









Студенттер мен жас ғалымдардың **«ҒЫЛЫМ ЖӘНЕ БІЛІМ - 2018»** XIII Халықаралық ғылыми конференциясы

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EDUCATIONAL EQUITY IN KAZAKHSTAN: A MEANS OF IMPROVING HUMAN CAPITAL

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Human capital and education

The Oxford English Dictionary defines Human capital as "The skills, knowledge, and experience possessed by an individual or population, viewed in terms of their value or cost to an organization or country." [2] The notion encompasses that there are investments in people (e.g., education, training, health) and that these investments increase an individual's or a population's productivity [1].

Schultz put forward the first definition for Human Capital: it consisted of the 'knowledge, skills and abilities of the people employed in an organization. [4] Acemoglu says that investments in human capital equalizes the distribution of technological progress [3]. In his research, Goldin found that with the help of human capital development Europe first escaped the long-term trouble which was caused by the stagnant capital growth and pressing demographic boom [1]. It was Jacob Mincer, a father of modern labor economics [12], first developed the mathematic correlation between education, experiences and wage income, i.e. the individual productivity of a person. [13] Income in Mincer's human capital earnings function is the dependent variable and years of education and work experience are independent variable [11]. Goldin claims that education can increase the human capital by increasing the individual productivity of workers and, at the same time, by decreasing the amounts of criminal activities as there are more educated and informed people in the society [1]. Weisbrod B. claiming that "investment in education expands and extends knowledge, leading to advances which raise productivity and improve health" determine that states and organizations must pay more attention to adequate level of expenditures on people [5].

Crocker R. draws out the following model of education and human capital development, which aptly illustrates that human capital is direct outcome of educational investment [11].

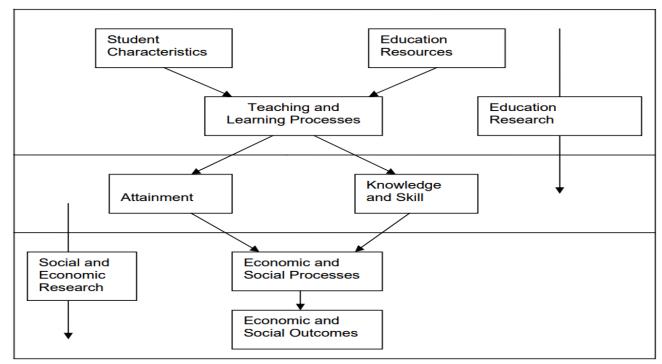


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Education and Human Capital Development [11]

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev has been emphasizing human capital almost all through his addresses to the people of the state. And in the last two addresses delivered in 2017 and 2018, the human capital issue is even talked in separate chapters. [9], [10]. From this, we can see a growing concern for as well as awareness of the human capital development in today's Kazakhstani society. In 2017, Kazakhstan was ranked 56th out of 188 countries with high human development index. In the same year, Kazakhstan occupied the 57nd place in the ranking of the Global Competitiveness Index by the World Economic Forum [7]. Obviously, Kazakhstan has seen the importance of education in developing human capital and, in turn, uplifting the country's economic potential.

Education in Kazakhstan

Education is given a high importance in Kazakhstan and in 2011 Kazakhstan was ranked first on UNESCO's "Education for All Development Index" by achieving near-universal levels of primary education, adult literacy and gender equality [14].

National policies and practices regarding education

The basis of the state policy in the field of higher education in Kazakhstan is the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan (1995). In accordance with paragraph 2, Article 30 of the Constitution "All citizens shall have the right to receive free general secondary, technical and vocational education, and on a competitive basis a free post-secondary, higher and post–higher education provided that the education at these levels is received for the first time". [6]

The main strategic documents about education which have been adopted by the Kazakh authority are followings:

- Long-term: Development Strategy Kazakhstan 2050 "One nation, one destiny", adopted in 2012.
- Medium-term: several strategies co-exist for the medium term, notably the Program for Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011–2020 (adopted in 2010) [21] and the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education and Science for 2014-2018 (from 2014). Other strategic documents include the National Action Plan for the development of school children's functional literacy for 2012–2016 (from 2012), the State General Compulsory Education Standard (from 2012).
 - Short-term: President to the nation delivers addresses to the nation every year with new

initiatives and new strategies. These initiatives and strategies are then developed into strategic documents and laws in different sections of the country's life. The ministries, including the Ministry of Education and Science, also develop their own operational plans for each year.

1. Accessibility of Education in Ethnic Languages

In Soviet past, along with a strong russification process [16], the development of national languages in different states was profoundly inhibited. Even though Kazakhs were the titular nation in Soviet Kazakhstan, its language was gradually ousted from the mainstream usage in society at this time, let alone the languages of other ethnic minority groups [16]. Having seen the harshness of such hegemony from dominant Russian culture and language, independent Kazakhstan has promised freedom over all ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan to develop their languages and cultures by ensuring it in its constitution and other relevant laws: article 30 of the Constitution approved in 1995 stipulates that citizens have the right to free comprehensive secondary education in State educational institutions. Citizens also have the right to free higher education in State institutions on a competitive basis [17]. The Education Law adopted in 2007 established the new principles and objectives of education. In accordance with Article 3, the basic principles of education in the country are the following: 1) equality of rights of all to obtain the quality education;2) priority of development of educational system;3) accessibility of education of all levels for population in recognition of mentality, psychophysiological and individual peculiarities of each person... The Law on Language adopted in 1997 ensures the rights of all ethnic groups in terms of language in education: "The Republic of Kazakhstan shall ensure acquisition of primary. basic secondary, general secondary, technical and professional, post-secondary, higher and postgraduate education in state, Russian and, if necessary and possible, in other languages." [19]. All ethnic groups in Kazakhstan have the possibilities to achieve education in languages they prefer. This improved the educational accessibility and affordability in many ethnic communities:

According to National Statistics Agency, in 2015/16 school year there were 2 770 774 school children from over 66 ethnic groups [15]. These students studied in 7 325 schools all over the country, including 3817 Kazakh language medium schools, 1321 Russian language medium schools, 14 Tajik language medium schools, 4 Uighur language medium schools, 11 Uzbek language medium schools, 18 other minority ethnic languages medium schools, and 2188 mixed language medium schools.

2. Inclusive education

In accordance with the basic principles of the Education Law adopted in 2007 (see above), Kazakhstan has intensively been developing inclusive education to provide educational accessibility for mentally and physically disabled citizens. The development of the system of inclusive education is one of the priority directions of the national program of education in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011 – 2020 [21]. According to the Kazakhstan government online service statistics, nowadays, there are a total of 144,783 children with special educational needs, including 96,555 schoolchildren and 48,228 preschool children. In the 2016-2017 educational year, 10% (495 kindergartens from 4910 kindergartens) of kindergartens implemented inclusive education, 6130 children, 44.7% or 3289 schools created conditions for inclusive education (over 40 thousand children). Except for these achievements, regional centers for developing inclusive education in the form of kindergartens, rehabilitation centers, psychological, medical and pedagogical consultations, have been established all over Kazakhstan. In the Vocational educational system, 178 colleges are carrying out inclusive educations for about 3000 people. New technological possibilities are accessible for children with special needs, especially, e-learning, distance education have enabled these children to have quality education. Besides, to stimulate the cognitive development of children with disabilities about half of the special educational organizations in the country are equipped with multimedia educational systems [20].

Conclusion

The two main fields in ensuring educational equity in Kazakhstan are the equal educational opportunities for all ethnic and minority communities living in the country and providing all possible means for physically and mentally limited layer of the nation to ensure the availability of

education. The equity of education concerns the human capital development of the country which is one of the priority of the country to develop. So, both fields are well supported by national policies and action plans by far.

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