

# PERSONALITY EMPLOYMENT CRISIS IN THE SUBJECTIVE PROJECTION OF THE UNEMPLOYED YOUTH WITH HIGHER EDUCATION

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## Abstract

*The main purpose of this research is to examine the employment crisis among the unemployed youth with higher education. In particular, the research investigates the subjective experience of the youth representatives (n = 188) in the situation of job loss or inability to find it. For this purpose, the research uses the method of ranking social and psychological spheres of the youth by the criterion of frustration in the situation of job loss or inability to find it, as well as the method of multidimensional scaling to determine cognitive constructs used by the youth in interpreting individual situations of professional exclusion or unclaimed labor.*

*According to the results of ranking social and psychological spheres of life of the unemployed youth with higher education, such social spheres of life as “inability to use the profession” and “difficult financial situation” are most frustrated in the situation of job loss or inability to find it. The research also found that such psychological spheres of the youth as “uncertainty in the future” and “feelings of dependence on external circumstances” are most frustrated in the situation of professional exclusion or unclaimed labor. The scaling of social and psychological spheres of life of the unemployed youth with higher education allowed empirical explanation of cognitive constructs as a system of latent categories of the subjective experience, which determines the character of experiencing a personal employment crisis. These categories include “social assessment”, “professional identification”, “self-doubt – dependence on others “lack of perspective – feeling of inferiority”.*

*The results of the research allowed reconstructing the latent categories of the subjective experience of the unemployed youth with higher education who are experiencing a personal employment crisis in a situation of professional exclusion or unclaimed labor, which provides more favorable conditions for optimizing the process of psychological support and assistance to the unemployed youth taking into account the specifics of the subjective and psychological profile of their personality.*

**Keywords:** *youth, professional exclusion, unclaimed labor, personality employment crisis, cognitive constructs*

## Introduction

The structural transformation of the employment market is characterized by a high degree of dynamism and contradiction, which, in the realities of the pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2, is manifested in trends of uncertainty, unpredictability and crisis of its development (Raimo et al., 2021). Total restrictive measures imposed in recent months by most countries have had a very negative impact on the operation of all labor market subjects, sometimes causing a crisis of a more global, psychological nature – the loss of a sense of certainty and transparency about their own future, deprivation of basic needs, professional and social marginalization, and loss of the meaning in life (Trógolo et al., 2022). There are also problems concerning the employment crisis that arose in previous periods. For example, there are issues related to the employment

of non-manual employees comparing to manual workers who are more advantageous for short-term employment, even though they are at risk, because the employer spends less (costs associated with special training, sick pay, etc.) (White, 1991; Goldthorpe, 2007). It can be stated that in the new life circumstances, the majority of the working population is acutely frustrated by such a defining personality need as employment. Therefore, the situation in the modern employment market requires from psychologists to conceptualize and empirically analyze a specific class of phenomena in the structure of the personality life path, which are due to the inclusion in the dynamic and contradictory relations of employment (Giorgi et al., 2015).

The most obvious manifestation of the employment crisis is unemployment, which in the conditions of permanent social and economic deprivation accumulates both possible opportunities for the development of the adaptive potential of the individual and the most dangerous risks to its holistic and full functioning. Accompanied, as a rule, by the loss of social status, material wealth, the usual circle of communication, unemployment has become for many today a source of acute crisis. This crisis is also accompanied by the loss of life of loved ones due to COVID-19 (Blustein et al., 2020).

The predicted change in risks at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century did not reduce unemployment (Beck, 1999), but increased it (Breen, 1997; Kalleberg & Von Wachter, 2017). Today we can reasonably categorize the situation of radical restructuring, disruption, deformation, destruction or loss of significant ties and relationships of the individual with the institution of employment as a special kind of life crisis – personality employment crisis. Particularly specific is the employment crisis associated with the professional exclusion (unemployment) or underemployment of the youth, which requires a special approach in explaining the relevant negative social and psychological effects.

It should be noted that the conceptualization of crisis phenomenology in the field of employment relations has a rich theoretical and empirical experience of development. The most relevant for this research are the works (Darity, 1993; Dooley et al., 1991; Feather, 1992; Fryer, 1992; Graversen & van Ours, 2008; Hanisch, 1999; Jahoda, 1981; Kanfer, 2001; Liem & Liem 1990; Saks, 1999; Warr, 1984; Winefield, 1992).

In terms of analyzing the characteristics of the unemployed youth employment crisis, an interesting pattern is illustrated by the results of the current research: in contrast to the adult unemployed, the unemployed university graduates have significantly higher rates of thoughtful job search and lower rates of chaotic search. It can be explained by the fact that many of them are not yet responsible for their own families and are calmer about their life situation and finding a way out of it.

An important factor to consider when studying the experience of the unemployed youth personal crisis of employment is the crisis of professional identity of students, which takes place in the domestic higher education system (Varban, 1999). It is expressed in certain ways of adapting students to educational and professional activities, in increased anxiety and self-doubt.

A number of researchers point to three main personality variables that affect job search and employment status of university graduates and are indirectly related to the employment crisis: a feeling of control over possible job search results, self-efficacy in job search and overall self-esteem (Saks, 1999). The research proved that the personal parameter “self-efficacy” is the most predictive factor of the employment status of graduates at the time of graduation.

Studying the ways to overcome the employment crisis, a number of researchers point out that resuming employment and finding a first job are different processes due to the age differences, life experience and other factors (Barber et al., 1994). To describe the dynamics of job search by graduates, the authors used three models: sequential (transition from extensive to intensive search), learning (changes in search mode due to personal experience and observing other people’s successes) and emotional (changes related to frustration and accumulation of stress from failures). All three models were tested on samples of university and vocational

school graduates. According to the research, the sequential model has the greatest prognostic potential: if a student fails to find a job by the time of graduating and remains unemployed for several months, he/she returns to the extensive search.

The study of the career development of university graduates found that six months after graduation, the psychosocial stress of the employed graduates was higher than that of the unemployed graduates (Chen & Zeng, 2021).

The works of European researchers convincingly proved that the low-skilled adolescents and youth belong to the so-called risk group, which is likely to join the category of the unemployed and unclaimed labor (Caliendo & Schmidl, 2016).

Despite the high effectiveness of the research efforts, there have been no attempts to conceptualize this problem through the prism of analyzing the patterns of cognitive-sense determination of the experience of the employment crisis among the unemployed. Moreover, despite the representative theoretical and empirical experience of studying the problem of employment crisis of the individual, in fact, there is no research on the study of the peculiarities of its experience by the youth.

Recent trends in the employment market emphasize the increase in the share of the unemployed (European Dara Portal, 2020). The specificity of the youth employment resource, which has the optimum of physical energy, the desire for rapid self-realization, self-affirmation, self-determination in life, is that the youth at the same time (due to lack of sufficient labor, professional and social experience) are one of the most vulnerable social strata and, as a result, less competitive. Diversity and uncertainty of social and professional choice, low starting opportunities for labor and professional mobility, and the unguaranteed nature of employment determine the need for fundamentally new strategies for the formation and implementation of labor potential of the youth (Ramaci et al., 2021).

The study and solution of such problems requires a special, scientifically grounded approach, methods and techniques that can explore operational analogues of those phenomena and problems that are presented at a deep personal (subjective-psychological) level and cannot always be explained and represented by means of traditional psycho-diagnostic tools (Pelekh & Kukla, 2019). In fact, the empirical explication and “reconstruction” of latent categories of the subjective experience of the unemployed are of interest to many practical psychologists, because it allows providing more favorable conditions for optimizing the process of psychological assistance to the unemployed taking into account the specifics of their subjective psychological personality profile (Proudfoot et al., 1999).

This approach found a clear concretization in the empirical study of cognitive-sense constructs of the unemployed youth, through the prism of which it is possible to deeply “reconstruct” the subjective phenomenological representation of their crisis experiences. Moreover, the possibility of empirical fixation of individual (subjective-psychological) forms of personal transformation during the employment crisis, especially in a situation of professional exclusion (unemployment), provides a basis for a more thorough study and understanding of psychological conditions and patterns of constructive overcoming its negative effects and consequences.

### *Problem Statement*

The problem of this research is determined primarily by the fact that not every representative of the unemployed or professionally unclaimed youth with higher education has an internal psychological resource to overcome the negative psychological effects and consequences of losing a job or inability to find it. Under certain unfavorable conditions or negative circumstances of life, it can provoke an acute crisis condition, up to the manifestation of a personality employment crisis. In such a situation, a youth representative needs qualified

psychological assistance from a specialist who may provide favorable conditions for the development of internal psychological resources of constructive experience and overcoming crises in a situation of job loss or inability to find it. Obviously, the effectiveness of such psychological care depends on the understanding by psychologists-practitioners of the content of crisis of the unemployed youth with higher education, the specifics of cognitive components of the subjective projection of professional exclusion or unclaimed labor.

This research solves the problem of empirical explication and reconstruction of latent categories of the subjective experience of the unemployed youth with higher education – cognitive assessments and cognitive constructs that the youth consciously or unconsciously use in interpreting an individual situation of job loss or inability to find it. The results of this research can be used by psychologists to optimize the process of psychological assistance to the unemployed youth with higher education, taking into account the specifics of the subjective psychological profile of the personality.

### *Research Focus*

The purpose of this research is to study the cognitive and sense components of experiencing a personal employment crisis among the unemployed youth with higher education.

The main tasks solved in this research include:

- 1) The study of cognitive assessments of the individual situation of professional exclusion and unclaimed labor among the unemployed youth with higher education.
- 2) The study of cognitive-sense constructs of the unemployed youth with higher education.

## **Research Methodology**

### *General Background*

In order to carry out an empirical study of the problem and taking into account the identified objectives, two research lines were identified. The *first research line* examined such empirical correlates of experiencing a personal crisis of employment by the unemployed youth as cognitive assessments of their individual situation of occupational exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor. At the pilot stage of the implementation of the first research line, a representative randomized sample of 50 unemployed youth representatives from among the participants in the empirical study was formed. They were asked to analyze the individual situation of professional exclusion or unclaimed labor and describe those areas (factors) of life that were most frustrated by the loss of work or inability to find it. The research made an expert assessment of the responses of the unemployed youth with higher education and identified a number of areas of life that caused the greatest degree of frustration due to the loss of employment or inability to restore it. As a result, a list of spheres of life was identified (which were most often found in the answers), which meaningfully reflects the two levels of frustration of the unemployed youth with higher education – social and psychological.

At the final stage of the first research line, all participants were asked to rank a separate list of social and psychological factors according to the criterion of the greatest frustration due to the loss of employment or inability to restore it. Thus, the results of the implementation of the first research line revealed the most frustrated due to the professional exclusion and unclaimed labor social and psychological spheres of life of the unemployed youth with higher education.

The *second research line* provided the definition of cognitive-sense constructs of the unemployed youth as latent categories of their subjective experience, which determine the content and modality of experiencing a personal employment crisis. The study of cognitive and

sense constructs of the unemployed youth, which determine the way of experiencing a personal employment crisis, was conducted on the basis of ranking social and psychological factors of life, frustrated by the loss of employment or inability to restore it. As a result, two matrices of the results of ranking the social and psychological factors of life of the unemployed youth were analyzed using the method of multidimensional scaling (Nasledov, 2004).

### *Research Sample*

The empirical study, which was conducted from the end of 2019 to the middle of 2020, involved 188 unemployed youth representatives with higher education. The number of respondents who made up the research sample was determined by the number of the unemployed youth representatives with higher education who were officially registered as unemployed at that time in a specialized state center for retraining the unemployed – Rivne City Employment Center (Rivne, Ukraine). The distribution of the main socio-demographic and occupational characteristics of the unemployed youth with higher education is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Socio-demographic and Professional Characteristics of the Unemployed Youth with Higher Education*

Gender	Female – 120, male – 68
Age	Aged 20-24 – 58, aged 25-29 – 89, aged 30-35 – 41
Family status	Unmarried – 73, married – 88, divorced – 27
Education sphere	Humanities – 97, technical – 58, natural sciences – 33

When characterizing the sample as a whole, it should be noted that the research involved three categories of the unemployed youth with higher education:

1) youth representatives who, after graduating from higher education institutions, due to objective reasons (for example, lack of vacancies in the specialty) cannot get a job in the specialty (47 people);

2) youth representatives with higher education who worked for some time (professional experience for this group does not exceed 4 years) in public and private sector enterprises and due to objective reasons found themselves unemployed (liquidation or restructuring of the enterprise, reduction of staff) (89 people);

3) youth representatives with higher education who, after working for some time (professional experience for this group does not exceed 3 years) at public and private sector enterprises, on their own initiative decided to change their profession through the state system of retraining (52 people).

Common for these categories of the unemployed youth with higher education is the fact that they are experiencing a personal employment crisis, but the modality of such experiences among different categories has different features due to the cause of retraining (forced or voluntary).

### *Instruments and Procedure*

The list of the most frustrated social spheres of life among the unemployed youth due to occupational exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor included “*inability to use the profession*”, “*difficult financial situation*”, “*reduction and loss of social contacts*”, “*deterioration of family relations*”, “*change of attitude on the part of others*”, “*loss of social status*”. The most frustrated psychological areas of life of the unemployed in a situation of loss or absence of job were “*uncertainty in the future*”, “*bad mood, depression*”, “*feeling of helplessness*”, “*feeling of inferiority*”, “*insecurity, inability to present oneself*”, “*feeling of dependence on external circumstances*”.

The main task of the first line of the research – the study of cognitive assessments of the individual situation of professional exclusion and unemployment among the unemployed youth with higher education – was solved using a formalized questionnaire “Study of the intensity of emotional experiences and cognitive assessments among the unemployed” (Rudiuk, 2011). According to the results of the pilot stage of the first research line, a list of factors (spheres) of life was identified, which meaningfully reflects two levels of frustration of the unemployed youth with higher education due to the loss of employment or inability to restore it – social and psychological.

The list of the most frustrated social spheres of life of the unemployed youth includes “*inability to use the profession*”, “*difficult financial situation*”, “*reduction and loss of social contacts*”, “*deterioration of family relations*”, “*change of attitude on the part of others*”, “*loss of social status*”. The most frustrated psychological areas of life of the unemployed youth with higher education include “*uncertainty in the future*”, “*bad mood, depression*”, “*feeling of helplessness*”, “*feeling of inferiority*”, “*insecurity, inability to present oneself*”, “*feeling of dependence on external circumstances*”.

At the final stage of the first research line, all participants (n = 188) ranked a separate list of social and psychological spheres of life according to the criterion of the greatest frustration due to the loss of employment or inability to restore it. The first rank was assigned to the most frustrated sphere of life from each list of factors, the last rank to the least frustrated sphere. The participants’ assessment of social and psychological spheres of life according to the criterion of frustration due to the loss of employment or inability to restore it was conducted using an ordinal scale. The first rank was assigned to the most frustrated sphere of life from each list, and the last rank to the least frustrated sphere.

The main task in the implementation of the second research line of research – the explication of the subjective scales-criteria, or cognitive-sense constructs that are consciously or unconsciously used by the unemployed youth with higher education in interpreting the individual situation of professional exclusion or disability – was solved by scaling two matrices of ranking social and psychological spheres of life of the unemployed youth with higher education, obtained within the first research line. The multidimensional scaling method was used for this purpose (Nasledov, 2004).

### *Data Analysis*

To determine the degree of consistency in the ranking of social and psychological spheres of life by the unemployed youth, the Kendall’s W Test concordance coefficient was used, which is defined as the ratio of the real distribution of ranks to the ideal – when the ranks of all participants coincide (Nasledov, 2004). In this research, the high value of the concordance coefficient ( $p \leq .05$ ) indicates a high degree of coordination of the attitudes of the unemployed youth with higher education in relation to the most frustrated social and psychological spheres of their lives due to the loss of employment or inability to restore it.

Determination of cognitive-sense constructs used by the unemployed youth in the interpretation of the individual situation of occupational exclusion (unemployment) or unclaimed labor was carried out using the method of multidimensional scaling (Nasledov, 2004). The initial empirical basis for multidimensional scaling were the results of ranking the most frustrated areas of life of the unemployed. The main task of multidimensional scaling is the “reconstruction” of the psychological space of the subjects of choice, given by a small number of subjective scales. Each scale of the resulting space is interpreted through objects at opposite poles of the scale. For the analysis, this research used the model of subjective preferences (Euclidean distance model), in which the initial data are the results of ordering by each subject from the group of incentive sets according to the criterion of preference. This model allows obtaining a group psychological space of stimuli in the axes of essential signs-criteria. The procedures for calculating the Kendall concordance coefficient and multidimensional scaling were implemented using the SPSS 19.0 computer software package.

## Research Results

The study of cognitive assessments of the individual situation of professional exclusion revealed some trends important for understanding the subjective patterns of the employment crisis among the unemployed youth, thus providing a basis for the explication of its cognitive-sense constructs.

If to analyze the percentage of the unemployed in relation to frustrated social factors of life due to occupational exclusion and unclaimed labor, it becomes obvious that the inability to implement the acquired professional knowledge and skills is the most frustrated social sphere of life that worries the youth, because 38.2% of all the unemployed put it on the first rank (see Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Frustrated Social Factors of Life of the Unemployed (in % of the total number of respondents for each rank)*

Content of the social factor	Ranks of social factors					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Inability to use the profession	38.2	32.5	17.2	12.1	–	–
Difficult financial situation	26.8	26.4	33.6	13.2	–	–
Reduction and loss of social contacts	–	–	–	17.2	44.3	38.5
Deterioration of family relations	14.7	23.9	31.2	12.9	7.2	10.1
Change of attitude on the part of others	–	–	–	10.1	44.3	45.7
Loss of social status	20.4	17.2	17.8	34.6	4.3	5.7

If to take into account the aggregate indicator of the factor “*inability to use the profession*” in the first two ranks, the vast majority of the unemployed youth (70.7%) gave priority to it. This testifies to the content determinism of the processes of professional identification among the majority of the youth and, as a consequence, the subjective significance of possible professional disqualification due to occupational exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor. It can be

argued that the experiences associated with the inability to use education and skills are among the specific effects of unemployment.

Financial difficulties, which are naturally and logically related to unemployment, are relevant for 53.2% (in the sum of the first two ranks) of the unemployed youth. Being of the factor “*difficult financial situation*” among the first places is natural. For the unemployed, this is the main source of fears and anxieties, because material deprivation changes the usual way of life, the content of goals and aspirations, forms a different culture of consumption, and makes people more anxious, irritable, emotionally unstable. Material deprivation can be classified as a generalized, nonspecific effect of unemployment.

Taking into account that the youth, acting as a specific social stratum with extremely dynamic social needs and limited resources for their implementation, seek to realize their personal and professional potential in the situation of prevailing values of material prosperity and financial well-being, it is logical and natural to have a high level of frustration in a situation of occupational exclusion (unemployment) or unclaimed labor.

Social life factors associated with feelings of change or loss of status (“*loss of social status*”) and changes in the role structure of the family, distortion of the sustainable balance of the family hierarchy, deterioration of the family microclimate (“*deterioration of family relations*”) are singled out as the most frustrating, respectively, 37.6% and 38.6% of the unemployed youth (the sum of the first two ranks).

It is natural that employment, being an independent value for a person, indirectly ensures the safety of many other value components of life. In the case of its deprivation, there is a violation not only of financial, material, social and professional, but also of interpersonal, social-target, social-identification, and social-motivational ties of the individual (Purc & Laguna, 2019). In this case, it can be stated that the interference of the above factors creates in the individual psychological projection of the unemployed youth background of permanent emotional stress, which manifests itself in the form of an acute crisis.

Accordingly, the decline in social communication (“*reduction and loss of social contacts*”) (82.8% of the unemployed youth by the sum of the last two ranks) and the deterioration of attitudes from the part of others (“*change of attitude on the part others*”) (90% of the unemployed youth by the sum of the last two ranks) are not particularly frustrated among the unemployed youth. The relatively low level of frustration of these social spheres of life among the unemployed can be explained by an extensive social network, a more flexible system of social compensation mechanisms, lack of strict determination by the professional environment, and age norms and social moratorium that require from the youth less personal responsibility.

Thus, in general, the ranking of the most frustrated social spheres (factors) of the unemployed youth in a situation of occupational exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor allowed to obtain logical and consistent results that fully represent the system of their most pressing social needs that do not find adequate realization.

The assessment of the level of psychological frustration of the unemployed youth is reflected in the results of ranking the most frustrated psychological factors of life in a situation of the occupational exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor. The results of ranking the most frustrated psychological factors of life among the unemployed are indicative in terms of understanding the most pressing psychological needs and the consequences of the impossibility of their implementation by the youth who find themselves in a situation of losing professional employment (see Table 3).



**Table 3**  
*Frustrated Psychological Factors of Life of the Unemployed*

Content of the psychological factor	Ranks of psychological factors					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Uncertainty in the future	44.0	22.4	29.3	4.3	–	–
Bad mood, depression	5.7	17.2	4.6	56.6	10.1	5.7
Feeling of helplessness	–	–	–	10.1	61.7	28.2
Feeling of inferiority	–	–	–	5.7	29.6	64.7
Insecurity, inability to present oneself	11.8	29.6	46.8	11.8	–	–
Feeling of dependence on external circumstances	38.5	30.7	19.3	11.5	–	–

*Note:* (in % of the total number of respondents for each rank)

The tabular data allow stating that the most frustrated factors are “*feeling of dependence on external circumstances*” (69.2% of the unemployed youth by the sum of the first two ranks) and “*uncertainty in the future*” (66.4% of the unemployed youth by the sum of the first two ranks).

These results can be quite logically explained using the theory of M. Jahoda (Jahoda, 1981). It identifies five latent functions of employment, which are clearly manifested in a situation of job loss or inability to find it. 1) Due to its regularity and a certain time schedule, a job structures the daily life of a person, makes it orderly, and fits it into the rhythms of wider social communities. 2) Employment involves regular interaction with colleagues and other people, which creates the preconditions for establishing professional and friendly contacts, expanding the social horizon of a person. Interaction with colleagues not only expands the experience of communication, but also acts as a shock absorber of many problems that arise in professional activities and beyond. 3) Job is a means of involving a person in collective goals, as it not only forms the content of individual labor goals, but also connects them with the goals of other people and organizations. It makes human work meaningful and maintains a person’s sense of general competence. 4) Employment shapes a person’s social status, as it is associated with the performance of certain roles in certain positions in the social structure of the society. On the one hand, it affects the formation of personal identity and self-esteem, and on the other hand, affects the social status of other family members and the family as a whole. 5) Employment encourages regular activity, thus maintaining a high level of vitality.

The results of this research allow supplementing the list of these latent functions with at least two more. On the one hand, the integration of a person into the field of employment allows not only to ensure transparency and certainty of professional prospects, but also to maintain a sense of confidence in the future in general, on the other – employment as the main means, prerequisite ability to meet the most fundamental personal (social and psychological) needs, forms a person’s sense of confidence and independence from external circumstances and other people. It is logical that their deprivation in a situation of professional exclusion (unemployment) or unclaimed labor cause psychological effects, which are recorded in this study. However, there is a possibility that these functions are specific only to the stratum of the unemployed youth.

According to the results of the research, the least pronounced are the psychological factors “*feeling of helplessness*” (89.9% of the unemployed youth in the sum of the last two ranks) and “*feeling of inferiority*” (94.3% of the unemployed youth in the sum of the last two ranks). This confirms the fact that the youth have the optimal adaptive resource that can provide a high level of social and personal identity and personal integration in the situation of unemployment. In this case, the lack of a passive strategy for the youth to respond to the situation of possible professional disqualification may be due to the age characteristics of the unemployed in general and the specifics of the sample in particular.

Determining of the degree of consistency of the positions of the unemployed youth in relation to their most frustrated social and psychological spheres of life confirmed the validity of the results of this stage of the empirical study. The concordance coefficients calculated separately for the ranked list of social ( $W=0.98$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and psychological ( $W=0.710$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) spheres of life of the unemployed youth give grounds to assert the authentic nature of the differences of their average ranks, and thus – a high degree of consistency of their positions in relation to the most frustrated social and psychological factors of life in a situation of occupational exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor (see Table 4).

**Table 4**  
*Ranks of the Most Frustrated Social and Psychological Factors of Life of the Unemployed*

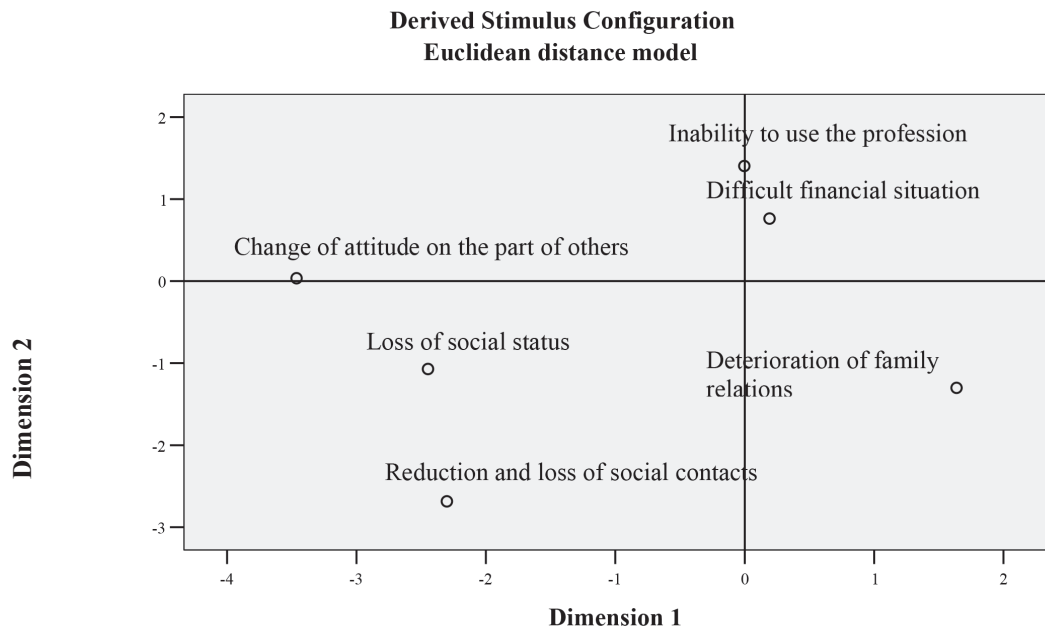
	Life factors of the unemployed											
	Social						Psychological					
Inability to use the profession	2.08	2.29	5.22	2.85	5.37	3.19	1.95	3.64	5.15	5.59	2.61	2.05
Difficult financial situation												
Reduction and loss of social contacts												
Deterioration of family relations												
Change of attitude on the part of others												
Loss of social status												
Uncertainty in the future												
Bad mood, depression												
Feeling of helplessness												
Feeling of inferiority												
Insecurity, inability to present oneself												
Feeling of dependence on external circumstances												
Average rank	2.08	2.29	5.22	2.85	5.37	3.19	1.95	3.64	5.15	5.59	2.61	2.05

The result of the next stage of the research is the explication of cognitive-sense constructs of the unemployed, which underlie the processes of their subjective-sense interpretation of the individual situation of professional exclusion or unclaimed labor and determine the content of the employment crisis.

Based on the application of appropriate statistical procedures, the research obtained optimal two-scale solution for two groups of indicators: the most frustrated social and psychological spheres of life of the unemployed. It should be noted that in this research such a differentiation of the spheres of life of the unemployed into social and psychological is conditional, because in reality, they are elements of their holistic subjective space, but in terms of empirical development of the problem, this differentiation is very important. Let us move on to the interpretation of the content of certain cognitive-sense constructs of the unemployed youth.

The model of subjective preferences concerning the most frustrated social factors for the unemployed allowed obtaining a group space of incentives in the axes of essential criteria (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
*Object Configuration Chart of Social Factors for the Unemployed*



The results of scaling the social factors of the unemployed allow an unambiguous interpretation of the group criteria of preferences by the coordinates of the objects. The first scale is represented by two pole factors: “*change of attitude on the part of others*” and “*deterioration of family relations*”. In our opinion, it reflects the effects of social response and public assessment of the fact of professional exclusion and unclaimed labor in the minds of the unemployed youth. Such a response among the immediate environment of the unemployed (family) and in the public consciousness (society) gives grounds to single out the cognitive-sense construct of “*social evaluation*” and interpret it as a predictor of the content of experiencing a personal employment crisis among the unemployed youth.

The second scale is represented by two pole factors: “inability to use the profession” and “reduction and loss of social contacts”. Unlike the criteria presented by the first scale, which are external in nature, the criteria underlying the second scale are internally determined, as they are the basic elements of the process of professional identification of the unemployed youth. The high level of professional identification (80.7% of the total number of the unemployed youth), the chosen profession and the specialty obtained during training were so deeply integrated into the professional self-consciousness of the youth that the devaluation of professional status due to professional exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor were for them a loss. Realization and development of professional potential are possible only under the condition of active integration and inclusion of the youth in the system of labor and professional relations, which is impossible outside the professional space. Therefore, the pole factor “*reduction and loss of social contacts*” illustrates the frustration of professional contacts as a form of social contacts and as a necessary mechanism for the formation of professional identity. This gives grounds to single out another cognitive-sense construct of the unemployed – “*professional*”

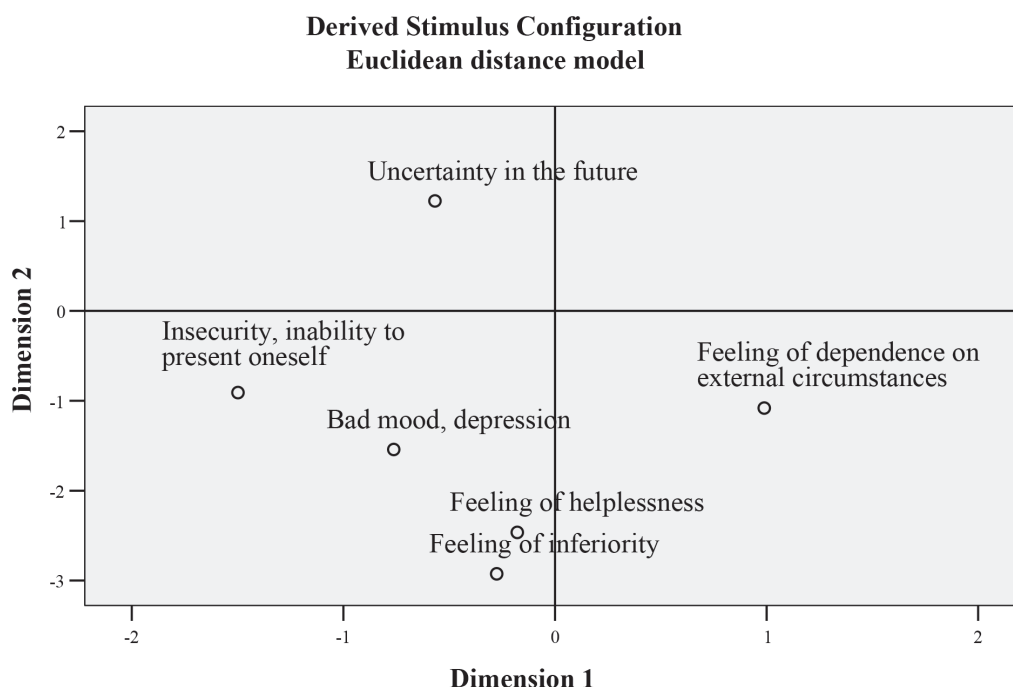
*identification*”, which underlies the pattern of their subjective reactions to the situation of professional exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor and largely determines the resulting effect of experiencing a personal employment crisis.

Interpretation of the results of scaling the psychological factors of the unemployed youth, although not particularly difficult in our case, is not an easy task, because in real life, it is very difficult to distinguish between “pure” and derived psychological effects of professional exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor.

The model of subjective preferences for the most frustrated psychological factors of life of the unemployed youth also allowed obtaining a group space of incentives in the axes of essential criteria (see Figure 2).

## Figure 2

Object Configuration Chart of Psychological Factors for the Unemployed



The first scale is represented by two pole factors: “*insecurity, inability to present oneself*” and “*feeling of dependence on external circumstances*”. The logic of explaining this result lies, in our opinion, in the age and personality characteristics of the unemployed. The factor of age and, accordingly, current experience is an important prognostic factor that determines the strategy of responding to the situation of professional exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor among the unemployed youth.

In this case, the age specifics and experience of professional development of the youth can be a source of effects that, on the one hand, acts as facilitators of an active (effective) strategy to respond to a critical event, and on the other hand, its inhibitors. An inhibitor of the effective response to the situation of professional exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor is the high stress potential of the unemployed against the background of the youth’s lack of experience in solving related psychological problems (“*insecurity, inability to present oneself*”).

On the other hand, most of the youth undergoing retraining in a specialized employment center are characterized by a pronounced internal locus of control. Expressed internal attributions of the unemployed youth inhibit the actualization of active behavioral adaptation strategies (independent job search, active involvement of social resources to restore employment, etc.) and facilitate emotionally focused strategies to overcome the employment crisis via the activation of meaningful sense-transforming processes in their subjective experience. To some extent, this can exacerbate the youth's feelings of dependence on circumstances and other people (*"feeling of dependence on external circumstances"*).

A possible explanation for the obtained results may be that the situation of professional exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor actualizes in the unemployed youth paternalistic strategy of behavior, the rudimentary remnants of which were internalized from parents (family) and in the minds of the younger generation show some inertia. In any case, a more thorough study of this issue may be the subject of separate research.

Taking into the account the above, the selected cognitive-sense construct can be called **"self-doubt – dependence on others"**.

The poles of the second scale were psychological factors *"uncertainty in the future"* and *"feeling of inferiority"*. This has a natural explanation, because the prospect of life self-realization of the youth is closely correlated with the possibility of professional and labor self-realization, which acts as a kind of standard, a measure of life success. Frustration of opportunities in the realization of professional prospects radiates to a broader plane of life self-realization. The lack of perspective in assessing one's own future (professional and, more broadly, life in general) due to the pronounced maximalist characteristic of this age stratum becomes especially acute in the experiences of the youth leading to the feeling of inferiority. Although ranking of psychological factors indicates opposite trends (the factor of *"feeling of inferiority"* was the least frustrated for the unemployed youth), it should be interpreted as the result of the use of psychological protection mechanisms by the unemployed.

Taking into the account the above, the selected cognitive-sense construct can be called **"absence of life prospects – experiencing the feeling of inferiority"**.

If we compare the explicit cognitive-sense constructs with each other, it can be seen that when scaling the frustrated psychological factors of life of the unemployed youth, they are formed by dichotomy factors "cause-effect". This may indicate a high probability of the existence of causal relationships between the selected psychological pole factors. For a more thorough examination and clarification of this assumption, it is appropriate to conduct additional research.

## Discussion

The well-established tradition of studying crises determined by a complex set of factors relevant to the phenomena of professional exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor often appeals to the idea that crisis experiences of job loss or inability to find it arise due to the frustration of basic social and psychological needs of an individual. The source of satisfaction of such needs is individual's professional employment (Kalleberg & Von Wachter, 2017; Blustein et al., 2020).

The research strategy implemented in the empirical study was also based on the idea of cognitive-sense determination of experiencing an employment crisis by the unemployed youth. This research presents only a small part of the possible directions and approaches to studying the problem of the employment crisis of an individual, demonstrating its relevance and exceptional importance not only in terms of fundamental but also practical and applied analysis.

It is obvious that the processes and effects of structural transformation of the domestic sphere of employment require special study and analysis because they cause radical

restructuring, disruption, deformation, destruction or even loss of significant ties and relations of the individual with the institution of employment and may lead to the loss of integrity and autonomy. Often, the inertia of individual behavior (due to the ideas and experiences gained in the previous social reality) causes a crisis because of the lost ability to be adequate to new social circumstances. The latter is true for the youth part of the working population, which today is the least “protected” by state guarantees of employment and has found itself face to face with new challenges of the “pandemic” reality.

It should be noted that the crisis employment market as a subject of psychological analysis has long been on the periphery of scientific interest in domestic psychology, and its systematic study in modern theoretical and empirical research is uneven and fragmented. This can be explained by several reasons.

First, it is the natural delay in the theoretical understanding of changes in employment in our society. Second, it is the lack of psychological generalizations of the processes that take place in the field of employment and in the domestic labor market. Third, it is the lack of relevant research traditions and, consequently, the lack of conceptual tools by which psychologists could allocate the crisis employment market into an independent field of study. Fourth, *which requires a separate study and some scientific conclusions*, it is the impact of force majeure on the functioning of the labor market (COVID-19 and related unknown detrimental effects, such as unforeseen job losses, accompanied by psychological crises: loss of loved ones, mental cases, and depression of various levels of complexity, including suicidal states) (Blustein et al., 2020). Due to this conceptual deficit, a number of phenomena relevant to the situations of professional exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor among the youth, being empirically obvious, are still insufficiently understood theoretically. The most productive way out of this situation is to find, construct and operationalize new concepts that in the context of current trends in the employment market will be able to describe and explain those phenomena (e.g., personal employment crises, individual strategies to restore employment). These phenomena cannot be psychologically “reconstructed” by means of traditional conceptual schemes, which are valid mainly for the description of functional or individual styles of activity of a person limited by one profession. These concepts are able to “place” an individual in economic and living space broader than a specific job. It is not a coincidence that in recent years the concepts of “career”, “labor mobility”, “labor consciousness”, “professional life path”, etc. have been assimilated into the conceptual and categorical apparatus of psychology (Kobus, 2017; Demin, 2004; Uusiautti & Määttä, 2015). Another reason for that is the neglect of interdisciplinary contacts and generalizations. It is difficult to study the field of employment and the psychology of the unemployed not based on economic or sociological concepts and models. These problems are complex and cannot be solved solely by psychological means, especially when it comes to macroeconomic phenomena – unemployment, poverty, etc., the determination and consequences of which lie not only in the field of individual experiences and interpersonal relationships. There is a need for a theory that could take into account the development of careers in addition to personal characteristics and social and economic factors. Today, interdisciplinarity is an attributive quality of psychological knowledge (Fabian, 2021). The history of foreign research in the field of employment well confirms this thesis and demonstrates the importance for psychology of such concepts as “employment institution”, “material deprivation”, “social functioning of an individual”, etc., as well as the importance of psychological concepts “self-esteem”, “motivation”, “attribution style” for economic analysis. The fifth reason is the emphasis of the academic attention on the problems of self-realization and personal development as a consequence of the general humanistic pathos of domestic psychology, especially relevant in the last twenty years of its development. Psychologists have focused their attention on the possibilities of personal development, without attaching much importance to its limitations (including in the field of employment). Taking into account recent publications on this issue,

some progress can be stated – gradually the vector of research priorities of the academic (psychological) community shifted to the analysis of personal correlates of behavior regulation in critical life situations (including those related to unemployment) (Ajzen, 2012; Chen & Lim, 2012; Brynza, 2000; Fernández-Valera et al., 2020; Infurna et al., 2016; Pavlov, 2006).

Thus, new circumstances in the domestic employment market actualize for psychologists the problem of conceptualization and analysis of a specific class of phenomena in the structure of the life path of an individual, which are due to the inclusion in the dynamic and contradictory employment relationship. Primarily, this is a class of phenomena that are determined by the logic of crisis experiences and individual behavior in a situation of impossibility to realize the potential in the field of employment relations, or employment crisis.

### Conclusions and Implications

Today, professional exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor of an individual, being complex social phenomena, are an indicator of the disease of the society as a whole, of the imperfection of many state institutions, including the profession-training education system and its inconsistency with the practical needs. In the absence of a state guarantee of employment, the inertia of the vocational school, the surplus of the specialists of a certain profile, usually inconsistent with the professional needs of society, and the lack of others, the most professionally demanded, the share of the unemployed youth is growing. Profession-training school is slow to respond to the changes in the labor market, resulting in training not professionals but potential unemployed.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that having the optimum physical energy, the desire for rapid self-realization and self-affirmation, the youth, due to lack of necessary professional and social experience, are “superfluous” and uncompetitive in today’s labor market. Therefore, the unemployed youth is a potential risk group (professional marginalization, deviant and delinquent orientation, addictive behavior), and the consequences of professional exclusion should not be underestimated.

It is important to understand that the study and solution of such problems requires a special approach, methods and tools that can describe and explore operational analogues of those phenomena and problems that are presented at a deep personal (subjective-psychological) level and cannot always be explained and represented by means of traditional psycho-diagnostic tools. In fact, such explication and “reconstruction” of latent categories of subjective experience of the unemployed are of particular interest to us, because the study of them will provide more favorable conditions for optimizing the process of psychological support and assistance to the unemployed youth, taking into account the subjective psychological profile of their personality.

This idea was concretized and converted into a research idea, which was to study the features of cognitive-sense determination of the experience of the employment crisis among the unemployed youth. In particular, this research examined the empirical correlates of the experience of the employment crisis by the unemployed youth – cognitive assessments of the individual situation of occupational exclusion (unemployment) and unclaimed labor, as well as cognitive-sense constructs.

The study of cognitive assessments of the individual situation of professional exclusion and unclaimed labor among the unemployed youth showed that they are most acutely frustrated by social (“inability to use the profession”, “difficult financial situation”) and psychological (“uncertainty in the future”, “feeling of dependence on external circumstances”) factors (spheres) of life.

The scaling of the social factors of the unemployed made it possible to single out two cognitive-sense constructs used by the youth in the process of subjective interpretation of the individual situation of professional exclusion – “social assessment” and “professional

identification". Two more cognitive-sense constructs, which underlie the processes of determining the content of the experience of the employment crisis by the unemployed youth, have been made explicit in the process of scaling their most frustrated psychological factors of life – “self-doubt – dependence on others” and “absence of life prospects – experiencing the feeling of inferiority”.

When scaling the most frustrated psychological factors (spheres) of the unemployed youth, it was found that the explicit cognitive-sense constructs are formed by dichotomy factors “cause-effect”, which probably indicates the causal nature of the interdependence between the selected psychological pole factors.

### Declaration of Interest

Authors declare no competing interest.

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