

## ECONOMIC CAPITAL OF THE FAMILY AS A FACTOR OF AVAILABILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UNIVERSITIES IN RUSSIA AND VIETNAM

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the actual problem of accessibility of higher education (on the example of universities of Russia and Vietnam). Social inequality, which is a characteristic of any society, remains a serious barrier to higher education. Moreover, in spite of the fact that today the number of forms and methods of obtaining higher education is substantially expanding, socially unprotected layers of the population still can not take advantage of many educational services.

In the article, based on conflictological and structuralist campaigns, using the quantitative method of sociological surveys conducted in 2015-2016 (the sample consisted of 2000 respondents - students of KFU and DSU), the influence of the economic capital of the family on the accessibility of higher education for Russian and Vietnamese students is analyzed. Recommendations are offered to reduce the economic barrier to access to higher education for different groups of students.

On the basis of empirical research it is shown that the socioeconomic capital of the family is a deterrent to the accessibility of higher education. At the universities of Russia and Vietnam, children come from middle and upper classes, while for lower classes the accessibility of higher education remains limited. The study showed that the majority of students from families with an income of 20,001 to 50,000 rubles (60.5%) study at the DSU, while 47.7% of respondents in KFU belong to families with income from 50,001 to 100,000 rubles, which indicates the high socio-economic status of their families.

The study of the stated problem can help to overcome a number of social contradictions, to build a more effective model of vocational training and socialization of individuals, and also help ensure high modern standards of social policy of states. Moreover, a comparative analysis in this area will allow states to integrate into a single educational system for solving global educational problems of our time. Of particular relevance is a comparative analysis of the problem on the example of a developing (Vietnamese society) and an economically developed country (Russian society).

These articles can be used in the activities of government bodies that implement and regulate educational policy in Vietnam and Russia, in the process of developing and improving social development programs in the field of general and higher education in Vietnam and Russia, in cross-cultural comparative studies.

**Keyword:** The higher education; social inequality; income level; Universities; Economic capital.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education is the most important channel for social mobility of individuals or groups, its accessibility is one of the main conditions for activating the resources that make up human capital. However, social inequality, characteristic of any society, remains a serious barrier to higher education. Furthermore, despite the significant expansion of forms and ways of obtaining higher education, socially unprotected layers of the population can not benefit from many educational services.

The possibility of obtaining higher education by representatives of various social groups is determined not only by the individual factor, but also by institutional, economic, socio-cultural, and information. At the same time, the economic factor is one of the significant barriers in the chance of access to higher education. As rightly noted Atkins M. and Abdon L., success in higher education is: that all of them with the potential to benefit from higher education have equal opportunity to participate and to succeed, on that course and in an institution that best fit their potential, needs and ambitions for employment or further study (Atkins, & Abdon, 2014, p. 76).

At the present stage, higher education systems of Vietnam and Russia have similarities, countries dynamically develop and strengthen relationships and interactions in higher education. In these conditions, it is necessary and timely for the given states to search for the optimal model of interaction in the educational sphere, as well as to prepare recommendations for solving problems in the system of higher education, including the problems of accessibility of higher education.

Within the framework of this article, the influence of the economic factor on the accessibility of higher education for Russian and Vietnamese students is analyzed (by the example of Kazan Federal University - KFU and Danang State University - DSU).

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 the

representatives of the conflict approach in sociology. The representatives of the structuralist paradigm studied the relationship between the social structure of society and the institution of education (Ballantine, 2001, p. 3-5). P. Bourdieu describes the essence of the transformation of the three forms of capital into education, defines the role of cultural capital in the formation of the status hierarchy and social practices of implementing educational needs.

Russian sociologists have developed the mechanisms for studying the social inequality in the higher education: vocational guidance for Russian youth (V.I. Dobrenkov, V. Ya. Nechaev, 2003), the unequal chances of different cohorts of Russian youth for higher education (F.E. Sheregui, 1997), the economic aspect of accessibility of higher education (Ya.M. Roshchina, 2004). Yarskaya-Smirnova and Romanov 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. (Yarskaya-Smirnova & Romanov, 2005). Fursova and Gorbachyova conducted a comparative analysis of the Russian and foreign educational discourse on sociology of education as an industry of sociological knowledge (Fursova, & Gorbachyova, 2015, p. 93).

Tomash Zaritski published the results of a comparative study on the relationship between cultural capital and the accessibility of higher education (Tomash, 2006).

A comparative study conducted by Karpenko and Bershadskaya contains a socio-economic analysis of the global accessibility rating of higher education in the number of Western European and American countries, including Russia (Karpenko, & Bershadskaya, 2014). The authors come to the conclusion that the high-grade of the 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 its factors of accessibility (Đỗ Thiên Kính, 2005; Phạm Hương Trà, 2007; Phùng Thị Kim, 2010 and others).

How do social inequality factors manifest themselves in a particular country or in a number of countries? What is the specificity of the manifestation of these factors? How much does the economic capital of a family affect the accessibility of education for its members? How significant is the

difference in the accessibility of higher education in an economically more developed country and developing (on the example of Russian and Vietnamese societies, respectively)? These and other questions are answered by the authors of the article.

## 2. METHODS

The research was conducted in 2015 - 2016 by the method of mass survey in the form of questionnaires and interviewing in two cities: Kazan (Russia) and Danang (Vietnam). Both cities are over a million, with more than 10 universities located in them. The largest university of Kazan is the Kazan Federal University (KFU), where more than 44,000 students study. More than 55 thousand people study at the Danang State University in 212 specialties / profiles. In 2016 in the rating of Russian universities KFU took 10th place, DSU in the ranking of universities in Vietnam - 12th place. The data cited testify to the comparability of these cities and universities.

The questionnaire was conducted using a stratified sample, the total sample size was 2000 first-year students of the DSU (Vietnam, Danang, 1000 students) and KFU (Russia, Kazan, 1000 students). By the method of random sampling, 100 students were interviewed from ten faculties (institutes). The ratio of respondents by sex was 50% male and 50% female. The sampling error does not exceed 5%. Data processing was performed in SPSS Statistics Version 20.

By the method of in-depth interviews, 30 first-year students of KFU and DSU were interviewed. At each faculty of 15 profile specialties, one respondent was selected.

## 3. RESULTS

The availability of higher education implies not only the possibility of admission to a higher educational institution, but also the successful completion of training.

*The economic capital of the family* is considered by us as a factor influencing the accessibility of higher education, and includes the finances of the family, ensuring the possibility of admission and education in the university. The following indicators of social and economic capital are considered in the article: *family income, expenditures on educational services and related expenses in the structure of the family budget.*

*The level of family income* affects the ability to enter the institution directly or indirectly, determining the possibility of paying for tuition fee.

According to our research, the majority of families of students from the DSU and KFU have an income of over 20,000 rubles. At the same time, the majority of students in the DSU are from families with an income of 20,001 to 50,000 rubles (60.5%), whereas in the KFU 47.7% of respondents belong to families with income from 50,001 to 100,000 rubles. In KFU, the gap between low-income families and families with high incomes is higher than in the DSU. In the KFU, students who enter the university come from families with high incomes in 46.8% of cases, that is, more often than students originating from families with the lowest income (less than 10,000 rubles). In DSU, the difference between families with high incomes and families with the lowest incomes is much lower and amounted to 11.7%. Thus, the differentiation of the opportunities for admission to higher education for students from the KFU is greater than for students from the DSU. Low family income is a significant barrier for students from low-income families, which is confirmed by the judgment of R.H. Haveman, T.M. Smeeding that "even in developed countries, the gap between the "poor" and "rich" increases over time, despite the existing support mechanisms for entrants" (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006, p. 147).

*Payments for the education of children* occur not only in the course of studying at the university, but also in the period of admission to the university (payment of classes with tutors, attending preparatory courses, and other). The results of the study show that the average cost of a student's family from the KFU for preparatory courses is higher (40,430 rubles) than in the families of students from the DSU (30,700 rubles).

To the question "*Did your family spend much money on your preparation for passing the USE and entrance examinations: hired tutors, engaged in preparatory courses, etc.?*", a student from KFU answered "*about 40.000 rubles for six months with a tutor in two subjects*". A student from the DSU notes "*I was doing extra training at school, not very expensive.*"

The forms of additional training that most students from KFU (namely, tutoring) chose, as well as students from the DSU (attending preparatory courses in secondary schools) show (see table 2) that for students in the KFU the gap between low-income families and families with higher incomes higher

than for students of the DSU. In KFU, students from a family with a higher income were 2-3 times more likely to opt for such a form of additional education as tutoring, in comparison with families with low incomes. In DSU this difference is not so great: the difference between the families with the highest income and the families with the lowest income was only 4.5%. Thus, the higher the family income, the greater the choice of expensive forms of additional training. Moreover, there is a significant differentiation between social groups (low and high incomes) when choosing the form of additional training for children.

*Table 1: The proportion of students at the DSU and KFU who chose the forms of preparation for admission to the university depending on their family's income, % of the respondents*

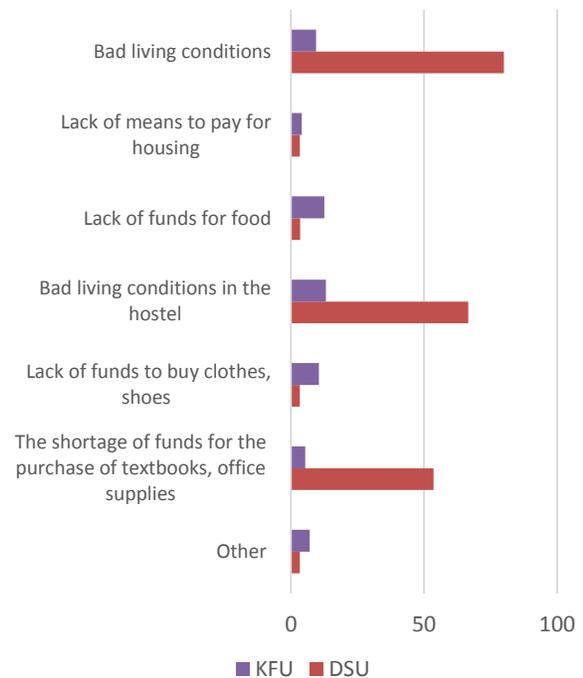
Forms		From 5000 up to 10000 rubles	From 10001 up to 20000 rubles	From 20000 up to 50000 rubles	From 50001 up to 100000 rubles	More than 100000 rubles	I can not answer
Additionally/ by himself	KFU	44,4	42,9	37,1	30,6	38,9	25
	DSU	50	37,6	32,1	29,1	30,8	20
Additional lessons in secondary schools	KFU	22,2	2,9	14,4	15,1	8,4	22,7
	DSU	41,7	45	51,2	52,5	46	35
With a university tutor	KFU	0	8,6	5,9	6,5	4,2	4,5
	DSU	0	10,9	9,3	12,8	7,7	20
With a tutor	KFU	11,1	8,6	30,6	1	37,9	29,5
	DSU	3,5	5,4	6	8,3	7,7	0
At the preparatory courses of the university	KFU	22,2	5,7	7,4	9,4	5,3	2,3
	DSU	2	0	0	0	0	0

In addition, for students from the KFU, forms of additional training that involve relatively low costs (for example, additional classes in secondary schools) are more likely to be chosen by families with low incomes (the difference between the families with the highest income and the families with the lowest income is 13, 8%). While for students from the DSU expensive forms of additional training (for example, lessons with a tutor) are chosen by most students from a family with high incomes. An analysis of the level of fees for additional courses depending on the specialty shows that if the difference in the cost of additional courses for various specialties for students from the KFU was small, then for the students from the DSU there

are significant differences. Families of students in technical, natural sciences, medical specialties, spent more on additional courses than others. For students from KFU, the differentiation of fees for additional courses for different social groups and specialties is not as pronounced as in the DSU. This is one of the barriers for students of the DSU who choose technical or natural-science specialties, especially for students from low-income families.

So, on the one hand, the choice of the form of additional courses at the time of admission to the institution depends directly on the level of family income: the higher the family income, the higher the fee for the best preparatory courses. On the other hand, the total amount of money that students and their families spent on training at a university becomes one of the barriers to admission to higher education, especially for less well-off families, while for students from the KFU this manifests itself more than for students from the DSU.

After entering the university students face a number of material and domestic difficulties. The study shows (see Figure 1) that the students of the two countries experience the same difficulties, however, for Vietnamese students, some problems are more pronounced, for Russian - others.



*Figure 1. Difficulties of students of the DSU and KFU after admission to the university, % of the number of respondents*

So, if, after entering the university, the majority of students from the KFU have difficulty with food expenses, then DSU-students experience difficulties with their living conditions.

The problem of housing conditions is emphasized by the students of the DSU and KFU in an interview. *"I have free education. I live in a hostel, type 3, where there are 8 students in one room. In my opinion, this number of students is a lot, so I often go to the classroom. But parents have little money, so you have to do so"* (a student from the DSU). *"I am trained on a commercial basis. In addition to tuition fees, I pay for renting an apartment that I rent with friends. This is considerable expenditure by my standards"* (a student from KFU). Thus, the cost of housing in the process of studying at the university becomes an additional factor affecting the accessibility of higher education, not only for budget students, but also for contract students. The inequality in access to higher education is again revealed depending on the institutional factor; in this case, for students from the DSU, this influence is more pronounced than for students from the KFU.

In the first year students face a number of difficulties that can become a barrier to continuing education in the university. Among them - the difficulty of mastering individual subjects (KFU - 43.3%, DSU - 70%), inconvenient schedule (KFU 20.5%, DSU - 26%), lack of time for homework (KFU - 13.6% %, DSU - 28%) and difficulties not related to the training process (KFU - 15.4%, DSU - 42%). First-year students from the DSU pointed to a very high level of teachers' demands (34.2% versus 11.2% in KFU) and a shortage of educational literature (30% vs. 3.4%). In addition, both in the DSU and KFU freshmen do not have enough money to pay for tuition (2.8% and 3.2%, respectively). *"There are few textbooks in the library, 7-8 students use one book or one copy of a photocopy. The audience in the buildings B1, B6 are small, in the group of 40-50 students, the projectors work poorly. Moreover, when registering loans for disciplines, the university's website is often overloaded"* (a student from the DSU).

The results of annual sociological surveys in Russia over the past five years show that about 26% of applicants consider tuition fees as one of the factors influencing the choice of a university. The average cost of education in the university was 85,000 rubles in year. In 2017, the cost of training in Russian universities varies from 18,000 rubles per year (Barnaul) to 396,800 rubles per year (St. Petersburg) (*Russian education federal portal*). Whereas in

Vietnam, in accordance with the government decree, the average cost of studying at a university was 6.6 million VND (about 27,000 rubles) in the 2014-2015 school year (*Da Nang University, 2016*). So, from the data given, it follows that the average cost of studying at a university in Russia is three times higher than in Vietnam.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Differentiation in terms of family income is one of the components that determine the inequality in admission to both KFU and DSU. On the one hand, the choice of the form of the preparatory courses depends on the size of the family income. On the other hand, fees for additional courses and tuition at the university represent a greater barrier for students from KFU, especially from less well-off families, in comparison with the DSU.

If, after entering the university, the majority of students from the KFU are experiencing expenditure difficulties, then the students from the DSU are experiencing difficulties with their living conditions. In the first year most of the students from the DSU experience learning difficulties, the students from the KFU most significant call the costs of training. We believe that to reduce the economic barrier in obtaining higher education, states need:

- To apply educational loans with low interest rates, especially for students from low-income families;
- To normalize the budget in the sphere of higher education, ensuring equality in obtaining educational services, forecasting the number of students, investing in the material and technical resources of universities;
- Implement the policy of budget places, preferential prices for training and various bonuses for students. In this case, to improve the accessibility of higher education, Vietnam can apply the Russian experience. So, in Vietnam budgetary places are given only on demanded specialties of preparation (teachers, policemen, military men);
- To increase the monthly scholarship for students showing outstanding results, as well as diversify the types of scholarships (academic, research, socio-cultural, sports and other achievements). Here, the universities of Vietnam should adopt Russian experience and diversify the types of scholarship.

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