next step is to check for autocorrelation. Based on the results of the Durbin-Watson (DW) d test in the second model (see Formula 2), d = 0.779, dL = 1.198, and dU = 1.650. Since d < dL, there is possible evidence of positive autocorrelation, indicating the model's errors are associated. As a result, a lagged dependent variable was used in a regression model (autoregression), and the Durbin h statistic was computed. The results indicated that the autocorrelation issue had been resolved. Based on the results of the second model, this model can be interpreted. It is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), but the significance of the individual parameters differs: education and urbanization are statistically insignificant ($p = 0.095$ and $p = 0.926$, respectively), while lagged youth unemployment and average annual wages are statistically significant ($p = 0.001$ and $p = 0.005$, respectively) (see Table 3). Therefore, the overall model can be interpreted as a whole and not only the lagged dependent variable separately.

Table 3. Results of the Regression Models

Variable	Coefficient	t-statistic	p-value (p)
Model 1 (South Korea):			
Constant	0.373	2.606	0.015
Overall socioeconomic impact (FAC_{1_1})	0.038	0.043	0.966
Youth unemployment (lagged)	0.170	3.247	0.003
Model 2 (Lithuania):			
Constant	169.967	0.634	0.532
Average annual wages	0.000	-3.107	0.005
Education	0.502	-1.740	0.095
Urbanization	2.379	0.094	0.926
Youth unemployment (lagged)	0.990	3.751	0.001

In summary, none of the factors other than the average annual wage in Lithuania have a statistically significant impact on youth unemployment in Lithuania and South Korea. After testing the models, it can be concluded that only one hypothesis for Lithuania can be confirmed: the lower the average annual salary, the higher the unemployment among young people. All other others cannot be confirmed. Due to the fact that all selected variables for the study are statistically insignificant in the regression model.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Unemployment among young people aged 15 and above is a serious problem in Lithuania and South Korea. In Lithuania, this is due to the fact that a large proportion of young people work in the informal sector due to high competition. Youth unemployment shows the gap between the demands of the labor market and the skills that young people have. Whereas the problem of youth unemployment in South Korea is due to the large number of NEETs due to social and cultural factors that make it difficult for young people to find employment. Furthermore, young individuals seeking employment sometimes have to compete with their classmates and older, more experienced workers, which makes it harder for them to get jobs.

The empirical research showed that when income rises in South Korea, the probability of individuals remaining in the same work increases, shown by a decline in youth unemployment. While in Lithuania, the level of wages directly affects unemployment among young people, with the lower the average annual salary, the higher the unemployment among young people.

To reduce the level of unemployment among young people, both countries have implemented several initiatives, such as the Youth Guarantee Initiative in Lithuania and targeted employment programs in South Korea. For these programs to be effective in today's labor market realities and successfully bridge the gap between young people's abilities and business needs, they need to be continually adapted due to rapidly changing labor market demands. A full understanding of these processes can help policymakers make more informed decisions and create more employment opportunities for young people in both countries.

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