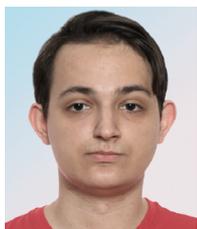


# SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESEARCH

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## CAREER HABITUS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GIG ECONOMY: EMPIRICAL STUDY



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*Considering the transformations in the socio-professional structure that emerged under the influence of post-industrialization, the article attempts to develop a theoretical framework for understanding career habitus. Guided by this framework, we conduct an empirical study aimed at outlining fundamental characteristics of career habitus among Moscow university students amid the rise of the gig economy as a system of labor relations, in which temporary and short-term employment has become pervasive. The empirical research consists of two stages: qualitative semi-structured interviews and an online survey. Our typology of career habitus has demonstrated its productivity in terms of researching the perceptions of student youth about professional development. The findings indicate that basic characteristics of the industrial career habitus are present in the university students. It is manifested in respondents' desire to have a permanent employment contract, a standard work schedule, guaranteed and regular paycheck, and social benefits. The university students aspire to work in a reliable organization that provides them with opportunities for both position advancement and income growth. Organizations themselves are perceived as means to shield young individuals from labor market uncertainties and risks. On the other hand, the career habitus of the student youth exhibits certain post-industrial traits: desire to work from home, drive for self-realization, readiness for relatively frequent changes of employers, etc. However, the gig economic career habitus, as a distinct subtype of the post-industrial habitus, characterized by a desire to break free from "corporate slavery" and to be an independent worker, is not widespread among the Moscow students.*

*Career habitus, career orientations, gig economy, university students, young people.*

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## Introduction

Post-industrialism theorists declare that society has undergone significant transformations, marked by a notable increase in the role of the service and information technology sectors. Labor is evolving toward a more educated and intellectual realm, characterized by diversity and the opportunity for individuals to fully and productively realize their potential (Bell, 1999; Toffler, 2004). In this new societal paradigm, non-economic motivations of workers take precedence over economic ones, owing to the satisfaction of individuals' basic needs. The Protestant ethic, traditionally centered on thrift and hard work, is gradually receding into the background (Toffler, 2004).

The implications of post-industrialization must, however, be critically assessed. The strong relationship between labor and capital, employee and employer, is being eroded, resulting in the disappearance, to some extent, of clearly defined life paths, including distinct professional and career trajectories (Bauman, 2005). Capital can now move at a fundamentally different pace, shedding territorial, spatial, and social boundaries. The long-term mindset inherent in industrial society is being replaced by a short-term one. This shift is particularly evident in the labor market, where there is a focus on flexibility and temporary contracts. While this enhances the autonomy of both employees and employers, it also threatens the development of clear future prospects, the foundations of social solidarity, and mutual trust. It could be argued that "capitalism without work" is taking shape (Beck, 2001). In this new societal context, a significant portion of workers, according to U. Beck, is at risk of diminishing, as they can be relatively easily replaced by a small group of highly qualified specialists or outsourced to other countries. Due to the proliferation of "irregular labor," a "full employment society" under contemporary capitalism is a "fiction."

The transformations in the labor institution are mirrored by the socio-professional structure of contemporary society. While the intellectual and creative work discussed by D. Bell and A. Toffler is undoubtedly crucial, concurrently, there is a proliferation of low-skilled and precarious labor within the service sector.

American social thinker D. Pink discusses the concept of "free agents" – independent contractors who have the flexibility to work for multiple employers/clients simultaneously on their own terms. Alongside them, there are various types of temporary workers who lack the values of freedom and independence and are devoid of fundamental social protections: temps, temp slaves, and permatemps<sup>1</sup> (Pink, 2001). Economist and sociologist R. Florida observed the expansion of both the creative class, comprising individuals whose work involves the generation of new ideas and technologies, and the service class, which performs "outsourcer" functions for wealthier and more successful members of society (Florida, 2007). Nonetheless, British researcher G. Standing identified "proficians"<sup>2</sup> – specialists and experts engaged in atypical employment but maintaining a high standard of living through continuous contract renewals, juxtaposed with the "precariat" – a cohort of workers experiencing insecure employment with fluctuating, typically low incomes (Standing, 2014). Therefore, in post-industrial society, two socio-professional groups emerge based on the degree of their successful adaptation to changes in the labor and employment landscape – the privileged and the deprived.

## Gig economy as a research context

The most radical changes in the institution of labor and the socio-professional structure of post-industrial society are manifested in the gig economy. Initially, Americans used this term to describe short-term employment, which became the primary source of income for a segment of the population following

<sup>1</sup> Temps refer to workers engaged in temporary employment, who typically transition to permanent employment conditions if such an opportunity arises. Temp slaves are temporary employees characterized by low wages, low-prestige positions, and poor management attitudes. Permatemps are individuals who work for one company over an extended period but are formally employed through specialized agencies.

<sup>2</sup> The concept formed by G. Standing is derived from two English words: "professionals" and "technicians".

the economic crisis of 2008 (Banik, Padalkar, 2021). Subsequently, the term gained traction in English specialized literature focusing on labor institution transformations, eventually evolving into a scientific term.

While theoretical and empirical research on the gig economy is still in its early stages (Flanagan, 2017), scholars have identified two main approaches to defining this emerging concept: narrow and broad (Dianov, 2023). Within the framework of the narrow approach, the gig economy is equated with individuals working on or through digital platforms. On the other hand, the second approach, advocated by the author, does not limit the gig economy to platform work but considers the concept in a broader context, encompassing various forms of non-standard labor relations, such as temporary and agency workers, on-call workers, independent contractors, among others. Thus, the gig economy can be defined as a system of labor relations characterized by the predominance of temporary and short-term contracts.

Given that the gig economy is expanding at a significant pace (De Stefano, 2016), it raises questions about the implications of the new realities of the labor market on the career aspirations of contemporary Russian youth. While the gig economy offers increased flexibility in career paths and the ability for individuals to create their own work schedule, it also lacks substantial employment guarantees. This necessitates individuals, particularly young people, to pay closer attention to managing their own career development and to consider new risks in the workplace.

As a result of changes in the institution of labor and employment, career strategies are potentially becoming more diverse. The concept of a career is no longer solely linked to advancement within an organization or the aspiration to reach specific job roles. A more comprehensive understanding of individuals' orientations toward change and mobility within the labor sphere can be achieved through the utilization of the concept of "career habitus". The latter represents a set of dispositions and attitudes that influence an individ-

ual's choices regarding work and professional development.

The research problem, therefore, lies in the necessity to identify and explain the characteristics of the career habitus of Moscow students amidst the ambivalent impact of post-industrialization and its "radicalized" offspring – the gig economy.

### **Theoretical framework for examining career habitus**

Drawing from the theory of P. Bourdieu, a group of researchers developed the concept of career habitus (Mayrhofer et al., 2004). If habitus, as described by P. Bourdieu, represents an "acquired system of generative schemes", a "structured" and "structuring" structure dependent on the living conditions, which produces and reproduces them (Bourdieu, 2001), then career habitus emerges as a specific type of habitus – a distinct set of enduring yet adaptable dispositions tailored to a particular career field. It signifies multidirectional changes in the field and "automatically" unfolds within its framework (Iellatchitch et al., 2003).

Career fields encompass specific labor spheres regulated by norms and rules, involving the relations between workers and employers/clients. Within these fields, individuals leverage various types of career capital to either maintain or enhance their position. Career capital refers to those types of capital (economic, cultural and social) that are relevant within a certain career field (Iellatchitch et al., 2003). These are tangible and intangible resources that increase individuals' chances of career success.

Empirical research revealed that self-employed individuals do not necessarily prioritize concepts like advancement or progress; instead, they emphasize acquired knowledge, achievements, self-realization, and freedom as the main components of their career (Mayrhofer et al., 2004). Therefore, the concept of career habitus does not solely focus on labor mobility or the desire to attain or maintain a particular position, but rather considers the multidimensional nature of potential professional development.

Career is commonly examined through the lens of either an objectivist perspective, focusing

on individuals' movements within hierarchical structures, or a subjectivist perspective, which underscores a deliberate professional trajectory shaped by personal perception (Kogan, 2017). Meanwhile, the concept of career habitus based on P. Bourdieu's theory of practice transcends the structure/agency dichotomy by considering both objective and subjective factors. Within this framework, career choices represent the realization of a career habitus, encompassing both external and internal determinants of decision-making.

The understanding of career habitus in this article pertains to a system of attitudes and dispositions concerning personal, professional and vocational development and growth. In this context, career habitus supplements the concept of career orientations, which are defined as meanings and attitudes related to professional choice (Egorova, 2017). Employing the concept of career habitus allows for the integration of individuals' perspectives on career in its entirety, including career strategies and success (Mayrhofer et al., 2004).

The theoretical foundations for the development of career habitus typology are worth exploring. In industrial society, standard employment was predominant, characterized by stable, indefinite, and direct agreements between full-time employees and their sole employers (Schoukens, Barrio, 2017). However, developed capitalist economies are gradually moving away from indefinite employment contracts, a 40-hour work week, and social benefits for workers in favor of non-standard, flexible relationships (Muntaner, 2018; Zwick, 2018).

The general changes in the labor and employment landscape, especially with the growth of intellectual services, are reflected in the behavior of the creative class. Members of this group prioritize individualism and the opportunity for self-expression. They operate within what is termed a "horizontal labor market" and a "horizontal career" (Florida, 2007). Creative workers demonstrate agility in changing employers, are willing to transition between organizations, and explore new formats of employment and activities.

The creative class should be distinguished from free agents, who are more autonomous workers. Thus, R. Florida believes that members of the creative class, as a rule, are not free agents in the fullest sense of the word, since they usually engage in hired work, necessitating their adaptation to the demands of employers and the labor market (Florida, 2007).

D. Pink contrasts the "organization man" and the "free agent" as two types of identity (Pink, 2001). Free agents can work for several companies at the same time, take on different projects and often change customers. The organization man is fully integrated into the social and corporate system, where their personality becomes subsumed within the structure of a large company, and they adhere to the traditional organizational and social norms of life and work.

The work ethic of free agents is distinct. For them, values such as independence and autonomy are prioritized over job stability. They often find the traditional understanding of work as a serious and arduous activity unappealing. Moreover, free agents aspire to set their own schedules, blurring the boundary between work and life (Pink, 2001).

We should highlight that the gig economy encompasses two distinct types of workers (Dianov, 2023). The first is educated and highly paid freelancers, remotely employed professionals, who can be called a privileged group. These individuals exhibit traits akin to D. Pink's free agents, as they prioritize autonomy and flexibility in their work choices. Conversely, the second type comprises temporary, on-call and agency workers. Unlike their counterparts in traditional employment, these workers lack fundamental labor rights and struggle with unstable, inadequate wages – resembling G. Standing's concept of the precariat.

The concepts of standard employment and the "organization man" provide insight into the industrial type of career habitus, emphasizing labor stability and loyalty to the company. On the other hand, the post-industrial type of career habitus is shaped by the creative class's orientation toward flexible relationships with organizations, emphasizing self-actualization

and autonomy within the constraints of hired status. Free agents, emblematic of independent workers, embody strong values of self-realization, freedom, and autonomy, preferring short-term work arrangements. These individuals are viewed as carriers of the gig-economic career habitus, a radicalized subtype of the post-industrial one. Further details on the features of these career habitus types are provided in *Table 1*.

As previously mentioned, the gig economy also encompasses a disadvantaged group of workers. Among them are individuals who voluntarily opt for low-prestige, low-paid, and unstable jobs, indicating a precarious habitus. Such a career choice is often justified by specific motives, such as the need to allocate more time to leisure and family (Tartakovskaya, Vanke, 2019). The precarious career habitus potentially represents a second radicalized subtype of the post-industrial, which will not be discussed further in this article.

In accordance with selected types of career habitus, we can identify the following types of career fields:

1. Classic organizational: This field values loyalty to the company, fostering a strong and stable bond between employee and employer. Both parties are committed to long-term relationships, and the employer provides social guarantees and security to the employee.

2. Flexible post-industrial: In this field, workers prioritize flexible and temporary work arrangements. The relationship between employee and employer tends to weaken and may be irregular. Short-term relations are prevalent, and the organization does not prioritize providing security or social guarantees to the employee.

3. Gig-economic: This subfield of the post-industrial field involves providing specific services and labor through digital platforms. Communication between the worker and the employer (client) is minimal, and short-term

**Table 1. Main characteristics of industrial, post-industrial and gig-economic career habitus**

Comparison parameter	Industrial	Post-industrial	Gig-economic
Occupational stability	Importance of stable and guaranteed employment	Orientation toward the possibility of self-realization, flexibility, freedom, autonomy of the personality	Values of self-realization, flexibility, freedom, and autonomy are expressed to the greatest extent possible
Type of work registration	Orientation toward an indefinite or long-term employment contract	Willingness to combine different types of employment and contracts	Focus exclusively on short-term relationships with employers/clients
Social benefits and guarantees	Highlighting the necessity of receiving a comprehensive benefits package	Willingness to forego social protections	Abandoning conventional labor contracts, thus foregoing benefits package
Guarantee and regularity of wages	Focus on stable and guaranteed salary	Readiness to forego a dependable, steady income	Earnings can be regular, but they are rarely guaranteed, because they depend on the actual outcomes of the work
Changing employers	Aspiration for long-term employment within a single organization	Readiness to switch employers frequently	Changing clients and employers as part of a lifestyle
Schedule and working hours	Setting up for a five-day work week and an 8-hour work day	Consent to combine different schedules and work modes	The most flexible and unrestricted mode and work schedule
Remote work	Desire to get a secured "physical" workplace	Willingness to work remotely, combine remote work with periodic presence in the workplace	Work is predominantly carried out remotely
Work-life interface	Clear separation of work from other areas of life	Work and other aspects of life can merge	
Role of formal education in the workplace	Fairly clear link between formal education and further work	Formal education may not be as crucial for success in one's career	

Source: own elaboration.

relationships are common. Organizations and platforms typically do not provide security to the worker.

The proposed typology of career habitus, considering the ongoing transformations in the socio-professional structure, holds potential cognitive value. It serves as a tool to describe and elucidate individuals' perspectives on professional and vocational development in contemporary society. The empirical study aimed to outline the basic characteristics that comprise the career habitus of Moscow university students, guided by the theoretical framework presented by the author.

The hypothesis suggests that despite the growing popularity of non-standard employment, including work in the gig economy, young people do not view atypical forms of labor relations as their primary career strategy.

### Research methodology

The empirical study consisted of two successive stages: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative phase, conducted through semi-structured interviews, aimed to gather a diverse range of opinions and categorize motives and attitudes toward different types of employment to inform the development of research tools. At the second stage, a questionnaire survey was conducted to obtain preliminary percentage distributions of responses, reflecting various groups of motives and attitudes that contribute to the career habitus of Moscow students.

In December 2022, qualitative research was conducted involving 22 semi-structured interviews with full-time students<sup>3</sup> from Moscow universities. Participants were drawn from 14 different universities, comprising 8 males and 14 females with ages ranging from 20 to 23 years old.

The semi-structured interview guide included questions designed to capture and understand the motives and attitudes of students regarding work and career in gen-

eral, work within their field of study, the primary factors influencing their choice of job, attitudes toward employment and self-employment, preferred types of employment arrangements, work modes and schedules, and willingness to be loyal to an organization. Similar aspects were addressed in the questionnaire survey. Multiple-choice questions were answered using nominal scales, while questions with single-answer options utilized ordinal scales (four- and five-point scales) adapted for studying career habitus features.

At the second stage of the study (January – February 2023), undergraduate, specialist and graduate students at Moscow universities were surveyed online. A quota-based target sample was used; 12 universities were randomly selected from the list of medium and large universities in Moscow. Then the number of respondents was quoted based on the number of admissions to the first year<sup>4</sup> (as of 2022)<sup>5</sup>: HSE University (50 respondents), Lomonosov Moscow State University (45), Bauman Moscow State Technical University (36), Plekhanov Russian University of Economics (23), Moscow Polytechnic University (19), Kutafin Moscow State Law University (16), Moscow City University (16), Pirogov Russian National Research Medical University (13), MGIMO University (9), MSUT “Stankin” (9), Moscow State Linguistic University (8), Moscow Automobile and Road Construction State Technical University MADI (8). The total number of respondents is 252 individuals.

The share of state-funded students was 61.1%. 61.9% of respondents were enrolled in socio-economic and humanitarian fields, 28.2% in mathematics and technical specialties, and 9.9% in natural sciences. At the time of the survey, 56.0% of students had a job. The gender distribution among respondents was 42.5% male and 57.5% female. The average age of respondents was 21.7 years.

<sup>3</sup> In both quantitative and qualitative research, students from the third year bachelor's / specialist's programs (and above) could participate.

<sup>4</sup> Other variables were not quoted.

<sup>5</sup> In this case, the number of individuals enrolled in the first year serves as an indicator of the university's size, as official data on the total number of students may not always be accessible.

## Results

Let us first delve into the outcomes derived from the qualitative stage of the study. It is evident that work for students appears to be a multi-motivational activity: *“Work should simultaneously bring pleasure, but at the same time give a good monetary return”* (female, 21 years old, economics); *“This is a way of self-realization that will allow me to provide for a living”* (male, 22 years old, mechanical engineering); *“This is an opportunity to demonstrate my talents, abilities and at the same time get a certain amount of money”* (female, 22 years old, aircraft industry). It is emphasized that work “makes me better” because through it, an individual can improve, grow both professionally and personally. One can derive enjoyment from work as it enables the fulfillment of personal interests and higher needs. On the other hand, with all the opportunities that work provides, its root cause is still earnings, income. The informants emphasize the importance of striking a balance between wages and the personal appeal of work. However, some students also acknowledge that any job eventually becomes routine, at which point income becomes virtually the sole motivator.

Students perceive their career in a rather traditional manner: *“Promotion of a person in an organization, growth in position, salary, authority”* (female, 21 years old, economics); *“Professional path, advancement up the professional ladder”* (female, 23 years old, sociology); *“Opportunity for professional growth”* (male, 23 years old, applied mathematics and computer science). In the student’s mind, a career is primarily associated with attaining higher positions, especially executive and managerial roles, along with an increase in income, greater levels of responsibility, and the accumulation of experience.

Let us explore into the informants’ perspectives on the hired labor. In it, students are *“attracted to a greater degree by stability, partly by predictability”* (female, 20 years old, chemistry), other advantages of working in an organization include *“stable earnings”* (male, 21 years old, designing light industry products), *“regular paid vacations, sick leave”* (female, 20 years

old, linguistics). Hired work allows minimizing the risks for an individual and provides the opportunity to have a guaranteed income. Its advantages, such as the availability of corporate training and a benefits package, the opportunity to communicate with other employees and share experiences, were also noted.

It is emphasized that not all work can be effectively transitioned to freelance or self-employment. According to the interviewees, in comparison with hired labor, self-employment is much more difficult, responsible and unstable, since it is associated with the need to show independence and initiative, while not providing a steady income: *“I don’t think I can work for myself, because I need to be controlled”* (female, 23 year, management); *“I do not have enough independence and confidence in my actions to work for myself”* (female, 23 years old, personnel management); *“Working for myself does not imply fixed employment and does not guarantee stable income”* (male, 20 years old, linguistics). We should note that informants usually do not see significant problems in having direct control over themselves, and even strive for this.

Some students view self-employment and freelancing as supplementary sources of income, categorized as secondary employment. However, in certain crisis scenarios, such as the failure to realize current career plans, self-employment may be regarded with greater seriousness. Notably, starting one’s own business emerges as a compelling alternative to traditional employment for some informants.

When discussing the way of employment, students are often attracted to an employment contract concluded for an indefinite period, since it involves regular and guaranteed payments and the availability of labor rights (vacation, sick leave, etc.). Interviewees believe that this type of contract indicates a more stable, solid and serious relationship that arises between an employee and an employer. However, there is occasional dissatisfaction with companies that opt for civil contracts instead of labor contracts, as this lowers the employee’s status and restricts their social security rights.

The most understandable and familiar schedule for informants is the standard eight-hour, five-day work week, with the workday starting in the morning and ending in the evening. It is also believed that a fixed schedule (as opposed to a flexible one) makes it possible to better distinguish between personal and working hours. At the same time, future entrepreneurs want to gain a greater degree of control over the organization of their time and life in general, so they choose a non-standard schedule.

Let us consider the attitude toward remote employment. Due to the fact that permanent telecommuting, “*can drive you crazy*” (female, 23 years old, management), some informants highlight the appeal of a hybrid employment format. This approach allows individuals to maintain traditional work attributes, such as having a designated office space or desk, while also offering the flexibility to work online when necessary. However, there is also a negative perception of remote work, often associated with the specifics of the professional activities of informants. It is said that it is necessary to maintain direct contact with employees, interact with more experienced colleagues, which they believe is difficult to achieve in remote work. Some interviewees point out that distant work can lead to a decrease in the efficiency of work processes and be the cause of blurring the line between work and personal life.

Among the respondents, there exists a perspective suggesting that working in one’s field of study is not essential in today’s world. This viewpoint stems from the belief that one’s chosen specialty may not align with their personal interests or yield significant income. Numerous instances show individuals achieving success in unrelated domains. Respondents express feeling compelled to select an educational path at a relatively young age, lacking the opportunity to thoroughly evaluate the pros and cons. As one respondent remarked, “*Higher education is necessary in order to understand what you don’t want to do, isn’t that what they say?*” (female, 23 years old, sociology). Conversely, an opposing viewpoint contends that working within one’s specialty

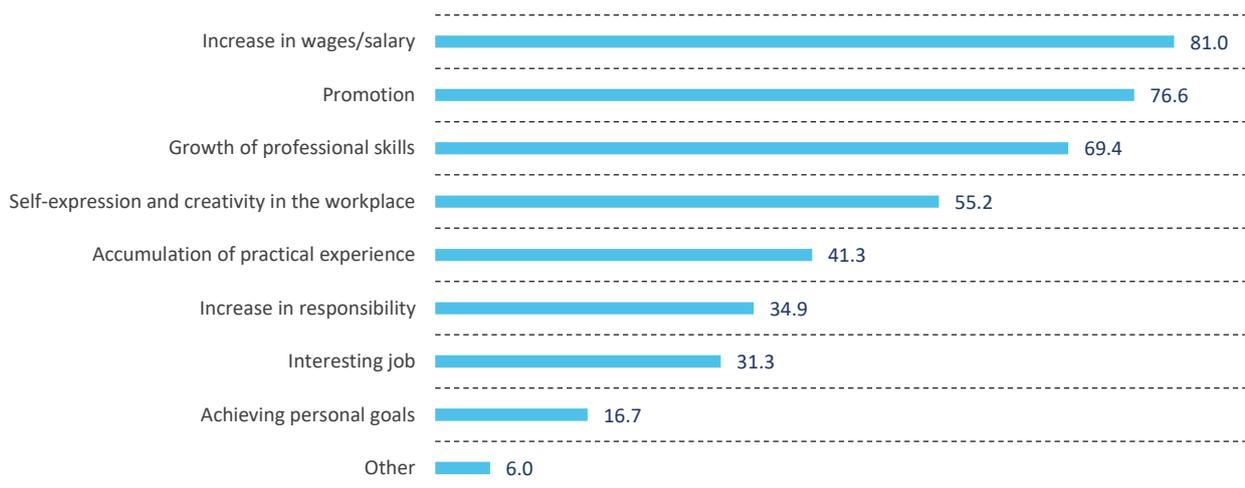
is imperative. Proponents of this perspective argue that higher education imparts crucial competencies for future professional endeavors, while others fear the prospect of their education not translating into practical application, leading to potential frustration.

Students are willing to exhibit a certain level of loyalty to the organization, as changing jobs is perceived as potentially resulting in the loss of career capital. This capital, which may have been relevant in one company, could be less significant in another. If the working conditions align with the preferences of the students, they do not mind staying with the same organization for an extended period. However, in general, transitioning to a new workplace is not seen as particularly challenging. Students recognize that over the course of their professional careers, they may need to work in various organizations: “*If the working conditions in one company deteriorate, then you can find a better job elsewhere*” (male, 23 years old, applied mathematics and computer science).

We shall now proceed to analyze the outcomes derived from the quantitative phase of the research. Students primarily associate work with earnings, money (85.7%), followed by self-realization/creativity (62.3%) and interesting activity (48.8%). Much less frequently, work is associated with hardship and fatigue (27.8%), routine (25.0%), and necessity (11.9%). It is worth noting that interest and satisfaction from work are significant factors: less than a third of the respondents would accept a job that is highly paid but completely uninteresting.

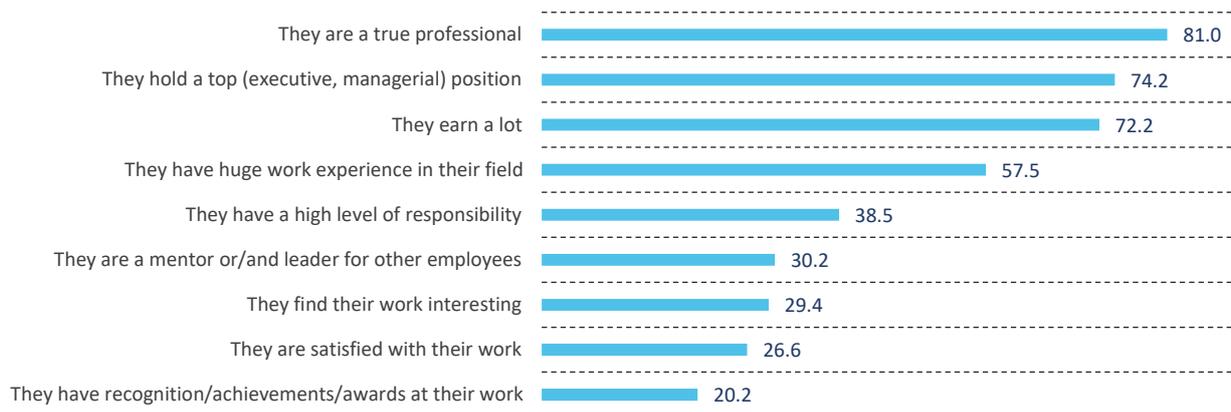
The survey confirms the traditional perception of a career (*Fig. 1*). Primarily, this concept is associated with an increase in wages/salary (81.0%), promotion (76.6%), and growth of professional skills (69.4%). For just over 55% of the respondents, a career is also associated with self-expression and creativity. According to respondents, one can talk about career success (*Fig. 2*) when an individual is a true professional in their field (81.0%), holds a high position (74.2%) and earns a lot (72.2%).

When asked about their projected type of employment, over 80% of students expressed a preference to be employees in



**Fig. 1. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question "What is primarily associated with the concept of career for you?" (multiple choice), % of respondents**

Source: results of own empirical study.



**Fig. 2. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question "On the basis of what can we say that a certain person has achieved career success?" (multiple choice)\*, % of respondents**

\* Response options indicated by at least 20% of the respondents are presented.

Source: results of own empirical study.

organizations. Nearly 8% indicated an interest in entrepreneurship, while just under 12% considered freelancing or self-employment. Less than 10% of respondents expressed intentions to utilize digital platforms for their primary job or additional income.

More than 70% of respondents agree that working as a freelancer/self-employed leads to loss of social protections, unstable income, the formation of a sense of insecurity, loneliness, stress, and irregular work schedule. Less than a third of respondents indicate that such work allows them to gain greater freedom and autonomy, combine work and personal life

more effectively, and have better opportunities for self-expression.

Slightly less than 90% of respondents are focused on an indefinite employment contract as a way to formalize relations with an employer. More than 85% of respondents would like to have full-time employment and work on a five-day basis. About three-quarters of students would prefer their working day to start in the morning (08:00–10:30) and end in the evening (17:00–19:00). Consequently, students' commitment to the traditional type of registration and standard work schedule has been confirmed.

When applying for employment, respondents would particularly focus on the following factors (Tab. 2).

Almost 60% of students believe that working in their field of study is unnecessary in today’s world. This perspective suggests that formal education plays a somewhat diminished role in career development according to student opinions.

At the same time, respondents express their willingness to demonstrate a certain level of loyalty to prospective employers. Just over 50% of respondents indicated that they prefer to work for a single employer, but they are also open to changing organizations if circumstances necessitate it.

Based on the materials from both the qualitative and quantitative stages of the study, it can be concluded that students tend to exhibit a mixed career habitus with a strong industrial orientation. The preference for standard employment is evident among students, as reflected in their desire for an indefinite employment contract with the organization, a stable and guaranteed salary, full-time employment with a five-day work schedule, and access to social security. Organizations and enterprises are perceived by respondents as a form of “protection” and “insurance” against the uncertainties of the today’s world, serving as a risk reduction tool that makes labor relations more predictable, clear, and robust.

This confirms the thesis that students value lasting employee-employer relationships.

On the other hand, students exhibit certain elements of post-industrial career habits, which include a desire for partial remote work, a moderate aspiration for personal fulfillment, recognition of the lack of necessity to work in the specialty, and readiness for relatively frequent job changes. However, the majority of students do not show a pronounced preference for flexible working hours or short-term contracts. Additionally, there is little desire to pursue self-employment or choose their own work tasks, which are fundamental principles of gig work. Students predominantly plan to remain within the industrial (organizational) career field, where companies provide employees with “security” and employees exhibit a moderate level of loyalty to organizations.

**Conclusions**

The proposed typology of career habitus holds heuristic value as it enables the characterization of young people’s fundamental attitudes toward professional and vocational development within the post-industrial economy and its extreme manifestation – the gig economy. The results of the empirical study highlighted the potential usefulness of the theoretical framework in directly examining the perceptions of future careers among student youth, particularly in light of the development of non-standard employment.

**Table 2. Respondents’ answers to the question “What would you pay priority attention to when looking for a job in the future?” (multiple choice), % of respondents**

Answer option*	%
Amount of remuneration	89.3
Regular and guaranteed payments	77.0
Ability to work remotely (including sometimes)	72.6
Reliability, stability of the organization	70.6
Promotion opportunities	67.9
Satisfaction from the work process	62.7
Opportunities for self-realization/self-expression / creativity in the workplace	57.9
Availability of a benefits package (vacation, sick leave, etc.)	44.4
Distance to work	42.9
Availability of official registration	41.7
*Response options indicated by at least 40% of respondents are presented here. Source: results of own empirical study.	

The analysis of empirical materials confirms the hypothesis we have proposed. A typical career strategy among students is marked by a focus on salary growth and promotion, as well as the development of professional competencies within the organization where the respondents anticipate official employment. The industrial type of career habitus predominates among Moscow students, with the majority showing an orientation toward stable employment. This includes seeking indefinite employment contracts, regular payments, a full-time standard work schedule, and access to social benefits and guarantees. Organizations are perceived as a means of safeguarding against the uncertainty and risks associated with freelancing and self-employment.

At the same time, students value self-development and self-expression in their work,

job satisfaction, and the opportunity to telework. Additionally, young people express their readiness to change employer organizations. This suggests that the career habitus of Moscow students is mixed, although it remains grounded in industrial characteristics.

The gig-economic career habitus is poorly manifested among students, as the proportion of those who express a desire to work under short-term relationships and fixed-term contracts is relatively small. Therefore, students demonstrate a keen awareness of the risks inherent in modern society, particularly in the realm of employment and career choices. It is likely for this reason that they prioritize “rigid” forms of labor relations, which can provide a certain level of stability and confidence in the future.

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