



Analysis of Education Inequality Based on the Pisa 2009 International Comparative Study

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Abstract

This is a secondary analysis of data from the 2009 PISA international comparative study. According to the PISA 2009 results, Russia is among those countries where there is no urgent problem with inequality in education. Meanwhile, Russian students lag pupils in countries that are more successful in providing access to quality education for all groups of students and perform better or much better than average in OECD, and have even fallen behind their peers in countries where inequality is much higher than in Russia.

In other words, despite the low level of education inequality (little correlation between student achievement and the educational level and wealth of parents), Russian students are at high risk of low academic achievement.

The objective of this research was to define possible strategies to reduce this risk for the most vulnerable category of students with disadvantageous family backgrounds. To do so, the Russian sample was analyzed to determine the proportion of students from families with poor socioeconomic standing that were able to overcome the negative influence of this and produce strong results for the country, so-called "resilient" students, and the share of those who were unsuccessful. A similar analysis was conducted using a national sample of countries that participated in the international study and have similar socioeconomic characteristics to Russia (Lithuania, Romania and Bulgaria); countries where the share of resilient students was the highest (Finland and Canada); and countries with high levels of education inequality (US and Chile).

To calculate the number of resilient students within a country, the following steps were taken:

- 25% of students with low socioeconomic status (C9C) were selected.
- 25% of students with strong results on the PISA 2009 reading test were selected.
- Using the Crosstabs function, the share of resilient students was determined.
- Based on data on education policy, organization of the education process, differentiation of schools by social characteristics of the student body and the availability of resources, a conclusion was made about which administrative decisions and educational strategies lead to a higher number of resilient students with disadvantageous family backgrounds.

References

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