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**INSTITUTIONAL DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYMENT QUALITY:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF UKRAINE AND LITHUANIA¹**

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¹ The article presents the findings of a research project entitled «*Opportunities and Risks of Building a Social State in Ukraine under Conditions of Global Uncertainty*» (State Registration No. 0124U004444), conducted within the framework of bilateral international scientific cooperation with the Republic of Lithuania.

ІНСТИТУЦІЙНІ ДЕТЕРМІНАНТИ ЯКОСТІ ЗАЙНЯТОСТІ: ПОРІВНЯЛЬНИЙ АНАЛІЗ УКРАЇНИ ТА ЛИТВИ

Анотація. У період посткризового відновлення та цифрової трансформації ринку праці питання якості зайнятості набуває особливої значущості. Вона визначає здатність інституційної системи забезпечувати стабільність, соціальний захист і професійну мотивацію. В українському контексті якість зайнятості залишається нерівномірною: значна частина працівників у нестандартних форматах — зокрема фріланс, доглядова та платформна праця — перебуває поза межами правового регулювання. Компенсаторна роль домогосподарств, фрагментарність нормативного поля, слабка цифрова інтеграція та обмежений доступ до соціального діалогу свідчать про недостатню інституційну спроможність. Водночас вплив інституційних механізмів на здатність системи праці адаптуватися до нових форматів зайнятості залишається недостатньо дослідженим. Так само потребує уваги питання ресурсної спроможності домогосподарств як чинника трудової стабільності.

Метою дослідження є ідентифікація ключових інституційних детермінантів якості зайнятості на прикладі України та Литви, оцінка їх ефективності та формулювання рекомендацій для модернізації української політики зайнятості. У межах порівняльного аналізу розглянуто нормативне охоплення, інституційну доступність, цифрову інфраструктуру, механізми соціального діалогу та фінансову стійкість домогосподарств. Особливу увагу приділено нестандартним форматам праці та ролі сім'ї як компенсаторного механізму добробуту. Литовська модель демонструє вищу узгодженість регуляторних інструментів, цифрову інтеграцію та нормативну гнучкість, тоді як українська система потребує оновлення правової бази, розширення охоплення та визнання нових форматів трудової участі.

Запропоновано стратегічні напрями вдосконалення політики зайнятості з урахуванням принципів соціальної якості праці, викликів посткризового розвитку та потреби в інституційній стійкості. Перспективи подальших досліджень охоплюють розробку індикаторів соціальної якості, оцінку компенсаторних механізмів домогосподарств і моделювання впливу інституційної доступності на продуктивність зайнятості.

Ключові слова: якість зайнятості, інституційна узгодженість, соціальний діалог, цифрова інтеграція, фріланс, платформна праця, трудова мотивація, соціальний захист, інституційна доступність, політика зайнятості, соціальна якість праці, посткризове відновлення.

Abstract. In the context of post-crisis recovery and the digital transformation of labor markets, the issue of employment quality has gained renewed analytical relevance. It reflects the institutional system's capacity to ensure stability, protection, and motivation for workers across diverse employment formats. In Ukraine, employment quality remains uneven, particularly for those engaged in non-standard forms such as freelancing, platform-based work, and care labor, which often fall outside the scope of legal regulation. The compensatory role of households, fragmented regulatory frameworks, limited digital integration, and restricted access to social dialogue point to insufficient institutional capacity. Moreover, the mechanisms through which labor systems adapt to emerging employment formats remain underexplored, as does the correlation between household resilience and labor market stability.

This study aims to identify the institutional determinants of employment quality in Ukraine and Lithuania, assess their effectiveness, and formulate recommendations for modernizing

Ukrainian employment policy. The article presents a comparative analysis of regulatory coverage, institutional accessibility, digital infrastructure, mechanisms of social dialogue, and the financial resilience of households. Particular attention is paid to non-standard employment formats and the role of families as informal welfare agents. The Lithuanian model demonstrates higher regulatory coherence, digital integration, and normative flexibility, while the Ukrainian system requires legal renewal, broader coverage, and recognition of emerging labor arrangements.

The findings support a strategic reorientation of employment policy based on the principles of social quality of work, institutional sustainability, and inclusive labor governance. Recommendations include updating the legal framework to reflect European directives on algorithmic management and employment presumption, expanding access to social protection for non-standard workers, and strengthening digital infrastructure within employment services. Further research should focus on developing indicators of social quality, evaluating the effectiveness of household-based welfare mechanisms, and modeling the impact of institutional accessibility on labor productivity in transitional contexts.

Keywords: *employment quality, institutional coherence, social dialogue, digital integration, freelancing, platform work, labor motivation, social protection, institutional accessibility, employment policy, social quality of work, post-crisis recovery.*

JEL codes: J21, J24, J46, J58, O33, I38

Problem Statement. In the post-crisis context of labor market transformation in Ukraine, the issue of employment quality has acquired critical significance. War, population displacement, structural shifts in the economy, and growing household vulnerability underscore the need to reconceptualize employment not as a formal status, but as an indicator of social resilience, institutional support, and human development.

Traditional quantitative indicators-such as employment rates, unemployment levels, and formal contract coverage-fail to reflect the complex realities faced by Ukrainian workers. Particular attention must be paid to the expansion of non-standard employment formats, including temporary, seasonal, hybrid, and platform-based work, which often fall outside legal regulation and fail to guarantee social protection, income stability, or professional development.

Against this backdrop, employment quality emerges as a multidimensional concept encompassing security, stability, skill matching, access to resources, developmental opportunities, and the institutional capacity to sustain these attributes. Comparative analysis with EU countries, particularly Lithuania, offers a basis for adapting effective practices to the Ukrainian context, taking into account the specificities of social dialogue, regulatory frameworks, and institutional capabilities.

Review of Research and Publications. Academic literature on employment quality reveals conceptual diversity but methodological fragmentation and limited comparative operationalization in post-crisis economies. International discourse is dominated by normative frameworks, including the concept of decent work [1], indicators of worker well-being [2], and structural characteristics of labor markets [3]. However, these models often overlook the institutional capacity of countries undergoing deep transformation, such as Ukraine.

For instance, the tripartite model proposed in [3]-comprising earnings quality, labor market security, and work environment quality-fails to account for instability, legal ambiguity, and unequal access to resources. The emphasis on the integrated notion of decent work [1] lacks clear indicators of institutional effectiveness. Approaches based

on subjective assessments—such as satisfaction, autonomy, and time balance [2]—tend to disregard macro-level institutional factors, including the performance of employment services or the state’s ability to respond to non-standard employment, which increasingly includes platform-based labor. According to the European Parliament, over 28 million people in the EU were engaged in platform work in 2021, with projections reaching 43 million by 2025 [4].

Lithuanian academic sources demonstrate higher institutional coherence, yet research remains focused primarily on the micro level—worker satisfaction, motivation, and working conditions—without addressing the architecture of institutional support. For example, L. Seputis [5] analyzes labor quality through subjective indicators but does not examine mechanisms of state support. In A. Bianco’s work [6], employment quality is considered in the context of ecological transformation and institutional responsibility. Research by M. Taylor et al. [7] highlights the dependence of institutional quality on variables such as education level, openness, and income redistribution—factors that may be shaped by policy but are not always amenable to direct measurement.

Ukrainian scholarly contributions demonstrate a deep understanding of employment-related challenges but remain fragmented in scope and methodology. Studies addressing the institutional regulation of platform-based employment [8] and highlighting the risks associated with unregulated labor formats and weak institutional responses [9] offer valuable insights, yet tend to assess labor market quality through factor analysis [10] without isolating institutional determinants. International labor conventions are systematically reviewed [11], but mechanisms for their adaptation to Ukrainian legislation are not sufficiently elaborated.

This indicates that, despite the existence of theoretical frameworks for understanding employment quality, there is a lack of comparative indicators tailored to the specific conditions of Ukraine and Lithuania. Moreover, institutional factors are often left unoperationalized, which complicates their integration into analytical models and limits the potential for evidence-based policy design.

Research Methodology. This study is grounded in a comparative institutional analysis of employment quality in Ukraine and Lithuania. The analytical framework encompasses five core dimensions: regulatory coherence, institutional accessibility, mechanisms of social dialogue, household resilience, and adaptability to non-standard employment. Each dimension is examined through the systematization of legal provisions, implementation practices, digital infrastructure, and the extent to which vulnerable groups are covered.

The institutional analysis is complemented by econometric modeling of labor productivity, enabling a quantitative assessment of the contribution of selected social and structural variables—namely employment rate, wage level, educational attainment, institutional accessibility, and perceived social well-being—to the explanation of productivity outcomes. This approach allows for the empirical testing of hypotheses regarding the influence of institutional factors on employment efficiency.

Methodologically, the study is guided by the principle of functional institutional effectiveness, which emphasizes not merely the existence of policies but their capacity to deliver quality employment under conditions of volatility and systemic stress. The analysis prioritizes the operational performance of institutions in sustaining inclusive and stable labor participation, particularly in contexts marked by regulatory fragmentation and economic uncertainty.

Limitations of the study include insufficient granularity in statistical data on non-standard employment, restricted access to micro-level datasets, and the variability in conceptual interpretations across sources. These constraints affect the precision of cross-country comparisons and the operationalization of key institutional indicators. Nonetheless, the proposed framework offers a structured basis for evaluating institutional capacity in relation to employment quality and supports the development of policy instruments tailored to transitional labor markets.

Identification of Previously Unresolved Aspects of the General Problem.

Despite the availability of international models for assessing employment quality, most remain unadapted to the realities of unstable economies characterized by fragmented institutional support and a high prevalence of non-standard labor. In Ukraine, there is a notable absence of harmonized indicators that account for regulatory accessibility, mechanisms of social dialogue, household resilience, and adaptability to emerging employment formats. Although the Lithuanian experience reflects greater institutional coherence, it has not been sufficiently represented in comparative studies with a post-crisis focus.

Existing academic literature tends to concentrate on micro-level dimensions-such as job satisfaction, motivation, and working conditions-while macro-institutional parameters are frequently overlooked. As a result, the challenge of constructing an operationalized framework for comparative analysis of institutional employment quality across states with varying degrees of resilience remains unresolved.

The aim of this study is to identify the key institutional factors shaping employment quality in Ukraine and Lithuania and to provide an analytical rationale for adapting effective institutional solutions to enhance the resilience, equity, and performance of Ukrainian employment policy. This is particularly relevant in the context of wartime instability, the expansion of non-standard labor formats, and the growing social vulnerability of households.

Main Findings. Within the scope of this study, employment quality is conceptualized as a composite indicator of social resilience, institutional effectiveness, and systemic adaptability. In light of wartime instability, the proliferation of non-standard employment, and the urgent need for institutional renewal, the analytical framework draws on approaches developed by international organizations [1,2,3] and encompasses five core dimensions: institutional functionality, regulatory clarity, social dialogue, household resilience, and adaptability to non-standard and digital labor formats.

Each dimension reflects both normative and practical aspects of ensuring quality employment. Institutional functionality is interpreted as a manifestation of systemic resilience; regulatory clarity serves as the foundation for institutionalization; social dialogue operates as a mechanism of inclusivity; household resilience is treated as an indicator of integration; and adaptability is viewed as a marker of innovation. This structure enables a comparative analysis that responds to contemporary challenges by integrating social, economic, and institutional dimensions of employment.

The framework is designed to capture the dynamic interplay between formal regulation and lived labor realities, particularly in contexts marked by legal ambiguity, digital transformation, and shifting welfare responsibilities. It allows for the identification of institutional gaps and the formulation of targeted policy responses that enhance employment quality not only through legal coverage but also through

functional accessibility and systemic responsiveness. By applying this structure to the cases of Ukraine and Lithuania, the study offers insights into the institutional determinants that shape labor market outcomes under conditions of asymmetric stability and reform.

Institutional Accessibility and Functionality in the Employment Sector. Institutional accessibility and functionality in the field of employment refer to the capacity of public structures to provide citizens with effective access to support services, retraining opportunities, career counseling, digital platforms, and social protection mechanisms. This dimension is essential for ensuring labor market stability and adaptability, particularly under conditions of structural transformation, the expansion of non-standard employment, and post-crisis recovery.

Comparative analysis indicates that Lithuania demonstrates systemic coherence and a high level of institutional functionality in employment governance. In 2024, the overall employment rate reached 73.2 %, exceeding the EU average. The national employment service (Užimtumo tarnyba) offers a broad range of services-from individualized counseling to digital training and entrepreneurship support. More than 42 % of registered unemployed individuals participated in active labor market programs, with 18.6 % representing socially vulnerable groups. The digital platform www.uzt.lt is integrated with the Sodra system, enabling automated employment tracking, contract registration, and access to social insurance. Total funding for employment policy in 2024 exceeded €140 million, amounting to approximately 0.4 % of GDP, with over 60 % allocated to active programs and digital transformation initiatives [13].

In contrast, Ukraine's employment system operates under conditions of fragmented infrastructure, uneven territorial coverage, and limited institutional resilience. Several employment centers are either non-operational or functioning in restricted capacity, particularly in regions affected by armed conflict. Funding for active labor market programs remains critically low. In 2023, the budget of the Unemployment Social Insurance Fund amounted to UAH 11.9 billion (≈€300 million), of which only a portion was directed toward active measures, and UAH 1.8 billion was allocated to microgrants under the «eRobota» initiative [14]. Total expenditure on employment policy accounted for less than 0.2 % of GDP-one of the lowest rates among European countries. For comparison, the average EU expenditure on active labor market policies ranges from 0.3 % to 0.8 % of GDP, with Denmark exceeding 1.0 % [15].

The limited scope of funding in Ukraine not only reduces program coverage but also constrains their quality, duration, and responsiveness to labor market needs. This challenge is particularly acute in the context of postwar reintegration, where a significant portion of the population requires retraining, psychological support, and stable access to employment services.

Regulatory Clarity as an Institutional Foundation for Labor Productivity. In the process of Ukraine's postwar recovery, labor productivity acquires strategic importance-not merely as an economic indicator, but as the outcome of interactions among social, institutional, and normative factors. It reflects not only individual effort but also the systemic capacity of the state to ensure legal certainty, access to guarantees, coverage of emerging employment formats, and institutional trust. These parameters-institutionalization, transparency, and protection-constitute the environment in which workers can fully realize their professional potential.

To quantitatively assess this relationship, an empirical model of labor productivity was constructed, covering the period from 1996 to 2021. Labor productivity (PRT) was used as the dependent variable, while the Human Development Index (HDI) and a social well-being indicator (SOC_ZADOVOL)-capturing satisfaction with living conditions, stability, and trust in institutions-served as independent variables. The model yielded the following results:

Table 1

REGRESSION ESTIMATES OF SOCIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING LABOR PRODUCTIVITY

Variable	Coefficient	p-value
HDI	0.904966	0.0000
SOC_ZADOVOL	0.012523	0.0000
Constant	−0.348368	0.0000
R ²	0.889644	—
Durbin–Watson	1.096255	—
Observation period	1996–2021	—

Source: Author’s calculations using EViews 9.0

The results confirm that the Human Development Index exerts a dominant influence on labor productivity, supporting the hypothesis of a multiplier effect from investments in education, health, and income. While the contribution of social well-being is statistically significant, its impact remains marginal. This suggests that even with basic life satisfaction, workers cannot fully realize their potential in the absence of a robust legal framework that ensures protection, predictability, and access to guarantees.

Regulatory clarity thus emerges as a foundational institutional condition for labor productivity. It defines the legal status of workers, encompasses non-standard employment, and fosters institutional trust. Comparative analysis shows that countries with high regulatory coherence-such as Lithuania-demonstrate greater adaptability to new labor formats. Lithuania’s revised Labor Code covers temporary, seasonal, self-employed, remote, and platform-based work, while the implementation of EU Directive 2024/2831 enables the classification of platform workers as employees based on autonomy criteria. Digital contract registration via Sodra is mandatory, and inspection capacity aligns with EU standards-one inspector per 9,913 workers. In 2024, over 95 % of formally employed individuals were covered by labor legislation, including flexible employment arrangements [16].

In contrast, Ukraine’s regulatory fragmentation, weak digital integration, and limited enforcement leave a substantial share of workers outside legal protection. The absence of provisions for platform labor, informal employment in care, IT, and freelance sectors, and underdeveloped monitoring mechanisms contribute to legal uncertainty. According to the State Labor Service, over 20 % of private-sector workers lack formal registration [17].

The productivity model confirms that without legal clarity, digital registration, and effective oversight, social factors do not translate into economic performance. In the postwar context, regulatory modernization must be aligned with a dignity-based economy-through legislative reform and the creation of conditions that enable the realization of human potential.

Social Dialogue as Institutional Infrastructure for Labor Productivity. Social dialogue constitutes a foundational institutional mechanism for reconciling the interests of workers, employers, and the state. Its effectiveness determines the capacity of the employment system to uphold fairness, respond to structural challenges, and sustain social cohesion. Within the framework of social quality of work, social dialogue aligns with the coordinates of inclusivity, emotional security, and integration-conditions under which workers perceive themselves as part of a functioning social order.

Lithuania formally complies with European standards: a National Tripartite Council operates, the state finances trade union leadership training, and in 2024, the eDialogas platform was launched to collect worker proposals. However, trade union density remains low at 7 %, collective agreements are concentrated in the public sector, and digital participation accounts for less than 5 % [18]. These figures suggest that participatory mechanisms are largely formal and exert limited influence on actual working conditions.

Ukraine's system of social dialogue is uneven and structurally weakened. According to the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine, union density stood at approximately 15 % in 2023 [19], yet actual engagement is minimal, particularly in the private sector. Collective bargaining is largely confined to the budgetary sphere, and the Tripartite Council has limited influence on employment policy. The war has further eroded trade union infrastructure, while digital mechanisms for participation remain underdeveloped. Limited coverage and weak digital engagement have not only social but also economic implications. According to our model, social well-being exhibits a statistically significant but low coefficient (0.0125), indicating a marginal impact on productivity. Without effective mechanisms for participation and representation, social cohesion fails to translate into economic performance.

Therefore, social dialogue must be redefined as institutional infrastructure for productivity. Its modernization-through enhanced representation, digital integration, and normative anchoring of participation-is a necessary condition for building a dignity-based economy. Despite its limited effectiveness, the Lithuanian experience underscores the importance of state support, digital tools, and regulatory stability-elements highly relevant to Ukraine's postwar reconstruction context [19].

Household Resilience as a Structural Determinant of Employment Quality. Household resilience represents a critical structural factor in shaping employment quality, as it determines the capacity to sustain labor market participation, absorb risks, and secure basic well-being. Within the framework of social quality of work, this dimension encompasses economic resilience, work-life balance, and psycho-emotional security.

A comparative analysis of Ukraine and Lithuania reveals significant disparities in institutional support for household welfare. In 2024, Lithuania's subsistence minimum stood at €774, while the minimum wage reached €924-figures that ensure baseline economic stability [16]. The social protection system covers the entire population, including self-employed and seasonal workers, and the Sodra platform [20] automates

the calculation of contributions and compensations. The household welfare index is estimated at 0.78, comparable to Northern European standards, despite debt obligations affecting 42 % of families.

In contrast, Ukraine's subsistence minimum in 2024 was UAH 3,200 (~€80), and the minimum wage UAH 7,100 (~€180), which fails to guarantee basic welfare in most regions. Social protection coverage remains fragmented, with over 30 % of households lacking stable access to compensatory mechanisms. Housing and energy costs exceed 40 % of household budgets in certain areas, while debt burdens affect more than 60 % of households, 28 % of which face overdue liabilities. In the empirical labor productivity model, the social well-being index yields a low coefficient (0.0125), indicating a limited impact of household welfare on economic performance. In many cases, the family functions as a compensatory unit-an indicator of systemic vulnerability rather than resilience.

Therefore, household resilience must be recognized as a central pillar of employment policy. The Lithuanian experience illustrates the effectiveness of a model grounded in systemic coherence, digital integration, and stable financing-principles that are highly relevant to Ukraine's postwar recovery. Strengthening institutional support for households is essential not only for mitigating social risks but also for enabling inclusive and sustainable labor market participation.

Adaptability to Non-Standard and Digital Employment as an Indicator of Institutional Flexibility. Adaptability to non-standard and digital employment reflects the institutional flexibility of labor systems-their capacity to respond to structural transformations in the labor market, particularly the expansion of platform-based, temporary, hybrid, and remote work. Within the architecture of social quality of work, this dimension encompasses the coordinates of cognitive innovation, organizational process design, digital inclusion, and systemic resilience.

Lithuania demonstrates a gradual institutional integration of non-standard employment. In 2024, 23 % of workers were employed under part-time arrangements, while temporary employment accounted for 2 %, governed by clear legal provisions including compensation, insurance access, and contract duration limits. Between 2023 and 2024, pilot programs were introduced to support platform workers, offering access to health insurance and pension registration.

Ukraine, by contrast, exhibits a growing prevalence of non-standard employment without adequate institutional response. Part-time work involves over 20 % of workers, particularly in services, education, and care. In 2021, 7.3 % of employees worked fewer than 30 hours per week, and 1.6 % were involuntarily shifted to reduced hours due to economic constraints. Despite its potential for self-realization, such employment formats are often accompanied by risks of precarity, hidden unemployment, and social inequality. Temporary employment under fixed-term contracts is also expanding. In the first half of 2024, the State Employment Service assisted 124,004 individuals, of whom over 84,000 participated in public or other temporary work schemes. An additional 20,389 were placed through private agencies, frequently without access to social protection.

In this context, freelancing has emerged as one of the most dynamic forms of non-standard employment, combining flexibility with high institutional uncertainty. According to Freelancehunt [21], leading sectors in 2024 included «Programming» (39.1 %) and «Design & Art» (19.5 %). Multimedia services showed rapid growth: «Photography» (+68.84 %), «Video Editing» (+51.04 %), «Filming» (+36.02 %).

Digital marketing also expanded: «Email Marketing» (+53.55 %), «SEO Audit» (+30.44 %), «SMM» (+17.2 %). The highest budget increases were recorded in projects related to «AI and Machine Learning» (+159.97 %), «Embedded Systems» (+162.43 %), and «Bot Development» (+46.43 %). Meanwhile, certain categories declined in relevance, such as «Teaser Advertising» and «SERM,» while «Translation» services, despite reduced volume, saw a funding increase of +97.8 %.

Freelancing in Ukraine is thus not only a marker of digital labor market transformation but also an indicator of institutional vulnerability, requiring targeted analytical attention within employment policy. Freelance activity increasingly overlaps with platform work, as digital platforms not only aggregate projects but also shape new labor relations—from short-term contracts to algorithmic management—necessitating distinct regulatory approaches.

According to service pricing statistics on Freelancehunt [22], the average monthly income of a platform worker in September 2025 was UAH 30,058 (≈USD 728), nearly four times the national minimum wage (UAH 8,000) and 13.4 % higher than the average wage of formally employed workers (UAH 26,499 in July 2025). Between 2017 and 2025, earnings in the digital labor segment have grown faster than wages in the offline economy, underscoring the need for institutional recognition and regulation of this evolving employment domain.

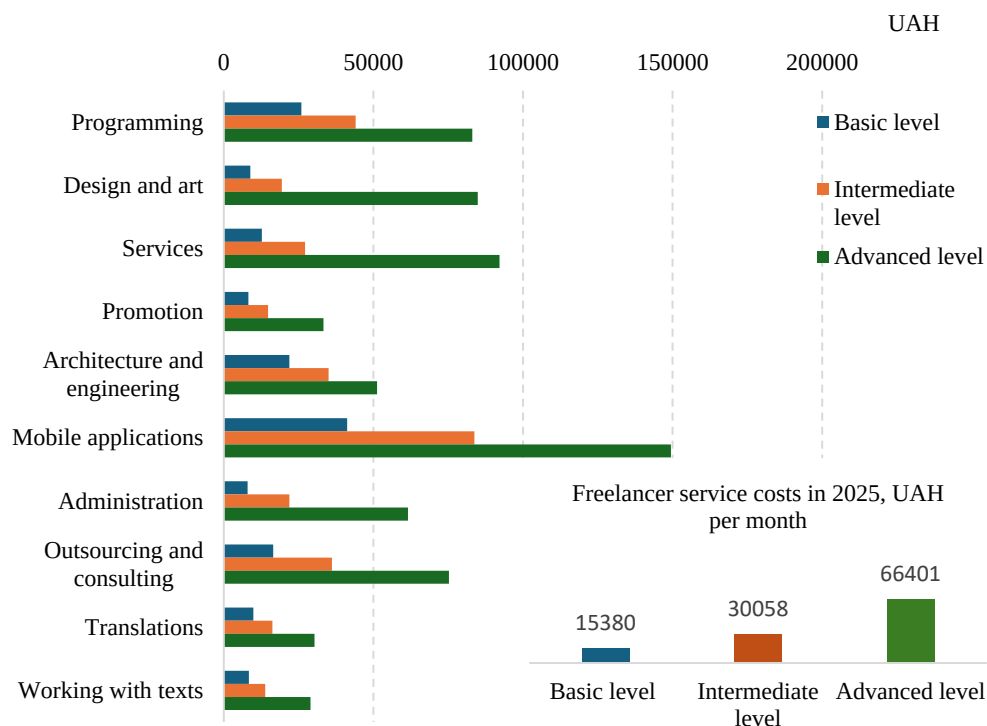


Figure 1. Monthly Cost of Freelance Services in Ukraine in 2025

Source: Author's calculations based on freelance service pricing statistics [22]

Among translators and freelance professionals engaged in text-based work, the largest share earns below \$400 per month. This segment remains relatively accessible for newcomers entering the labor market via freelance platforms. Designers earn an average of \$470 monthly, while the highest rates are observed in programming and mobile application development, where monthly earnings range from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Certain mobile app projects-particularly for Android and iOS-command exceptionally high demand, with clients willing to pay \$3,000–\$4,000 per month for freelance execution [21].

In 2024, interest in freelancing via digital platforms increased markedly, particularly due to wartime disruptions: 19.1 % of registered specialists became active during this period. The dominant age group was 24–29 years (23.5 %), with a notable rise among professionals aged 30–41, indicating a transition of experienced workers toward flexible employment formats. The share of younger freelancers (18–23 years) declined by 4.8 %. Over half of respondents held higher education degrees, and 11 % were students, confirming the accessibility of freelancing as an alternative form of employment. For 15.1 %, freelancing constituted their primary occupation (30–40 hours per week), while 8.8 % worked over 40 hours, demonstrating high levels of engagement. An intensive workload (over 50 hours per week) was reported by 9.7 % of specialists, suggesting stable demand and income relevance. Meanwhile, 47.5 % worked up to 20 hours per week, indicating part-time or episodic engagement as a supplementary income source [21].

Thus, adaptability to non-standard and digital employment is not only a marker of institutional flexibility but also a factor of labor productivity. In Ukraine's postwar recovery, where the share of non-standard employment is rising and digital labor is becoming a source of stable income, employment policy must be reoriented toward the recognition, protection, and development of these formats. This requires regulatory implementation of platform-based work, digital integration of contract registration, the creation of social protection mechanisms, and support for innovative self-employment. Lithuania's experience demonstrates that such adaptation is feasible-provided systemic coherence, digital infrastructure, and cross-sectoral coordination are in place.

The comparative analysis of five key institutional blocks-regulatory clarity, institutional accessibility, social dialogue, household resilience, and adaptability to non-standard employment-offers a comprehensive understanding of the institutional architecture of employment quality in Ukraine and Lithuania. Each block represents a distinct coordinate of social quality of work: legal protection, accessibility, participation, well-being, and flexibility. Collectively, these dimensions define the system's capacity to ensure dignified, productive, inclusive, and resilient labor market participation.

This table not only systematizes key parameters but also reveals structural gaps between the two countries. Lithuania demonstrates a coherent regulatory framework, digital integration, institutional responsiveness to emerging labor formats, and stable social protection coverage. Ukraine, by contrast, operates within a fragmented regulatory system, limited digital infrastructure, uneven coverage, and weak institutional response to the challenges posed by flexible employment. These disparities underscore the need for targeted reforms aimed at enhancing institutional resilience and aligning employment governance with the evolving realities of the labor market.

Table 2

**COMPARATIVE INSTITUTIONAL DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYMENT QUALITY:
LITHUANIA VS. UKRAINE**

Institutional Block	Lithuania	Ukraine
Regulatory Clarity	Coverage of all employment forms; EU directive implementation; digital contract registration via Sodra; inspection capacity — 1 inspector per ~9,900 workers	Non-standard and platform work unregulated; no presumption of employment; weak enforcement; fragmented digitalization
Institutional Accessibility	73.2 % employment rate; full digital integration; vulnerable group coverage — 18.6 %; stable employment service funding (€142 million)	~60 % employment rate; limited digital infrastructure; uneven coverage; funding <0.2 % of GDP
Social Dialogue	Union density — 7 %; collective agreement coverage — 7 %; functioning tripartite council; eDialogas platform	Union density ~15 %; coverage ~10–12 %; tripartite council formally active; no digital participation mechanisms
Household Resilience	Subsistence minimum — €774; minimum wage — €924; 100 % social protection coverage; welfare index — 0.78; debt burden <25 % of income	Subsistence minimum ~€80; minimum wage ~€180; coverage <70 %; SOC_ZADOVOL ~0.45; debt burden >40 % of income
Adaptability to Non-Standard Work	Part-time employment — 23 %; temporary — 2 %; partial regulation of platform work; digital contract registration; pilot programs	Part-time employment ~20 %; temporary — unregulated; platform work — outside legal framework; partial digital registration; no institutional response

Sources: compiled by authors based on [1, 14, 15, 20, 21]

Discussion. The comparative analysis of employment governance models in Ukraine and Lithuania reveals a set of conceptual and structural contradictions that require further theoretical clarification. The formal existence of participatory mechanisms does not guarantee their accessibility or effectiveness: Lithuania's digital integration and regulatory coherence stand in contrast to the declarative nature of Ukrainian instruments. The compensatory role of households in the Ukrainian context raises concerns about the institutional capacity of the state to ensure basic welfare and labor market stability.

The expansion of non-standard and digital employment formats brings into focus the limits of regulatory coverage. The absence of legal responses to platform-based labor creates zones of social uncertainty and undermines the protective function of employment policy. While the concept of social quality of work offers an alternative analytical framework, its practical implementation demands cross-sectoral coordination, normative anchoring, and a redefinition of the worker's role as an active subject of policy.

Conclusions and Directions for Future Research. The comparative assessment of institutional determinants of employment quality in Ukraine and Lithuania underscores the critical importance of regulatory coherence, digital integration, social

dialogue, and household resilience in sustaining labor market stability. The Lithuanian model demonstrates systemic alignment and comprehensive coverage of diverse employment formats, whereas the Ukrainian system remains fragmented, with limited access to protection for workers in non-standard arrangements.

The findings of this study affirm the need to update Ukraine's regulatory framework, digitally transform employment services, expand participatory mechanisms, and recognize households as policy-relevant actors. Particular attention should be devoted to the regulation of platform-based labor, algorithmic management, and flexible contracts. Future research should focus on developing indicators of social quality of work under conditions of digital transformation, evaluating the effectiveness of household-level compensatory mechanisms, and modeling the impact of institutional accessibility on labor productivity in post-crisis contexts.

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DOI 10.33111/vz_kneu.40.25.03.19.130.136

УДК: 330.8:379.8

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**СОЦІАЛЬНА ВІДПОВІДАЛЬНІСТЬ В ОПЛАТІ ПРАЦІ:
ДОСВІД УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ПІДПРИЄМСТВ ДО ТА ПІСЛЯ ПОЧАТКУ
ПОВНОМАСШТАБНОГО ВТОРГНЕННЯ**