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## **ACCESSIBILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAMESE AND RUSSIAN SOCIETIES: A QUANTITATIVE ASPECT**

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### **Abstract**

Our paper analyzes the social practice of accessibility of higher education in Vietnamese and Russian societies on a basis of a quantitative criterion of comparative analysis: the dynamics of the number of universities; change in the number of students; participation of young people in higher education; the achieved level of education of youth; the index of social equity in education and the gender parity index. Moreover, we carry out a comparative analysis of the level of accessibility of higher education for various social groups in Vietnamese and Russian societies.

Our results show that the number of students in Russia is decreasing, the share of people with higher education remains higher than in Vietnam. However, we also find that the level of social inequality in higher education in Vietnam was more pronounced than in Russia and the inequality in access to this area on the basis of gender in Russia was bigger.

**Keywords:** higher education, access to higher education, social inequality, gender parity, Vietnam, Russia

**JEL classification:** I21, I23, I24

### **Introduction**

The accessibility of higher education is seen as one of the instruments of socio-economic growth of countries, and is also an important channel for social mobility of individuals and groups. One can see that the access to post-secondary education (PSE) constitutes a complex set of factors that include for example financial factors such as the costs of schooling and student aid, as well as other factors that represent students' attitudes to PSE, their preparation, their aspirations, and other factors describing family background that shape up every individual's life and aspirations (see Finnie et al., 2008). The possibility of access to higher education not only depends on external factors (the level of financial security, the status of the family) of the subject - students, but also from internal subjects of higher education - human capital.

Thus, success in higher education lies in the fact that all those with the potential to benefit from higher education should have equal opportunity to participate and succeed, on a course and in an institution that best fit their potential, needs and ambitions for employment or further study (see Atkins and Abdon, 2014).

Unequal opportunities in education are influenced by two types of factors - descriptive and achievable. Therefore, the accessibility of higher education presupposes a differentiation of the possibilities for obtaining it for different social groups.

International research in the field of education is aimed at comparing the results of the functioning of national education systems, on the study of the level of literacy and education of the population in different countries of the world. Half a century of experience in conducting such studies shows that their results are the basis for developing new knowledge. In their paper, Batyukova (2010) notes that the study of various aspects of education contributes to the improvement of the methodology, articulates an understanding of research activity in the modern world, opens up new prospects for the development of the education system (Batyukova, 2010).

We believe that a comparative study of the social practice of access to higher education in different societies, in particular, the comparison between developing (on the example of Vietnamese society) and developed (on the example of Russian society), not only contributes to the development of sociology of education methodology, but also enables developing countries to supplement their own experience in educational policy, mainly through the borrowing of the advantages of the systems of developed countries.

In our opinion, the level of accessibility of higher education is an indicator of the magnitude, degree (high, low) of access to higher education in the country's region or in a particular country in accordance with different criteria.

The definition of the indicator of accessibility of higher education seems to be important in the current conditions of globalization, convergence of educational systems of various countries of the world. The degree of accessibility of higher education is one of the conditions for the successful implementation of academic mobility of students. The indicator of accessibility of higher education makes it possible to take into account both the features of the development of the national educational system and the global trends in the development of education.

## **Overview of the research literature**

The social institution of higher education often becomes a topic of research, both foreign and domestic sociologists, economists, political scientists. However, the problem of its accessibility, especially in cross-country comparison, is studied by modern social and human sciences rarely.

Theoretical basis for the study of accessibility of higher education was developed by representatives of the conflict approach in sociology. Representatives of the structuralist paradigm studied the relationship between the social structure of society and the institution of education (Ballantine, 2001). Bourdieu (1997) described the essence of the conversion of the three forms of capital into education, defined the role of cultural capital in the formation of the status hierarchy and social practices of implementing educational needs (Bourdieu, 1997).

Russian sociologists have developed mechanisms for studying social inequality in higher education. In the monograph Dobrenkov and Nechaev comprehensively examined the problem of professional orientation of Russian youth (Dobrenkov and Nechaev, 2003). Sheregi's works show the unequal chances of various cohorts of Russian youth for higher education (Sheregi, 1997). Yarskaya-Smirnova and Romanov (2005) conducted a number of

studies on the problem of accessibility of education for people with disabilities, presenting the current state of exclusion of disabled people in Russia from the higher education system (see Yarskaya-Smirnova and Romanov, 2005). Roshchina's works reveal the economic aspect of accessibility of higher education (Roshchina, 2004). In his works Shishkin (2006) considers the elitism and inaccessibility of some higher education institutions for different population groups, the author singles out an elite and mass higher education (Shishkin, 2006). In their paper Maksimova (2006) shows how the choice of the educational strategy for Russians is based on educational capital. Fursova and Gorbachayeva (2015) conducted a comparative analysis of Russian and foreign educational discourse on the sociology of education as an industry of sociological knowledge.

Economic aspects of education are considered by researchers from the Czech Republic. I. Čábelková and W. Strielkowski consider influence of the level of education on job satisfaction in post-transition economies on the example of the Czech Republic. (Čábelková, Strielkowski, 2013). Cultural and educational impact on the level of economy is shown in (Čábelková, Abrahám, Strielkowski., 2015). Research on migration process in post-transition economies, educational migration is considered in multiple articles. (Bilan, Strielkowski., 2016; Rokita-Poskart, 2016.).

Tomash Zaritcki published the results of a comparative study based on a survey of students in Moscow and Warsaw regarding the relationship between cultural capital and the accessibility of higher education. (Zaritcki, 2006)

A comparative study conducted by Karpenko and Bershadskaya (2014) contains a socio-economic analysis of the global accessibility rating of higher education in a number of Western European and American countries, including Russia (Karpenko and Bershadskaya, 2014). The authors come to the conclusion that the high rating of countries on financial opportunities for higher education creates prerequisites for further improving its accessibility on the principles of equality and justice.

A number of researchers in Vietnam are studying various aspects of educational inequality and the factors of its accessibility (Đỗ Thiên Kính, 2005; Phạm Hương Trà, 2007; Phùng Thị Kim, 2010, and others).

This indicates a significant amount of scientific work in the field of inequality in higher education and its accessibility. However, an analysis of the factors of social inequality is not sufficiently developed for the study of a single country or a number of countries. Therefore, the need for an in-depth study of this problem is topical, a comparative analysis of the accessibility of higher education in an economically more developed country and developing is of particular interest.

## **Main results**

For a comparison of the education systems in different countries need to develop criteria for comparative analysis, which can be divided into quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative represent a dimension of access to higher education on the basis of specific indicators that give an overall picture of the availability of (mass) of higher education. To them we will be classified as follows:

1. reduction (increase) the number of universities for a certain period of time;
2. decrease (increase) in the number of students over a certain period of time;
3. participation of young people in higher education - the proportion of young people enrolled in tertiary education in the total population of this age group;
4. youth educational attainment - the percentage of individuals with completed higher education in the aggregate of the population;

5. index of social equality in education (EEI), which measures the level of education of parents.

6. gender parity index, reflecting gender equality with regard to access to higher education. Any difference in this index is considered as inequality (Usher A., Cervenán A., 2005).

Based on the identified quantitative criteria, we present a comparative analysis of social practices of access to higher education in Russia and Vietnam.

1. Quantitative dynamics of universities. In recent years in Russia and Vietnam, the number of institutions of higher learning has significantly changed. So, if in Russia the number of educational institutions is reduced, contrary, in Vietnam increases. In 2010-2011 academic year in Russia there were 1 115 universities, however, their number was reduced to 1 046 in 2012-2013 academic year and up to 950 students in the academic year 2014-2015 (Federal Service of State Statistics, 2015). That is, over the past five years, 165 Russian institutions ceased to exist.

The number of universities in Vietnam less than in Russia, but from 2010 year (414 students) by 2015 year fixed appearance of 32 new institutions of higher education (445 students) (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2016, pp. 251). These figures do not give a certain accessibility features of higher education, so we turn to the analysis of other criteria.

2. Number of students (or number of entrants received in high school) is one of the indicators of the level of accessibility of higher education. S.A. Belyakov believes that at present the availability of higher education should be assessed in terms of changes in the amount of revenues, which is characterized by the number of students per 10 thousand people (Belyakov S. A., 2007). The researcher believes that, in a sense, the following indicator characterizes availability: the more young people can be taught in universities, the higher, *ceteris paribus*, higher education accessible (Belyakov S. (A), 2007).

Number of students is the primary and main indicator to measure the level of accessibility of higher education. However, the availability of higher education implies the possibility as income, and successful completion of high school. Therefore, in our view, the calculation of the number of students per 10 thousand people in the country is inadequate indicator of access to higher education. This allows only measure the rate of collection of entrants, but does not identify sufficiently the essence of accessibility of higher education category (does not include the completion of a higher education programme, which is necessary to obtain a complete picture). Therefore, you have to use other indicators of access to higher education.

According to Federal State statistics service, if in the 2013-2014 biennium was recorded in Russia 5.6467 million students, the next year there were already 5.209 million. (Federal Service of State Statistics, 2015). During the same period, the number of students in Vietnam respectively, 2.3639 million. and 2.1185 million. (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2016). Thus, the number of students in Russia and Vietnam is declining. The proportion of students among the population in Vietnam less than in Russia (2.3% - (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2016) vs. 3.56% (Federal Service of State Statistics, 2015). However, measurement of the level of accessibility of higher education in the Vietnamese and Russian societies should not be based solely on this data. You must also take into account other criteria that will measure the rate of interest, not only in the particular region or country, and will provide an opportunity to compare between different administrative-territorial units, be they regions or countries.

3. The number of students per 10 thousand people reflects the share of participation of young people in higher education in the country. In particular, according to 2015, the number of students in Vietnam on 10 thousand persons lower than in Russia (356 students (Federal Service of State Statistics, 2015) against the 231 students - (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2016). Review of the number of students in 10 thousand persons in the last 5 years shows that in Russia the number of students is reduced to 0.72 (Federal Service of State Statistics, 2015), whereas in Vietnam at the same time, this figure is increasing by 0.92 (in 2011, the figure was 227 students in 10 thousand (Prime Minister of Vietnam (2012).

4. The proportion of individuals with completed higher education in population aged over 15 years. This indicator expresses the level achieved (completed) education. The sample corresponds to the typical method of statistics in Russia and Vietnam. In particular, according to the census, 2014 completed higher education is 6.9% of the population of Viet Nam over the age of 15 years (General Statistics Office of Vietnam 2015, pp. 55 (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2011).

In Russia in 2010 this number was 23.4% (Gokhberg et al., 2016). That is, there is a significant difference in the availability of higher education in the developed country (Russia) and developing (Viet Nam). A high degree of accessibility of higher education reflects the level of life of the population, depending on the socio-economic development of the country.

5. Social Equality Education Index (EEI), which reflects the level of equity in education students with different socio-economic statuses, and takes into account the level of education of the father.

Usher and Cervenán (2005) point out that cultural capital everywhere plays an important role in access to education, in particular, the children of the elite are more likely to get a college education than children from working families. It should be noted that the notion of "accessibility of higher education" determines the idea of equality in access to higher education for children of all socio-demographic groups. The higher EEI the more people have access to higher education, and low index means a greater elitism students (Usher and Cervenán, 2005).

Thence, social equality education index reveals the differences in access to higher education for people depending on their status, in this case the level of parental education. It is one of the important indicators, reflecting the significant position of cultural capital in FEB. index Comparison of social equality education in Russia and Vietnam shows that EEI in Russia above (41- (Bershadskaia M.D, Karpenko O.M., 2015) and 37.76 - (Thanh Mai, 2015) in Vietnam respectively), i.e. the level of social inequality in access to higher education in Vietnamese society are higher than in the Russian society. This suggests a differentiation between population groups access to social resources, including higher education in developing countries (VietNam).

6. Gender parity Index (GPI) shows the equality of access to education on sex. According to UNESCO definition if  $GPI = 1$ , reflects the equality of the sexes, and the values of the GPI from 0 to 1 means the dominance of men and values greater than 1, the prevalence of women (Usher A., Cervenán A., 2005).

If in 2013 gender parity index in Russian education, according to the World Bank, was 1.24, in Vietnam - 0.9 (The world bank); in 2015 in Russia compared with 1.17 (Gokhberg L. M. and others, 2016), and in Vietnam (1.04 - General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2016). It should be noted that before 2013, in Viet Nam, registered GPI was  $< 1$ , in other words, the

proportion of male students exceeded the share of female students. This figure shows that, as in Vietnamese society and Russian society, exist inequality in access to higher education on grounds of sex. However, in Russia, the percentage of women students is decreasing, and in Vietnam, by contrast, is growing. A large proportion of girls in education of higher profile - this is the international trend. Gender parity index equal to 1.1 (The world bank, 2013). At the same time in Viet Nam the percentage of schoolboys enrolled in school at the right age less than schoolgirls (2014 GPI = 1.11) (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, UNICEF, 2015). However, when comparing the levels achieved in higher education by gender shows that in Russia the share of women with tertiary education is greater than the proportion of men (29.8% vs. 24.5) (Gokhberg L. M. and others, 2016). On the contrary, in Vietnam, the proportion of women with higher education is lower than that of men (6.3% and 7.6% respectively) (General Statistics Office of Vietnam 2015). Thus, in Russia this rate coincides with the gender parity index, while in Viet Nam, more men than women have higher education (GPI < 1) (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2015).

## Conclusions

Indicators measuring the level of accessibility of higher education and the state of access to higher education for different social groups identify the social problem of unequal access to higher education, both in Vietnamese society and in Russian society.

Data tables and results from the adjustment level indicators of access to higher education in Vietnamese and Russian societies show that, while in Russia the number of students per 10 thousand inhabitants is decreasing, the rate and the percentage of the population aged over 15 years, has higher education, higher than Vietnam. If, on the other hand, in Vietnam, the level of social inequality in higher education was more pronounced than in Russia, the inequality in access to this area on the basis of gender in Vietnam less than in Russia.

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