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EVALUATION OF THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE REGION IN VIEW OF THE HUMAN FACTOR IN THE ECONOMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

Abstract

The different level of socio-economic development of regions depends on different factors (geographical, climatic, demographic, etc.). In economic science, the problem of analyzing the factors affecting the crisis of individual territories and searching instruments to improve their competitiveness in the national and international markets is relevant. The issues of evaluating the competitiveness of regions, the search for competitive advantages of territories, especially by improving the quality of human resources, remain insufficiently studied. In this regard, in the article the existing models for evaluating regional competitiveness in view of the human factor in the economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan are presented. In addition, in the article the authors carried out the classification of regions according to the analysis of the main socio-economic indicators of the regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan, originating in the concept of regional policy. The authors also calculated the main indicators of competitiveness of regions of Kazakhstan according to the National chamber of entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan with the aim of determining the level of human resources development in the region and the competitiveness of the region in a comparative perspective, which allowed to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the regions, the competitive advantages of each territorial unit and the zone of possible growth and development.

Key words: competitiveness of regions, regional policy, human resources, modernization of the economy, evaluation models, advantages.

The relevance of the research topic is that in the Republic of Kazakhstan currently remain insufficiently studied the issues of evaluating the competitiveness of regions, search for competitive advantages of territories, especially by improving the quality of human resources. To a greater extent, the studies are formal in nature, as they consider the concept of underdeveloped regions, the factors of socio-economic problems and classical ways of solving them. This issue is particularly acute for most developing countries [1].

In this regard, the authors consider the economic development of the regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan as an open country, considering their interrelation and interdependence. Its growth engine is the commodity sector. In regions rich in natural resources, there is a small economic recovery and a normal level of well-being of residents. The reverse processes are typical for non-mining areas with high population density and availability of human resources. This creates differentiation in the development of territorial units of the country.

The division of the economic space of Kazakhstan into separate regions is due to the large extent of the territory and its heterogeneity. There are 16 territorial entities in the Republic: 14 regions and 3 independent units: Nur-Sultan c. (Astanac.), Shymkent c. and Almaty c. Within the framework of regional policy they are divided into 6 groups.

The basis of the grouping, originating in the Concept of regional policy, is the principle of problematical character [2]. This classification of regions is relevant in modern conditions. In Table 1 (p. 219) it is presented the analysis of indicators of socio-economic development of the regions of Kazakhstan.

Table 1 – Main socio-economic indicators of the regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan (according to data for 2018)

The share of region, per cent	Group, No					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
In total population	12	6	20	29	8	22
In gross regional product	28	17	21	15	7	13
In production	9	30	26	16	10	10
In agriculture production	2	1	19	31	18	29
In fixed capital investments	19	31	14	18	7	13
Note – Compiled by the authors on the basis of data [3].						

According to made analysis, the first group includes Almaty c. and Nur-Sultan c. (Astana c.) – the largest financial, economic and social centers. Their distinctive characteristics are: a high level of human resources, a stable level of well-being of citizens, a developed industrial sector and the availability of scientific and technical potential. Their regional policy provides for comprehensive infrastructure development, the formation of business centers and the development of tourist destinations.

The second group includes two regions rich in mineral resources – Atyrau and Mangistau regions. The standard of living of their inhabitants is the highest in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The third group is represented by three regions: Karaganda, East Kazakhstan and Pavlodar regions. They are distinguished by the wealth of mineral resources. The real economy of these regions is dominated by extractive and manufacturing industries based on local raw materials, as well as light industry and mechanical engineering. Regional policy in the regions of the second and third groups is focused on the development of transport and communications, increasing the share of small and medium-sized enterprises in the agro-industrial complex, the development of programs of industrial and innovative development in the manufacturing industry. Environmental protection measures, especially in the Caspian sea shelf zone, are a separate direction of regional policy for raw material territories.

The fourth group included Kostanay, Aktobe, Zhambyl, Turkestan regions and Shymkent c. The common characteristics of these areas are the availability of mineral resources and agricultural land. The level of development of human resources and per capita income in them is lower than in developed regions. The key direction of the regional policy is the development of transport and processing areas in agriculture, the expansion of the potential of large economic entities.

Fifth group: North Kazakhstan and West Kazakhstan regions. The structure of their real sector of economy is dominated by mechanical engineering and agriculture. The oil and gas industry is slightly represented here. The regional policy provides for the modernization of mechanical engineering and defense industry, the development of related areas of agriculture.

The sixth group includes Almaty, Akmola and Kyzylorda regions. The main activity of the regions is related to the development of agriculture. In terms of human resources and per capita income, they lag behind the cities of Almaty c. and Nur-Sultan c. (Astana c.), as well as the regions of the second and third groups. The exception is the Kyzylorda region (the zone of oil field development). The main directions of the regional policy are focused on the development of entrepreneurship serving agriculture, as well as on the development of new industrial production. These activities will give opportunities to improve the welfare of residents.

Increasing competitiveness in regional policy is based on the economic development of each of the 16 regions [4].

In order to eliminate imbalances, comprehensive approaches to evaluating the competitiveness of regions and a unified policy of economic development of the country are needed, taking into account the human resources of each territory [5].

Let’s consider the existing evaluation models used in practice. In particular, the rating model for evaluating the competitiveness of Kazakhstan’s regions on the basis of indices, developed By the Agency for research on return on investment, acting under the National chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan (rating of competitiveness of Kazakhstan’s regions) [6]. The ranking of regions is based on the index approach. The integrated competitiveness index is calculated by summing the weighted averages for each group of indicators.

In determining the components of the competitiveness indices of the region, the authors selected adequate indicators reflecting the competitive advantages and innovation of the economy. They should be statistically reliable and objective (the subjective opinion of the researcher in the interpretation should be reduced to zero). The availability of statistics is taken into account when selecting indicators.

The competitiveness rating strategy is used as a basis for calculating indices. It provides for the accumulation of private indicators in a single integrated indicator, characterizing the relative positions of the studied criteria. Scaling is used to organize indicators measured in different units. It provides for their translation into immeasurable values from 0 to 1 (0 characterizes the worst result, 1 – the best). Scaling is based on formulas (1) and (2):

$$K_n^i = \frac{Y_n^i - Y_{\min}}{Y_{\max} - Y_{\min}} \quad (1)$$

$$K_n^i = \frac{1 - Y_n^i - Y_{\min}}{Y_{\max} - Y_{\min}} \quad (2)$$

where Y_n^i – n-th indicator of the region i;

Y_{min} – the minimum value of the indicator for all regions of the sample;

Y_{max} – the maximum value of the indicator for all regions.

Formula (1) is used if the maximum value corresponds to the best result. Otherwise, formula (2) applies.

We determine the average arithmetic of indicators required to calculate the integrated coefficient by the formula (3):

$$K_{av.arith.} = \sum_{n-1}^{m} K_n^i \quad (3)$$

The obtained result is converted by the formula (4):

$$K_{av.arith} = \frac{K_{av.arith.obt}^i - K_{av.arith.\min}^i}{K_{av.arith.\max}^i - K_{av.arith.\min}^i} \quad (4)$$

This transformation is necessary for scaling of indicators in the range [0; 1]. Thus, the best value of the indicator will be assigned 1 in the study, the worst – 0. The remaining regions will be located in the considered range.

The transformations allowed to rank the regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan according to the general indicator of competitiveness and according to private indices evaluating a separate sphere. There are three groups according to the level of competitiveness development.

1. Absolute competitiveness. The coefficient takes a value in the range from 0,66 to 1.
2. Stable competitiveness. The index ranges from 0,33 to 0,65.
3. Minor competitiveness. The index takes a value from 0 to 0,32.

The first group consisted of Almaty c., Nur-Sultan c. (Astana c.) and Atyrau region. The third group is represented by Almaty, Zhambyl and Kyzylorda regions (Figure 1, p. 221).

According to the methodology of above mentioned Agency for research of investment profitability, operating under the National chamber of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan, the authors defined the index of regional competitiveness, which consists of the following indicators (Table 2, p. 221).

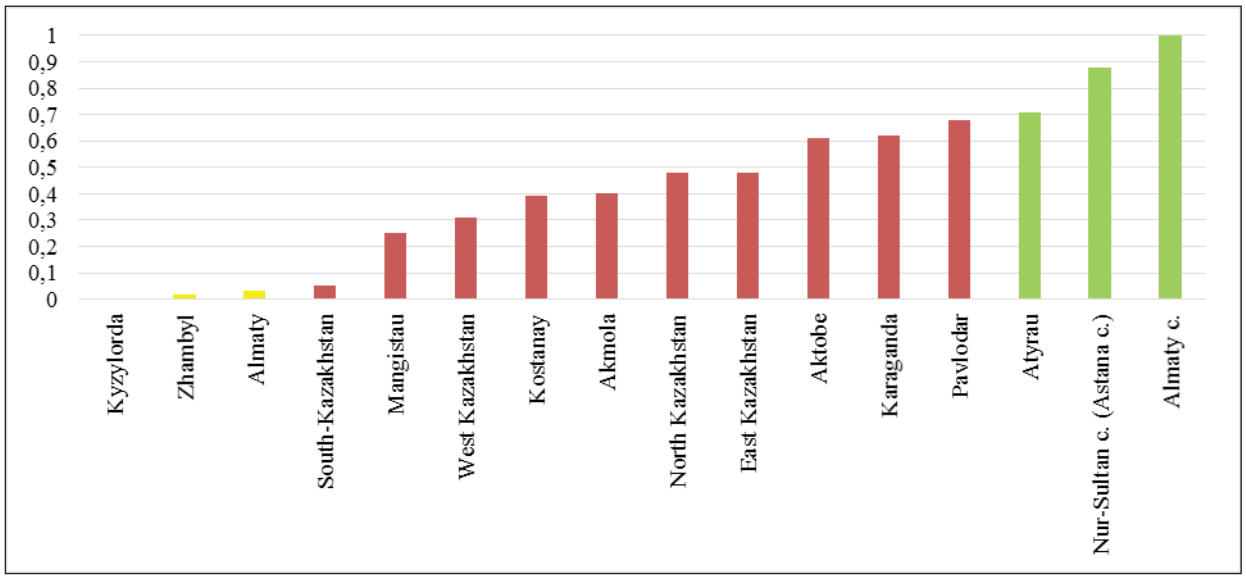

Figure 1 – Regional competitiveness Index in 2018

Note – Source [6].

Table 2 – Key indicators of the competitiveness index of Kazakhstan's regions (according to data for 2018)

The name of the region	GRP, billion us dollars	Investments in fixed assets, billion us dollars	Human developm ent index	The volume of industrial production, billion us dollars	Number of small businesses, units
Akmola	2,7	0,4	0,5	1,0	13 389
Almaty	6,1	1,8	0,5	2,1	20 050
Aktobe	5,7	0,4	0,1	4,0	16 314
Atyrau	13,6	1,5	0,5	1,4	11 388
East Kazakhstan	7,9	1,3	0,2	4,5	10 133
Karaganda	10,8	2,1	0,3	5,9	28 033
Kostanay	4,6	1,0	0,2	1,8	13 800
Zhambyl	3,4	0,4	0,1	1,0	11 234
Mangistau	8,2	1,8	0,1	5,9	13 635
Kyzylorda	3,6	0,5	0,2	2,0	9 856
North Kazakhstan	2,9	0,6	0,4	0,5	10 043
Pavlodar	6,1	2,8	0,6	4,7	14 388
Turkestan	7,9	1,1	0,3	2,1	20 780
West Kazakhstan	5,9	1,0	0,4	5,0	10 133
Almaty c.	30,1	1,3	0,8	2,4	116 606
Nur-Sultan c. (Astana c.)	14,1	2,4	0,8	1,4	61 000
Shymkent c.	8,3	2,7	0,6	2,7	20 795
Note – Compiled by the authors based on the data [5].					

According to the research, the maximum value of the competitiveness index is observed in Nur-Sultan c. (Astana c.), Almaty and Atyrau region. However, the level of human resources development in Atyrau region is not high.

According to these indicators, the most competitive regions are: Nur-Sultan c. (Astana c.), Almaty and Atyrau region. They are distinguished by high gross regional product per capita, investments in fixed assets, the number of small businesses and a high level of human resources development.

The regions with stable competitiveness include: Shymkent c., Aktobe region, East Kazakhstan region, North Kazakhstan region, Akmola region and Kostanay region. They are united by a developed energy infrastructure.

The regions of southern Kazakhstan are less competitive. Their list includes Turkestan, Kyzylorda, Zhambyl, Mangistau, Almaty and West Kazakhstan regions. But at the same time the latter show an index of human resources development above average.

Thus, the directions of regional policy are determined by the chosen development scenario. Many researchers agree that in the context of economic modernization, structural policy is an effective tool.

Despite a large number of studies, there is no single definition of "regional structural policy". In a broad sense, it is understood as an instrument of influence of the executive authorities of a territorial unit on all structural elements of the economic system. Regional structural policy is divided into subspecies (innovation, investment, etc.), one of which should be a policy for the development of human resources in order to improve the competitiveness of the region.

A high level of competitiveness of the region cannot be achieved without the development of human resources and their rational use. The latter is necessary for lagging regions, as they are characterized by a number of serious problems:

- imbalance between supply and demand for human resources;
- lack of financial and material resources to implement strategies of human resource development;
- the gap of human resource development from the requirements of the innovative economy;
- mismatch of plans to accelerate the development of human resources to the paces of sustainable development.

In general, the evaluation of the competitiveness of the region should include the evaluation of the development of human resources in the region as one of the main parameters. It should also be emphasized that the methods used in Kazakhstan to evaluate the competitiveness of the region include in its structure the evaluation of human resources, but don't take into account the level of their development in the dynamics. Accordingly, the prognostic evaluation of the competitiveness of the region should also be focused on the paces of development of human resources in the region.

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Аңдатпа

Аймақтардың әлеуметтік-экономикалық дамуының әртүрлі деңгейі әртүрлі факторларға (географиялық, климаттық, демографиялық және т.б.) байланысты. Экономикалық ғылымда жекелеген аумақтардың дағдарыстығына және құралдарды іздеуіне әсер ететін, ұлттық және халықаралық нарықтарда олардың бәсекеге қабілеттілігін арттыруға бағытталған факторларды талдау мәселесі өзекті болып келеді. Аймақтардың бәсекеге қабілеттілігін бағалау, аумақтардың бәсекелестік артықшылықтарын іздеу мәселелері, әсіресе адам ресурстарының сапасын арттыру есебінен жеткілікті зерттелмеген күйінде қалып отыр. Осыған байланысты мақалада Қазақстан Республикасының экономикасы жағдайында адам факторын ескере отырып, аймақтық бәсекеге қабілеттілікті бағалаудың қолда бар үлгілері берілген. Бұдан басқа, мақалада авторлармен аймақтық

саясат тұжырымдамасында бастау алатын Қазақстан Республикасы аймақтарының негізгі әлеуметтік-экономикалық көрсеткіштерін талдауға сәйкес аймақтардың топтастырылуы жүзеге асырылған. Сондай-ақ, авторлармен Қазақстан Республикасының Ұлттық кәсіпкерлер палатасының мәліметтері бойынша аймақтағы адами ресурстардың даму деңгейін және салыстырмалы аспектіде аймақтың бәсекеге қабілеттілік деңгейін анықтау мақсатында Қазақстан аймақтарының бәсекеге қабілеттілік индексінің негізгі көрсеткіштері есептелген, әрбір аумақтық бірліктің бәсекелестік артықшылықтарын және өсу мен даму ықтимал аймақтарын анықтауға мүмкіндік берді.

Тірек сөздер: аймақтардың бәсекеге қабілеттілігі, аймақтық саясат, адами ресурстар, экономиканы жаңғырту, бағалау үлгілері, артықшылықтар.

Аннотация

Различный уровень социально-экономического развития регионов зависит от разных факторов (географических, климатических, демографических и др.). В экономической науке актуальной выступает проблема анализа факторов, влияющих на кризисность отдельных территорий, и поиска инструментов, направленных на повышение их конкурентоспособности на национальном и международном рынках. Вопросы оценки конкурентоспособности регионов, поиск конкурентных преимуществ территорий, особенно за счет повышения качества человеческих ресурсов, остаются недостаточно изученными. В связи с этим в статье представлены имеющиеся модели оценки региональной конкурентоспособности с учетом человеческого фактора в экономике Республики Казахстан. Кроме того, в статье авторами осуществлена классификация регионов на основе анализа основных социально-экономических показателей регионов республики, берущая начало в Концепции региональной политики. Авторами также рассчитаны основные показатели индекса конкурентоспособности регионов Казахстана по данным Национальной палаты предпринимателей Республики Казахстан с целью определения уровня развития человеческих ресурсов в регионе и уровня конкурентоспособности региона в сравнительном аспекте, что позволило определить сильные и слабые стороны региона, конкурентные преимущества каждой территориальной единицы и зоны возможного роста и развития.

Ключевые слова: конкурентоспособность региона, региональная политика, человеческие ресурсы, модернизация экономики, модели оценки, преимущества.