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Effects Of Access To Education And Information-Communication Technology On Income Inequality In Kazakhstan

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Abstract

The article examines the influence of access to education and information-communication technologies on the inequality in the population distribution by income. The aim of the study is to prove that the low accessibility to professional education and information-communication technologies is a factor of increasing income inequality in Kazakhstan. Based on the databases of Kazakhstan household studies, the presence of direct relationship between the denoted parameters is ascertained, and recommendations on improving government policies to reduce income inequality and enhance the population's quality of life are given.

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1. Introduction

In the modern society many countries face the task of smoothing inequalities through different mechanisms of distribution and redistribution of income between socio-economic groups. It helps to ensure social justice and protection of the population, as well as to support socially vulnerable population categories. Taking into consideration the successfully developing economy of Kazakhstan, the matters of improving the quality of life and reducing the income inequality come to the fore.

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An important factor in the existence of inequality is the differences in access to vocational education and information-communication technologies. According to research by (OECD, 2011), since the 1980s, the main reason for the increase of income inequality from employment has been a steady growth in demand for highly skilled workers in high-tech industries. This was the reason for the growth of salaries of those with professional education, the relevant knowledge, and skills to work in high-tech information-communications sectors. As a result, the wage gap between highly skilled and low-skilled workers has been increasing, with growing income inequality in their employment. There is a perception that access to information and computer technologies could provide opportunities to obtain a higher income, reduce poverty, and improve the living standards in the country. Thus, access to education and information-communication technologies has a specific effect on inequality in the distribution of income from employment. In this article we will attempt to assess how strongly these two criteria influence the population distribution by income groups in Kazakhstan. *Aim.* The aim of the study is to prove that the low accessibility to professional education and information-communication technologies is a factor of increasing income inequality in Kazakhstan.

2. Method

As statistical instruments of research, methods of correlation and frequency analysis were applied, as well as tabular and graphical methods for visualizing the results of the study. The sources of data for statistical evaluations were: 1) the official data of the Statistics Agency of Kazakhstan, 2) household budget survey of the Statistics Agency in 2009 (12,000, or more than 45,000 members of the household), and 3) a database of the household survey in 2013 (1,530 households or 5,502 members of a household), conducted in the framework of the research project supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan "The economic stratification of Kazakh society through the prism of the intellectual potential of the country". Household budget survey of the Statistics Agency of Kazakhstan (sample - 12,000 households) includes indicators on income, expenditure and household consumption, their socio-demographic characteristics, involvement in the labour market and living conditions on the basis of the annual, quarterly and daily survey. The sampling error on the basis of household budget survey in 2009 in the country did not exceed 1%, by region - not more than 4%. Household Survey for 2013 in the framework of the research project included 1,530 households. The sample is representative at the regional level as well as for the urban and rural areas, and the statistical error does not exceed 2.5% with a confidence interval of 95%. All data were processed utilising a software package for handling databases SPSS 11.

3. Results

3.1 Impact of education on the inequality in income distribution.

Education is the most important factor in human development; it expands the capacity of an individual in the acquisition of knowledge and professional skills, allows transforming the quality of life, and serves as a source of economic growth. In a number of countries studies proving the link between education and the level of income inequality were conducted (Coleman & et al., 1975; Heckman & Krueger, 2005; Castelló & Doménech, 2000.; De Gregorio & Lee, 2002). Famous Russian scientist (Bobkov, 2013) studying the domestic and international aspects of the socio-economic inequalities in the Russian living standards, gives the accessibility of education as the indicator of one of the key factors of inequality in income distribution. One of the main ways of increasing income and reducing inequality in Kazakhstan could be an increase in access to vocational education for the population. A higher level of education leads to the increase of human potential and the improvement of the qualification of the workforce, as well as career growth. Consequently, the increase in the educational level contributes to the revenue growth. On the other end of the spectrum, the low level of income is accompanied by a lack of access to quality education: the poor are not able to raise the level of education of adults and children of their households. Due to a low level of education and skills one is deprived of opportunities to make money and have a high income. Such a "vicious circle of poverty" only exacerbates income inequality and access to education. Thus, income inequality affects the education inequality, and vice versa. A positive correlation is seen in Kazakhstan between the income of the individual and the level of their education, especially *vocational education*. Pearson's Correlation between the

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