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METHODOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENT OF LABOR MARKET STATISTICS IN UZBEKISTAN BASED ON INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL STANDARDS

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Abstract: This article examines the methodological improvement of labor market statistics in the Republic of Uzbekistan based on international statistical standards. Particular attention is given to the statistical methodologies, labor market indicators, and data quality standards recommended by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations (UN). The study proposes scientific and practical recommendations for harmonizing Uzbekistan's labor market statistical methodology with international standards, improving the accuracy, reliability, and international comparability of labor market indicators, and enhancing the quality of official statistical information

Keywords: labor market statistics, international statistical standards, ILO, IMF, OECD, United Nations, employment, unemployment, labor force, statistical methodology, official statistics, international comparability, data quality.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada O'zbekiston Respublikasida mehnat bozori statistikasining uslubiy jihatlarini xalqaro statistik standartlar asosida takomillashtirish masalalari tadqiq etilgan. Xususan, Xalqaro Mehnat Tashkiloti (ILO), Xalqaro Valyuta Jamg'armasi (IMF), Iqtisodiy hamkorlik va taraqqiyot tashkiloti (OECD) hamda Birlashgan Millatlar Tashkiloti (BMT) tomonidan tavsiya etilgan statistik metodologiyalar, mehnat bozori ko'rsatkichlari va ma'lumotlar sifati standartlari tahlil qilingan. Tadqiqot natijasida O'zbekiston mehnat bozori statistikasi metodologiyasini xalqaro standartlarga uyg'unlashtirish, statistik ko'rsatkichlarning aniqligi, ishonchliligi va xalqaro taqqoslanuvchanligini oshirish bo'yicha ilmiy-amaliy takliflar ishlab chiqilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: mehnat bozori statistikasi, xalqaro statistik standartlar, ILO, IMF, OECD, BMT, bandlik, ishsizlik, mehnat resurslari, statistik metodologiya, rasmiy statistika, xalqaro taqqoslanuvchanlik, ma'lumotlar sifati.

Аннотация: В данной статье исследуются вопросы совершенствования методологических основ статистики рынка труда Республики Узбекистан на основе международных статистических стандартов. Особое внимание уделено статистическим методологиям, показателям рынка труда и стандартам качества данных, рекомендованным Международной организацией труда (МОТ), Международным валютным фондом (МВФ), Организацией экономического сотрудничества и развития (ОЭСР) и Организацией Объединённых Наций (ООН). По результатам исследования разработаны научно-практические предложения по гармонизации методологии статистики рынка труда Узбекистана с международными стандартами, повышению точности, достоверности и международной сопоставимости статистических показателей.

Ключевые слова: статистика рынка труда, международные статистические стандарты, МОТ, МВФ, ОЭСР, ООН, занятость, безработица, рабочая сила, статистическая методология, официальная статистика, международная сопоставимость, качество данных.

INTRODUCTION

The country's figure social-economic development in providing labor market statistics important information source is considered. Labor market status reliable assessment, employment and unemployment level determination, labor resources effective use and evidence-based state policy working out international standards's figure statistical methodology use separately important will be.

The last years in Uzbekistan official statistics system international standards adaptation and statistical data quality and openness increase according to wide extensive reforms done is being increased. In particular, Uzbekistan Republic's Law "On Official Statistics" defines the main purpose of official statistics as "preparation, dissemination and coordination of quality, impartial and reliable official statistical information to satisfy users' needs" [1]. This law also strengthened the legal basis for organizing the official statistics system based on international statistical principles and standards. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on February 24, 2025, № DP-27¹ "On measures to approve and implement the Concept of Public Security of the Republic of Uzbekistan" identified the improvement of statistical methodologies based on international recommendations, integration of administrative and statistical information, and increasing the reliability and transparency of official statistics as priority tasks [2]. The decree also emphasized the necessity of forming the official statistics system in accordance with international requirements and widely introducing modern information technologies. These reforms will align the methodology of labor market statistics with the recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Statistical Commission, but require further improvement. In this context, improving the methodological aspects of labor market statistics in Uzbekistan based on international statistical standards, increasing the international comparability, accuracy and quality of statistical indicators, and ensuring their effective use in public administration are among the urgent scientific and practical tasks.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT

Issues of improving labor market statistics are one of the important areas of international scientific research. The recommendations of the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS-19), adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO), made it possible to calculate indicators of employment, unemployment, and underutilization of labour resources based on a unified methodology. Recent ILO reports (ILO, 2022; 2023) and ILOSTAT data emphasize the need to ensure the international comparability of labor market statistics indicators and improve the quality of statistical data [3].

Issues of assessing the quality of labor market statistics and developing the official statistics system are widely covered in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF), the Enhanced General Data Dissemination System (e-GDDS), and the Labour Force Statistics and Quality Framework methodologies of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These approaches constitute an important methodological basis for assessing the accuracy, reliability, relevance, and compliance of statistical data with international standards [4]. Also, the official statistical principles of the United Nations (UN) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 8) serve to harmonize labor market indicators at the international level. Although the theoretical foundations of labor market development are covered in the studies of Kuznets (1973), Blanchard and Katz (1999), Borjas (2016), and Fields (2019), the issues of comprehensive improvement of labor market statistics methodology in Uzbekistan based on ILO, IMF, OECD, and UN standards have not been sufficiently studied. This study aims to fill this scientific gap.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used complex statistical and economic analysis methods to study the issues of improving the methodological aspects of labor market statistics in the Republic of Uzbekistan based on international statistical standards. The methodological basis of the study was the recommendations of the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (19th ICLS) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Labour Force Survey (LFS) methodology, the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18), the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), and the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC Rev.4) classifications [5]. Also, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) and Enhanced General Data Dissemination System (e-GDDS) methodologies, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Labour Force Statistics and Quality Framework for OECD

1 <https://lex.uz/docs/6967900>

Statistical Activities, as well as the United Nations (UN) Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 8) indicators, formed the theoretical and methodological basis of the study [6].

In order to assess the dynamics and structural changes in labor market indicators, dynamic series analysis, grouping and generalization, comparative analysis, arithmetic mean, average growth rate, absolute, relative, and intensive indicators, structural analysis, index method, and international benchmarking (comparison) methods were used during the study. The reliability and international comparability of statistical data were assessed using the IMF DQAF quality criteria (relevance, accuracy, reliability, timeliness, usability, and methodological soundness) and OECD statistical quality indicators. In addition, the employment rate, unemployment rate, economic activity level, wages, labor resources, youth employment, informal employment, and labor underutilization indicators were analyzed by regions, types of economic activity, and demographic groups. The results were compared with international indicators recommended by the ILO, OECD, and the UN to determine the current state of the methodology of labor market statistics in Uzbekistan and the possibilities of harmonizing it with international standards.

As a result of the systematic analysis of statistical data, comparison of international methodologies, and scientific generalization, scientific and practical conclusions and proposals were developed to improve the quality, accuracy, international comparability, and effectiveness of the official statistics system.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Uzbekistan is actively working to align labor market statistics with international standards, in particular, the requirements of the International Labour Organization (ILO). This process requires improving the methodology for calculating employment, unemployment, and the informal sector, as well as increasing data transparency. The main areas of improvement in the methodology are:

1. Accurate measurement of unemployment: According to ILO criteria, not only those who are registered as unemployed, but also those who are actively looking for work and are ready to work are recognized. Population censuses and special sample observations are being introduced.
2. Assessment of the informal sector: Special international formulas are used to assess the share of the hidden economy in the statistical monitoring of informal employment.
3. Digitalization of the information system: Automation of the statistical database using modern information technologies allows tracking job movements in real time.

In the Development Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030, the issue of employment occupies an important place as a key factor in social stability and economic growth. Within the framework of this strategy, the goal is to increase the income level of the population, ensure social equality, and fully utilize labor resources. In particular, paragraph 18 of the Strategy places special emphasis on developing the labor market and ensuring employment.

This paragraph indicates that reducing the unemployment rate to 7% is one of the main goals. Several strategic directions have been identified to achieve this indicator:

- creating new jobs by maintaining sustainable economic growth;
- increasing employment in industry, services, and agriculture;
- expanding new job opportunities by supporting small businesses and private entrepreneurship;
- modernizing the labor market, i.e. improving the exchange of information between job-seeking citizens and employers.

In addition, the Strategy also identifies increasing youth employment, actively involving women in the labor market, and creating equal opportunities for people with disabilities as important tasks. This requires a comprehensive approach to the issue of employment. Through these measures, it is planned to form a sfigure and effective labor market in the country by 2030, ensure the employment of citizens, and increase social well-being [7].

Figure 1 presents the dynamics of the main labor market indicators in Uzbekistan over the period 2019–2025. The data reveal significant structural improvements in employment and labor market performance despite temporary disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The economically active population remained relatively sfigure throughout the observation period, increasing from 14.8 million people in 2019 to 15.7 million in 2025, representing an overall growth of approximately 6.1%. A slight decline in 2020 reflects the adverse economic effects of the pandemic, which temporarily reduced labour force participation. However, beginning in 2021, labour force participation gradually recovered as economic activity resumed and labor market reforms were implemented (Figure 1).

Indicators	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
 Economically active population, million persons	14.8	14.6	14.9	15.2	15.5	15.1	15.7
 Employed population, million persons	13.5	13.2	13.6	14.0	14.4	14.3	14.9
 Employment rate, %	57.2	55.9	56.8	57.9	58.6	68.3	70.5
 Unemployment rate, %	9.0	10.5	9.6	8.9	8.3	5.5	4.8

Figure 1. Dynamics of Key Labor Market Indicators in the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2019–2025² [8]

Employment demonstrated a more pronounced upward trend. The number of employed persons increased from 13.5 million in 2019 to 14.9 million in 2025, corresponding to an increase of approximately 10.4%. Although employment contracted in 2020 due to widespread business closures and restrictions on economic activity, the recovery from 2021 onwards indicates increasing labor demand and successful government employment policies. The consistent growth observed between 2022 and 2025 suggests expanding employment opportunities across various sectors of the economy.

The employment rate experienced the most remarkable improvement. After fluctuating between 55.9% and 58.6% during 2019–2023, it increased sharply to 68.3% in 2024 and further to 70.5% in 2025. This substantial increase indicates a significant improvement in labor market efficiency and may reflect methodological revisions, labor formalization measures, expansion of private-sector employment, and the implementation of active labor market policies. The rise in employment rates suggests that a larger proportion of the working-age population has become successfully integrated into productive economic activities.

Conversely, the unemployment rate exhibited a continuous downward trend following the pandemic period. Unemployment reached its highest level of 10.5% in 2020, reflecting the severe impact of COVID-19 on businesses and labor demand. However, it steadily declined to 9.6% in 2021, 8.9% in 2022, 8.3% in 2023, 5.5% in 2024, and ultimately to 4.8% in 2025. Overall, unemployment decreased by approximately 54% compared with its peak level in 2020, indicating substantial improvement in labor market conditions.

From a macroeconomic perspective, the simultaneous increase in employment and reduction in unemployment indicate enhanced labor market resilience and more efficient utilization of human capital. These trends are likely associated with economic diversification, investment expansion, entrepreneurship support, digital transformation, and active state employment programs. Furthermore, improved labor market indicators contribute positively to household incomes, domestic consumption, fiscal revenues, and sustainable economic growth.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Uzbekistan's labor market has undergone considerable positive transformation during the period under review. The sustained increase in employment, combined with declining unemployment, provides empirical evidence of improving labor market performance and supports the effectiveness of ongoing socio-economic reforms. These indicators also reinforce the importance of integrating labor market statistics into public finance management and evidence-based policy formulation, thereby enabling more efficient allocation of budgetary resources and improving the overall effectiveness of state economic governance.

Figure 2 presents a comprehensive analytical assessment of Uzbekistan's labor market performance between 2019 and 2025 while identifying methodological priorities for further improvement in accordance with internationally recognized statistical standards. The analysis demonstrates that the country's labor market has undergone significant structural changes characterized by increasing employment, declining unemployment,

² Source: Compiled by the author.

and improving labor force participation. These developments indicate positive outcomes of ongoing economic reforms while simultaneously emphasizing the necessity of strengthening the methodological quality of official labor market statistics.

One of the most important findings concerns the gradual expansion of the economically active population, which increased from 14.8 million in 2019 to 15.7 million in 2025, representing an overall growth of approximately 6.1%. This trend reflects demographic growth, higher labor force participation, and expanding economic opportunities. However, according to the Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization adopted by the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (19th ICLS, ILO, 2013), labour force measurement should not rely solely on aggregate population figures but also consider labour underutilization, informal employment, own-use production work, and multiple forms of labour participation. Therefore, future statistical improvements in Uzbekistan should expand beyond traditional labor force indicators towards multidimensional labor market measurements.

Employment indicators demonstrate even stronger improvement. The employed population increased by approximately 10.4%, while the employment rate rose from 57.2% to 70.5% during the study period. Such substantial growth indicates enhanced labor market efficiency, successful employment promotion policies, and increased business activity (Figure 2).

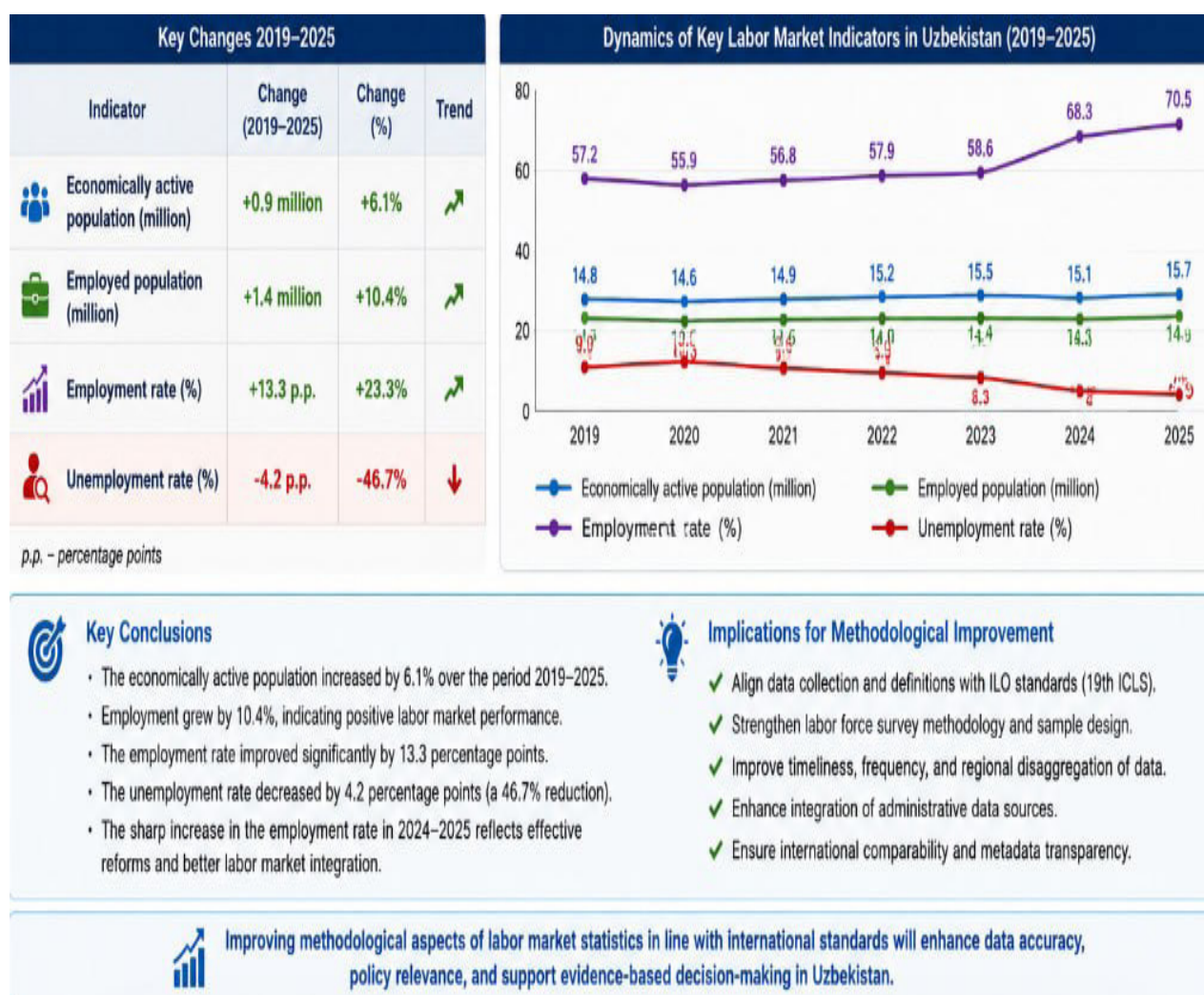


Figure 2. Analytical Summary of Labor Market Development and Methodological Improvement Directions in Uzbekistan³ (2019–2025)

Nevertheless, international statistical practice recommends interpreting employment growth together with indicators of job quality, working hours, productivity, occupational status, and formal versus informal employment. The ILO Resolution concerning statistics of labour relations (20th ICLS, 2018) emphasizes that measuring

³ Source: Compiled by the author.

employment alone is insufficient for evaluating labor market sustainability [8]. Consequently, Uzbekistan's statistical methodology could be strengthened through greater integration of decent work indicators and employment quality measures.

The unemployment rate exhibits the most notable improvement, declining continuously from 9.0% in 2019 to 4.8% in 2025, while falling by more than half from its pandemic peak of 10.5% in 2020. This decline reflects successful economic recovery and expanding labor demand.

However, according to the ILO Labour Force Survey Guidelines, unemployment statistics should be interpreted jointly with broader measures of labour underutilization, including time-related underemployment, potential labour force, and discouraged job seekers. International experience demonstrates that exclusive reliance on the unemployment rate may underestimate hidden labor market weaknesses, particularly in developing economies with substantial informal employment sectors.

The methodological recommendations summarized in Figure 2 closely correspond to internationally accepted principles governing official statistics. The recommendation to harmonize statistical concepts and definitions with ILO standards directly supports the international comparability of labor market indicators. Likewise, strengthening Labour Force Survey (LFS) methodology through improved sample design, rotational sampling, weighting procedures, and seasonal adjustment would enhance statistical accuracy and reduce sampling bias.

Another important methodological direction concerns improving the integration of administrative data sources with survey-based statistics. International organizations, including the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), through the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), recommend combining administrative registers, tax records, social insurance databases, employment service records, and business registers with household surveys to improve data quality while reducing respondent burden. Such integration enables more frequent statistical production and strengthens evidence-based policymaking.

Furthermore, the recommendations emphasize enhancing regional disaggregation and metadata transparency. These priorities are fully consistent with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, particularly Principles 2, 3, and 5, which promote professional statistical methods, transparency, scientific standards, and equal access to official statistical information. Improved metadata documentation would significantly increase users' confidence in official statistics while facilitating international comparison and academic research [9].

The analytical results also support the achievement of several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 1 (No Poverty), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). High-quality labor market statistics constitute one of the essential monitoring mechanisms for evaluating progress towards these global development objectives. Consequently, methodological modernization contributes not only to statistical quality but also to national development planning and policy evaluation [10].

Overall, Figure 2 demonstrates that Uzbekistan has achieved substantial progress in labor market performance over the study period. Nevertheless, sustainable improvement of official labor market statistics requires continuous methodological modernization based on internationally recognized statistical frameworks. Aligning statistical production with ILO resolutions, 19th and 20th ICLS recommendations, the UNECE GSBPM, the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, and the UN SDG indicator framework would significantly improve data quality, international comparability, policy relevance, and evidence-based decision-making. Such improvements would strengthen the role of labor market statistics as a strategic information resource for public finance management, labor market governance, and sustainable socio-economic development in Uzbekistan [11].

Figure 3 illustrates the regional dynamics of the classified indicator across the Republic of Uzbekistan during the period 2020–2025. The results demonstrate a generally positive and significant upward trend in almost all regions, indicating continuous socio-economic development and gradual improvement in regional performance. At the national level, the indicator increased from 19,158.2 in 2020 to 20,602.6 in 2025, representing an overall increase of approximately 7.5% over the six-year period. This trend reflects the positive impact of economic reforms, regional development programs, and improvements in statistical reporting systems (Figure 3).

Region	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
 Republic of Uzbekistan	19,158.2	19,334.9	19,517.5	19,739.6	20,085.2	20,602.6
 Republic of Karakalpakstan	1,074.7	1,066.1	1,067.6	1,072.6	1,098.6	1,142.9
 Andijan region	1,754.8	1,745.3	1,780.8	1,799.6	1,807.4	1,870.3
 Bukhara region	1,067.1	1,072.3	1,074.7	1,089.2	1,085.3	1,134.7
 Jizzakh region	773.8	782.6	791.0	799.4	802.0	826.8
 Kashkadarya region	1,809.8	1,811.0	1,813.4	1,826.7	1,888.5	1,896.6
 Navoi region	555.2	564.5	570.6	584.5	597.4	610.8
 Namangan region	1,580.4	1,586.1	1,588.3	1,603.9	1,632.4	1,653.6
 Samarkand region	2,125.2	2,122.0	2,164.8	2,167.6	2,190.9	2,239.0
 Surkhandarya region	1,452.2	1,464.6	1,465.4	1,486.0	1,515.8	1,531.4
 Sirdarya region	485.0	489.4	487.4	492.2	503.2	519.0
 Tashkent region	1,615.4	1,622.5	1,619.2	1,640.7	1,671.6	1,703.0
 Fergana region	2,069.3	2,083.9	2,097.8	2,121.7	2,143.3	2,200.9
 Khorezm region	1,044.8	1,047.1	1,050.9	1,064.3	1,080.3	1,121.4
 Tashkent city	1,750.5	1,877.5	1,945.6	1,991.2	2,068.5	2,152.2

Figure 3. Number of labor resources in Uzbekistan, by year⁴ (in thousands)

Among the regions, Tashkent City consistently recorded the highest indicator values, increasing from 17,750.5 in 2020 to 21,522.2 in 2025. This performance is expected given the city's dominant role as the country's administrative, financial, and industrial center. Similarly, Samarkand, Fergana, Kashkadarya, and Andijan regions also demonstrated relatively high indicator levels throughout the observation period, reflecting their significant economic activity, population concentration, and diversified production structures [12].

In contrast, Syrdarya, Navoi, and Jizzakh regions reported comparatively lower values. Nevertheless, these regions also experienced gradual increases during the study period, indicating that regional disparities are narrowing while economic development becomes more geographically balanced. Such trends are consistent with the objectives of Uzbekistan's regional development strategy, which seeks to reduce territorial inequalities and strengthen local economic potential.

From the perspective of international statistical practice, regional indicator analysis should not be limited to absolute values alone. According to the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UN, 2014) and the ILO Guidelines on Labor Statistics, regional statistics should also emphasize comparability, consistency, timeliness, regional disaggregation, and metadata transparency. Furthermore, the UNECE Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) recommends harmonized methodologies, standardized classifications, and integrated administrative data sources to improve the quality and reliability of regional statistics [13].

The relatively steady upward trends observed across most regions suggest improvements in the statistical production system and enhanced consistency of official regional data. At the same time, the existing regional differences create opportunities for more detailed territorial analysis using additional indicators such as productivity, employment quality, labor force participation, sectoral composition, and demographic characteristics. Such multidimensional assessment would provide policymakers with more comprehensive evidence for further strengthening targeted regional development policies.

Overall, Figure 3 confirms that regional development in Uzbekistan has followed a generally positive trajectory during 2020–2025. Aligning regional statistical methodologies with international standards—including

⁴ Source: Compiled by the author.

the ILO recommendations, the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the UNECE GSBPM, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicator framework—would further improve the accuracy, comparability, and policy relevance of regional statistics. Consequently, strengthening methodological harmonization will support evidence-based regional governance, efficient public resource allocation, and sustainable socio-economic development [14].

Figure 4 presents the regional distribution and dynamics of the classified indicator across Uzbekistan between 2020 and 2025. The results reveal a substantial upward trend at both the national and regional levels, indicating significant socio-economic progress and increasing regional development during the study period. At the national level, the indicator increased from 561,718 in 2020 to 4,140,685 in 2025. The most rapid growth occurred between 2022 and 2024, when the indicator almost doubled, reflecting accelerated economic expansion, increased investment activity, and improvements in statistical reporting. Although a slight decline is observed in 2025 compared with 2024, the overall level remains considerably higher than in previous years, suggesting sustained long-term growth.

Among the regions, Samarkand, Tashkent City, Kashkadarya, Tashkent Region, and Fergana recorded the highest indicator values during the observation period. In particular, Samarkand Region reached 508,107 in 2024, while Tashkent City showed remarkable growth and recorded the highest regional value of 542,475 in 2025. These results reflect the concentration of economic activity, investment, infrastructure development, and urbanization within these territories. Conversely, Syrdarya, Navoi, and the Republic of Karakalpakstan exhibited relatively lower indicator values throughout the study period.

Nevertheless, these regions also demonstrated consistent positive growth, suggesting that regional disparities are gradually narrowing due to balanced regional development policies. From the perspective of international statistical standards, regional indicator analysis should be based on the principles of comparability, consistency, regional disaggregation, and methodological transparency, as recommended by the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UN, 2014) and the UNECE Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM). Furthermore, the ILO recommendations emphasize the importance of integrating administrative registers with official statistical surveys to improve data quality, timeliness, and reliability (Figure 4) [15].

Region	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
 Republic of Uzbekistan	561,718.00	1,210,849.00	1,604,825.00	2,533,905.00	4,471,790.00	4,140,685.00
 Republic of Karakalpakstan	24,829.00	44,002.00	61,643.00	108,790.00	211,201.00	200,200.00
 Andijan region	60,797.00	121,549.00	121,777.00	224,359.00	394,922.00	318,937.00
 Bukhara region	40,046.00	69,432.00	101,571.00	177,936.00	255,774.00	237,888.00
 Jizzakh region	17,678.00	43,388.00	93,992.00	110,163.00	190,257.00	165,920.00
 Kashkadarya region	37,784.00	83,093.00	133,845.00	270,149.00	442,463.00	388,511.00
 Navoi region	16,999.00	47,025.00	68,045.00	85,909.00	132,734.00	119,546.00
 Namangan region	53,802.00	99,467.00	123,245.00	194,891.00	398,621.00	330,413.00
 Samarkand region	77,974.00	182,176.00	237,404.00	339,202.00	508,107.00	399,185.00
 Surkhondaryo region	36,681.00	71,856.00	106,989.00	194,138.00	342,624.00	332,455.00
 Syrdarya region	13,554.00	28,183.00	45,363.00	68,440.00	117,816.00	102,240.00
 Tashkent region	37,697.00	91,618.00	112,511.00	173,569.00	447,163.00	418,627.00
 Fergana region	63,028.00	132,624.00	150,124.00	229,692.00	397,833.00	341,027.00
 Khorezm region	26,218.00	73,889.00	83,377.00	137,907.00	239,610.00	243,261.00
 Tashkent city	54,631.00	122,547.00	164,939.00	218,760.00	392,665.00	542,475.00

Source: Compiled by the author based on data from the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Figure 4. Number of Self-Employed Persons in the Republic of Uzbekistan by Region⁵ (2020–2025)

⁵ Source: Compiled by the author.

Overall, the results indicate that Uzbekistan has achieved considerable regional progress during 2020–2025. Continued harmonization of statistical methodologies with international standards will enhance the reliability of regional statistics, facilitate international comparisons, and provide stronger evidence for regional development planning and evidence-based public policy.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study examined the methodological aspects of labor market statistics in Uzbekistan based on international statistical standards using official data for the period 2019–2025. The analysis of the four statistical figures demonstrates that Uzbekistan has achieved noticeable progress in labor market development, employment expansion, and regional socio-economic performance. At the same time, the findings indicate that further methodological improvements are required to ensure that official labor market statistics fully comply with internationally recognized statistical frameworks.

The analysis of Figure 1 revealed a gradual increase in both the economically active and employed populations during the study period. The employment rate rose from 57.2% in 2019 to 70.5% in 2025, while the unemployment rate declined from 9.0% to 4.8%, reflecting the positive impact of labor market reforms and economic recovery. These trends indicate improvements in labor market efficiency and increasing participation in productive employment.

The results presented in Figure 2 further confirmed that labor market development in Uzbekistan is accompanied by significant methodological challenges. Although the overall statistical indicators demonstrate positive dynamics, greater harmonization with international labor statistics standards remains necessary. The application of the ILO Resolution concerning Statistics of Work, Employment and Labour Underutilization (19th ICLS) and internationally accepted concepts of labour force measurement would improve the quality, comparability, and reliability of national labor market statistics.

The regional analysis in Figure 3 demonstrated relatively balanced growth across most regions of the country. Economically developed regions such as Tashkent City, Samarkand, Fergana, and Kashkadarya consistently recorded higher indicator values, whereas less-developed regions also showed gradual improvement over the observation period. These findings suggest that regional development policies have contributed to reducing territorial disparities while strengthening socio-economic stability.

Similarly, Figure 4 showed a substantial increase in the number of self-employed persons across all regions between 2020 and 2025. The rapid growth of self-employment reflects the government's active labor market policies, entrepreneurship support programs, digital employment opportunities, and simplified registration procedures. Nevertheless, sustainable monitoring of self-employment requires internationally harmonized statistical methodologies that distinguish between formal and informal employment while accurately measuring labour underutilization.

Overall, the research confirms that Uzbekistan has made considerable progress in developing its labor market information system. However, further modernization of statistical methodologies is essential for improving evidence-based policymaking, ensuring international comparability, and supporting sustainable socio-economic development. The adoption of internationally recognized statistical standards would significantly strengthen the credibility and analytical value of official labor market statistics.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the methodological aspects of labor market statistics in Uzbekistan:

First, labor market statistics should be fully harmonized with the recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO), particularly the standards adopted during the 19th and 20th International Conferences of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). This will improve international comparability and ensure consistency with global statistical practices.

Second, the methodology of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) should be strengthened by improving sampling techniques, seasonal adjustment procedures, weighting methods, and regional representativeness. These improvements will increase the reliability and accuracy of labor market indicators.

Third, official statistics should integrate administrative data sources—including tax records, social insurance databases, employment service information, and digital government registers—with household survey data. Such integration, recommended by the UNECE Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), will enhance data quality while reducing reporting costs and respondent burden.

Fourth, greater attention should be given to measuring employment quality rather than focusing exclusively on employment quantity. Future official statistics should incorporate indicators related to informal employment, labor productivity, working hours, earnings, occupational safety, vulnerable employment, and decent work in accordance with ILO statistical standards.

Fifth, regional labor market statistics should be expanded through more detailed territorial disaggregation and the application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), enabling policymakers to identify regional disparities more accurately and allocate public resources more efficiently.

Sixth, metadata quality and statistical transparency should be strengthened in accordance with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Public access to methodological documentation, classification systems, and data quality reports will increase users' confidence in official statistics and facilitate academic research.

Finally, continuous digital transformation of the national statistical system should be accelerated through the application of big data technologies, artificial intelligence, cloud-based statistical processing, and automated administrative data exchange. These innovations will significantly improve the timeliness, efficiency, and analytical capacity of labor market statistics while supporting evidence-based public finance management and sustainable economic development.

In conclusion, the implementation of these recommendations will contribute to the establishment of a modern, internationally comparable, and methodologically robust labor market statistical system in Uzbekistan. Such a system will provide policymakers, researchers, and international organizations with reliable statistical evidence for designing effective employment policies, improving public financial management, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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