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PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION-OCCUPATION MISMATCH IN RA LABOR MARKET

Every day, people, companies, educational institutions, and states ask questions related to the labor market. What kind of education should my child receive? Is there a qualified workforce in the region where our company is considering setting up a new business? Is there a need to review educational programs? Do we need incentives to attract students? There is a growing concern that current workforce skills cannot meet the rapidly changing demands of the economy.

The mismatch between qualifications and skills has become a concern for policy makers in both developed and developing nations due to the rapid changes in the labor market, globalization, technological development and demographic changes. Numerous

people hold occupations that do not align with their educational level. However, many employers report having difficulties in finding workers with the skills needed to scale their businesses and innovate successfully. The goal of the study is to determine whether the educational attainment of RA employees and the skills needed for the job match.

Keywords: labor market, mismatch, skills, education level, occupation, employment
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INTRODUCTION. Skills mismatch refers to the imbalance between the skills available in the labor market and the qualifications and skills required for jobs. This is the "gap" between vocational education and skills. The reasons for the skills mismatch are not always related to the skills themselves: uncompetitive wages, poor employee engagement practices, and low-quality jobs are just some of the potential factors contributing to the mismatch. In addition, skills mismatches are driven not only by low-quality education, but also by demographic changes, rapid technological development, new sources of job creation, and new ways of organizing work¹. The reasons for the mismatch between labor supply and demand can be cyclical, frictional or structural².

Regardless of the reason, skills mismatches can cause unemployment and hinder investment and employment growth, negatively affecting labor market outcomes, worker productivity, competitiveness, economic growth, etc.

LITERATURE REVIEW. An imperfect match between education and jobs is a fairly standard feature of the labor market. The literature defines a mismatch as a discrepancy between the characteristics of employees and the requirements of the jobs they occupy³.

The term "skills mismatch" can be used to describe over-skilling (over-education), under-skilling (under-skilling), under-skilling, skill shortages, learning field mismatches and skills obsolescence⁴. The term "skills mismatch" is very broad and can refer to many forms of labor market contact, including vertical mismatch, skills gaps, skills shortages, field of study (horizontal) mismatch and skills obsolescence⁵. Types of skill mismatches combine the qualification vs. qualitative mismatch argument. The following forms of skill mismatch are distinguished in Table 1.

¹ Comyn, P., & Strietska-Ilina, O. (Eds.). (2019). *Skills and jobs mismatches in low-and middle-income countries*. International Labor Office.
https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms726816.pdf

² H. Zimmer, 2012. "Labour market mismatches," Economic Review, National Bank of Belgium, issue ii, pages 55-68, September

³ Glenda Quintini. Right for the job: Over-qualified or under-skilled? OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers 120, OECD Publishing, 2011b.

⁴ Comyn, P., & Strietska-Ilina, O. (Eds.). (2019). *Skills and jobs mismatches in low-and middle-income countries*. International Labor Office.
https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms726816.pdf

⁵ Seamus McGuinness & Konstantinos Pouliakas & Paul Redmond, 2018. "Skills Mismatch: Concepts, Measurement And Policy Approaches", *Journal of Economic Surveys*, Wiley Blackwell, vol. 32(4), pages 985-1015, September.

Table 1

Major types of skills mismatch ⁶

Over-education (over-qualification)	The employee's educational (qualification) level exceeds the level required for the given occupation (job).
Undereducation (underqualification)	The educational (qualification) level of the employee is lower than the level required for the given occupation (job).
Overqualified	Qualification level (more broadly defined as knowledge, skill, ability) exceeds the requirements of the job
Underqualified	The qualification level is below the job requirement
Mismatch between education and work	The field of education does not correspond to the workplace
Skills gap	The skill level of workers is low or inadequate (often associated with structural or technological changes in the economy)

Empirical evidence shows that educational inconsistency is a widespread problem worldwide. OECD studies show that a significant proportion of workers in advanced economies, between 20% and 35%, are overqualified for their jobs⁷.

The Skills Measurement Employer Survey 2013 (Wave 2) of The Skills Towards Employability and Productivity (STEP) program used a self-reported method to measure overqualification/underqualification. The World Bank's STEP Skills Measurement Program has developed appropriate survey tools to collect data on skills in the context of low- and middle-income countries. This includes information on educational attainment, employment and socio-economic characteristics, covering approximately 3,000 adults aged 15 to 64. In the context of the project, overqualification is defined as a situation where a person's education exceeds the level required for the required job, and underqualification as when education is below that⁸. The results of the STEP survey for RA state that in 66.2% of cases, the education of the workforce corresponds to the qualifications set for the work performed, 28% is overqualified, and 5.8% is underqualified⁹.

A study by the International Labor Organization found that workers in high-income countries are more likely to be employed according to their level of education, with compliance rates of 52% and 43% (Figure 1). In low-income countries, only one in four workers holds a job corresponding to their level of education. These observations show that compliance rates between the level of education and the skills required by the labor market increase with a country's level of development¹⁰.

⁶ Skills mismatch measurement in ETF partner countries. European Training Foundation, 2019 https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-05/Skills%20mismatch%20measurement_ETF%20partner%20countries.pdf

⁷ Pellizzari, M., & Fichen, A. (2013). A new measure of skills mismatch: Theory and evidence from the survey of adult skills (PIAAC). <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/5k3tpt04lcnt-n.pdf?expires=1728996165&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=443D36198B1A3824D9A427B88F20DBA4>

⁸ Chua, K., & Chun, N. (2016). In search of a better match: Qualification mismatches in developing Asia. *Asian Development Bank Economics Working Paper Series*, (476).

⁹ Skills and jobs mismatches in low- and middle-income countries. International Labour Office – Geneva: ILO, 2019 https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_726816.pdf, p. 65

¹⁰ Only half of workers worldwide hold jobs corresponding to their level of education. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/blog/only-half-of-workers-worldwide-hold-jobs-corresponding-to-their-level-of-education/>

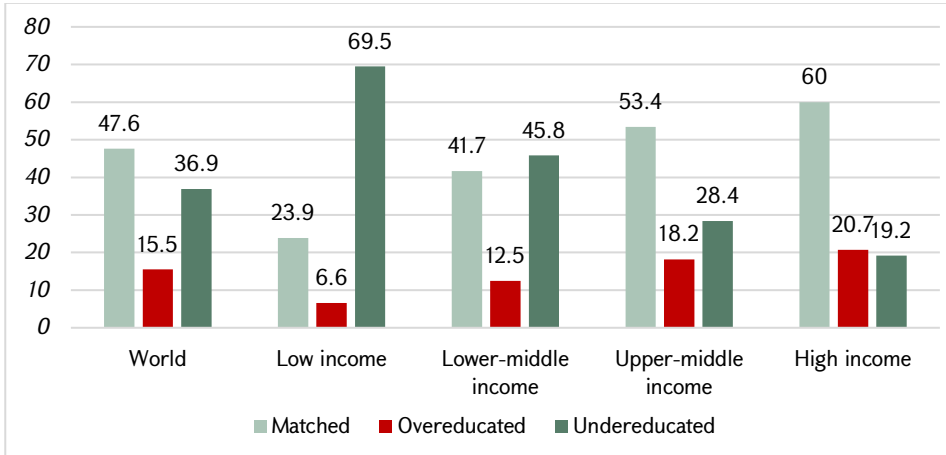


Figure 1. Proportion of population with over-educated, under-educated and adequate level of education¹¹

As we can see from the chart, only half of the workers have jobs that match their education level, the rest are either overeducated or undereducated for their jobs. However, levels of over-education or under-education are present in almost all countries, but their levels vary depending on the country's level of development. Undereducation is more common in low-income countries, and vice versa. In low-income countries, only one in four workers is in a job that matches their level of education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY. The qualification/education mismatch measure requires information on the match between a person's level of education and their level of education within an occupation. There are four different approaches used in literature to measure skills mismatch, and the results can vary. They are the subjective method, the empirical method (statistical method), the normative method and the performance evaluation method¹².

The subjective method is primarily based on the employee's self-assessment of the level of qualifications required to "get" or "do" the job, which is then compared to the highest level of education the employee actually attained to determine whether they qualify (have the same level of education as required)), are overqualified (above the level of education) or underqualified (have a level of education below the required level). With the normative method, it is also possible to differentiate between overqualified and underqualified by applying the International Classification of Occupations (ISCO), which classifies the main occupational groups in accordance with the International Standard for the Classification of Education¹³.

¹¹ Only half of workers worldwide hold jobs corresponding to their level of education. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/blog/only-half-of-workers-worldwide-hold-jobs-corresponding-to-their-level-of-education/>

¹² Comyn, P., & Strietska-Ilina, O. (Eds.). (2019). *Skills and jobs mismatches in low-and middle-income countries*. International Labor Office. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_726816.pdf

¹³ Skills and jobs mismatches in low- and middle-income countries. International Labour Office – Geneva: ILO, 2019

In RA, the employed are classified according to the Classification of Occupations¹⁴, which also underlies the ISCO-88 International Classification of Occupations. This classifier defines the names of occupations in the Republic of Armenia and the descriptions of their requirements with corresponding codes. The results of the study showed that occupations and educational standards are not coordinated in RA. For this purpose, relying on the international methodology, we carried out matching of the main occupation groups and skill levels (table 2).

Table 2

Alignment of main groups and skill levels of the RA occupation classifier

	<i>ISCO-08 major groups</i>	<i>Skill level¹⁵</i>
1.	Managers	4
2.	Professionals	4
3.	Technicians and Associate Professionals	3
4.	Clerical Support Workers	2
5.	Services and Sales Workers	2
6.	Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers	2
7.	Craft and related trades workers	2
8.	Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	2, 1
9.	Elementary occupations	1

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Skill level is defined as a function of the complexity and scope of the tasks and responsibilities performed in an occupation. The skill level is measured operationally, taking into account several criteria, including the educational level defined by the International Standard for the Classification of Education, which is required for performing the tasks associated with a given job. Accordingly, Skill Level 1 requires primary or secondary general education. Skill Level 2 requires International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)-2 level, i.e. secondary or upper secondary level of basic education. Skill Level 3 requires an ISCED-5b level, which is generally close to a vocational secondary level. Skill Level 4 requires an ISCED-5a or higher education level corresponding to higher and post-secondary education¹⁶.

ANALYSIS. In recent years, the labor market has faced serious problems in the area of personnel provision. One of the key reasons for this crisis is the lack of qualified

¹⁴ Education and Mismatch Indicators (EMI database). ILOSTAT database description <https://ilostat ilo.org/methods/concepts-and-definitions/description-education-and-mismatch-indicators/>

¹⁵ International Standard Classification of Occupations Structure, group definitions and correspondence tables.

¹⁶ The adjustments were made based on the International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 1997 and the International Standard Classification of Occupations Structure, group definitions and correspondence tables. https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-1997-en_0.pdf
https://www ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/document/publication/wcms_172572.pdf

specialists entering the labor market after graduating from educational institutions. Here are the main reasons:

1. Lack of qualified specialists. Graduates often do not meet the requirements of modern employers, as they do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to work in a rapidly developing business environment.
2. Low level of training. Educational institutions do not always have time to adapt their programs to modern market realities, which leads to graduates being unprepared for real tasks and challenges in the workplace.

The personnel crisis in the labor market poses a serious threat to the development of business and the economy as a whole and implies identifying the main mismatch challenges faced in the labor market of the Republic of Armenia (RA). Scientific and technological development and the increased competitiveness of economic entities are possible by providing them with qualified personnel who possess the required qualifications and whose skills and competencies correspond to the tasks within the framework of their work functions.

Relying on this methodology, the following indicators were collected from the RA Statistical Committee (ARMSTAT) database: employment rates, employment by educational level, and employment by types of occupation. This means that the employed people included in groups 1 and 2 must have higher or post-secondary education; those in group 3 must have secondary vocational education; those in groups 4-7 must have pre-professional or secondary general education; and those in groups 8-9 must have secondary general education. To determine the mismatch between educational level and occupation, we first examined the structure of the employed according to the types of occupation (Figure 2).

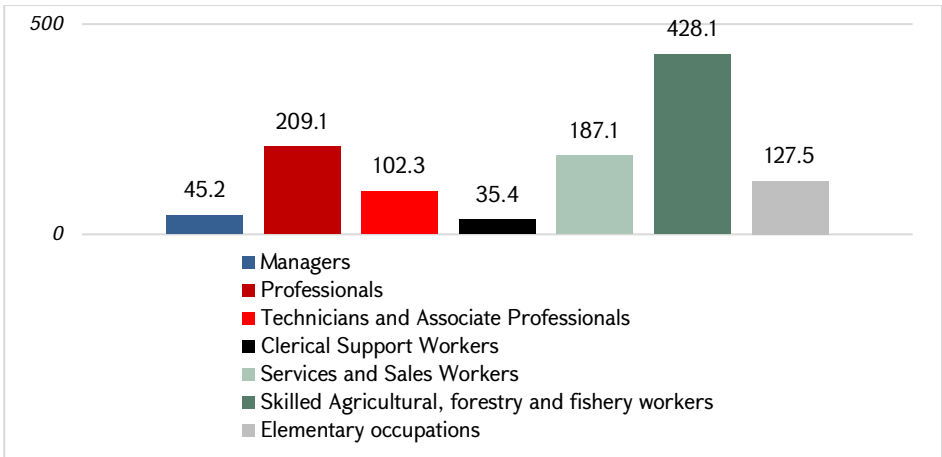


Figure 2. *Employed by occupation classifier, 2022 (thousand people)*¹⁷

As we can see from figure 2, in the structure of the employed, there is a large share of skilled agricultural and non-agricultural workers, operators, equipment operators, machinists, plumbers, and then highly qualified specialists. It is followed by highly qualified specialists and workers in the fields of service, housing,

¹⁷ Labor market indicators https://armstat.am/file/article/sv_06_23a_141.pdf

communal economy and trade. According to the classification of occupation, the smallest number of employed people is made up of office workers and heads of administrative, executive, judicial, local government, organizations, political and public associations.

If we look at the educational level of the employed people in RA, we will see that in the structure of the employed people, people with secondary general, higher and secondary professional education have a higher proportion. Nevertheless, over the years, the employment rate of people with higher, post-secondary education has increased, and if in 2008 the number of workers with higher, post-secondary education in the structure of the employed was 21.8%, then in 2022 it will be 32.63%. 2008-2022 during the period, the share of employed people with higher, postgraduate education was 32% on average, those with general secondary education - 40%, and those with secondary professional education - 20%.

As we can see, the distribution of the labor force and the employed according to educational levels is almost the same (figure 3).

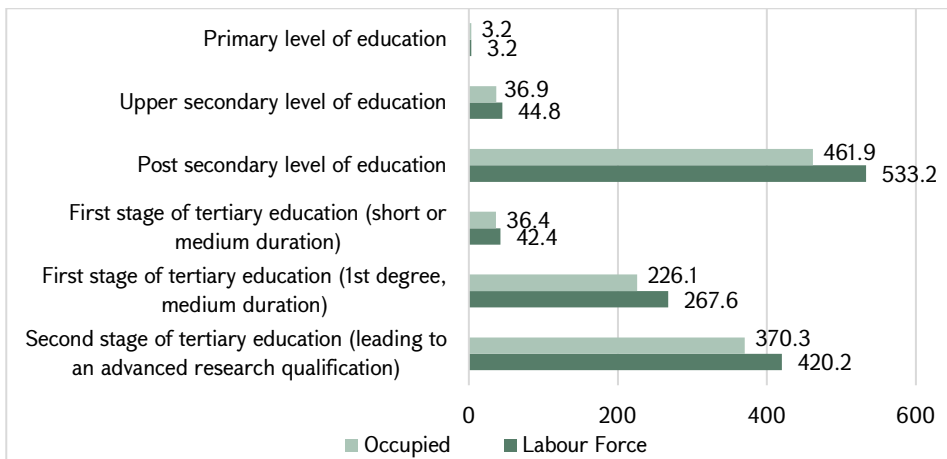


Figure 3. Occupied people and labor force of RA by educational level (thousands of people), 2022 ¹⁸

It turns out that the labor force/employed ratio by educational level is on average 1.13, which indicates that 1 out of 1.13 units of the labor force is employed according to the corresponding educational level (table 3).

¹⁸ Compiled by authors Labor force by indicators and by years. RA Statistical Committee.
https://statbank.armstat.am/pxweb/hy/ArmStatBank/ArmStatBank_2%20Population%20and%20social%20processes_23%20Employment%20and%20unemployment/PS-eu-11-2022.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=9ba7b0d1-2ff8-40fa-a309-fae01ea885bb

Table 3

The number of unemployed per 100 employed people, according to educational levels, 2008-2022 ¹⁹

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Second stage of tertiary education (leading to an advanced research qualification)	22	19	22	22	21	22	20	18	19	16	13
First stage of tertiary education (1st degree, medium duration)	23	21	22	28	26	22	30	26	24	20	18
First stage of tertiary education (short or medium duration)	33	11	19	22	20	28	27	20	20	14	16
Post-secondary level of education	20	19	22	22	22	21	23	23	24	20	15
Upper secondary level of education	18	19	11	18	18	22	27	27	34	14	22
Primary level of education	2	5	3	11	6	0	3	7	10	4	0

As we can see from the table, during 2012-2022, the ratio of unemployed to employed people has changed. Currently, there are 13 unemployed people of the same educational level per 100 employed people with higher, post-university education, 18 unemployed people per 100 employed people with secondary education, 16 unemployed people with pre-professional education, 15 unemployed people with secondary education, and 22 unemployed people with basic education. The number of unemployed, according to the level of education, has mostly decreased in the groups with pre-professional, higher, post-university education levels, while it has increased in the case of the general population (figure 4).

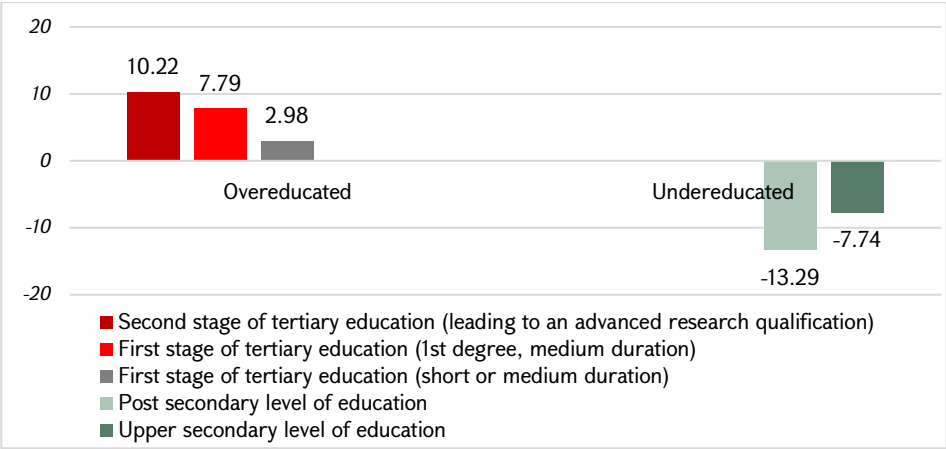


Figure 4. Proportions of under-educated and over-educated employees as a result of matching educational level and type of occupation

¹⁹ Compiled by authors Employment by indicators and by years. RA Statistical Committee.
https://statbank.armstat.am/pxweb/hy/ArmStatBank/ArmStatBank_2%20Population%20and%20social%20processes_23%20Employment%20and%20unemployment/PS-eu-13-2022.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rid=9ba7b0d1-2ff8-40fa-a309-fae01ea885bb

The calculations show that in 2022 - 22% of the employed in RA are overeducated, and 21% are undereducated, and the education of the rest corresponds to the level of education required for the occupation. Comparing with the results of the STEP survey conducted by the World Bank, the proportion of both the overeducated and the undereducated has increased.

Calculations show that in 2022 according to types of occupation, only 22.4% of the total employed should have higher education, while 32.63% of the total employed have higher education. This means that for about 10.2% of the employed, higher education is not mandatory. A similar situation is also in the case of secondary professional education, where the discrepancy is 10.9%. They have the opposite picture in the case of pre-professional education and 28.87% of those employed here are underqualified (figure 5).

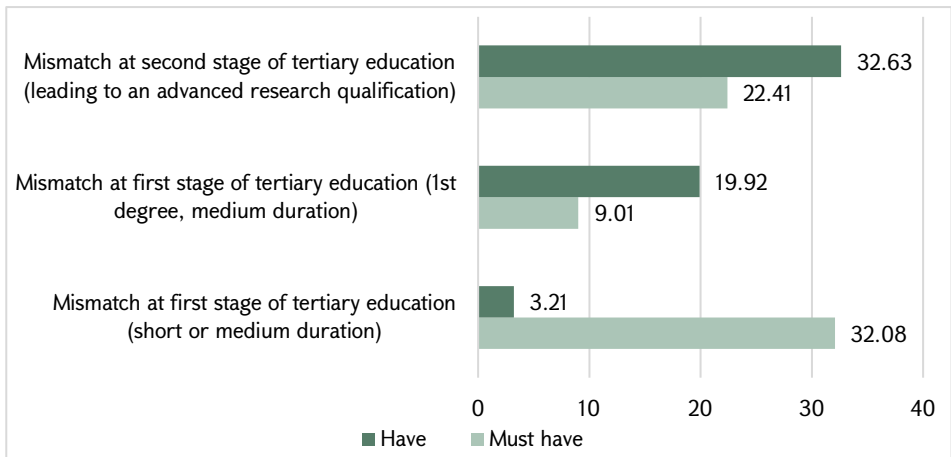


Figure 5. Discrepancy of employed people by educational level and employed people by type of occupation, in % from the number of employed people, 2022

As we can see, there is a mismatch between education level and types of occupation in RA, which reaffirms the skills gap in the RA labor market, becoming one of the structural problems of the labor market that affects labor productivity and growth. Achieving sustainable and more inclusive growth requires reforming the education sector and strengthening active labor market policies.

CONCLUSIONS. The problem of mismatches between the labor market and educational level is one of the challenges facing the economy and its social stability. This phenomenon indicates a gap between education and the labor market. The mismatch between the education system and labor market requirements hinders the country's economic growth and development, slows **labor productivity growth**, and **impedes the assimilation** of new technologies, **among other issues**. This discrepancy leads to the improper utilization of the most important factor of production.

The research findings show that in the **Republic of Armenia (RA)**, there are discrepancies **at different educational levels, with employees being both overqualified and underqualified**. For many types of occupation, a workforce with higher education is involved, **even when higher education is not required**

for these jobs. This circumstance can be explained **by both** the increase in the proportion of those with higher education in the structure of the employed **and** the weak correspondence between the professional training of specialists and the requirements of the labor market, **as well as** the limited opportunities for adequate employment (**which forces people to accept jobs below their qualifications**).

It turns out that despite the reforms taking place in RA in the field of education, professional training, **and** continuing education, the problems of **misalignment between professional qualifications and skills with the requirements of the labor market** are still prominent.

Comprehensive measures are required to address this problem, including changing the educational system and introducing modern methods of training and personnel management. This is the only way to create a sustainable and competitive economy capable of adapting to the challenges of the modern world. The successful implementation of such reforms and expert opinions **confirms** the importance and necessity of a systemic approach to solving these problems.

One of the options for solving the problem of qualifications mismatch in global practice is the introduction of an effective system **based on an Occupation Classifier, aligning necessary qualifications with educational levels**. It should become an important tool for monitoring and diagnosing the market, **as well as** defining the qualitative requirements for the workforce.

These professional standards should be developed and updated with the direct participation of businesses. They will reflect labor market requirements in specific fields and serve as a unique guideline for businesses to train professionals. By defining a comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, **and** abilities for all professions and occupations, professional standards will serve as a basis for harmonizing existing legislation.

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ՀՊՏՀ միջազգային տնտեսական հարաբերությունների ամբիոնի ավագ դասախոս, տնտեսագիտության թեկնածու

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ՀՊՏՀ տնտեսագիտության տնտեսության ամբիոնի ասպիրանտ

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ՀՊՏՀ ֆինանսատնտեսագիտական քոլեջի դասախոս

Կրթության և մասնագիտությունների անհամապատասխանության խնդիրները ՀՀ աշխատանքի շուկայում.– Ամեն օր մարդիկ, ընկերությունները, կրթական հաստատություններն ու պետությունները հարցեր են արձարժում աշխատաշուկայի վերաբերյալ. ի՞նչ կրթություն պետք է ստանա իմ

երեխան, արդյոք կա՞ր որակավորված աշխատուժ այն տարածաշրջանում, որտեղ մեր ընկերությունը նախատեսում է հիմնել նոր բիզնես, անհրաժեշտ է վերանայել կրթական ծրագրերը, պե՞տք են արդյոք հավելյալ խթաններ ուսանողներ ներգրավելու համար: Աճում է մտահոգությունը, որ ներկայիս աշխատուժի հմտությունները չեն համապատասխանում տնտեսության արագ փոփոխվող պահանջներին:

Հատկանշական է, որ որակավորումների և հմտությունների անհամապատասխանությունը դարձել է քաղաքականություն մշակողների մտահոգությունը թե՛ զարգացած, թե՛ զարգացող երկրներում՝ պայմանավորված աշխատաշուկայի արագ փոփոխություններով, գլոբալացմամբ, տեխնոլոգիական զարգացումներով և ժողովրդագրական փոփոխություններով: Շատ մարդիկ զբաղեցնում են աշխատատեղեր, որոնք չեն համապատասխանում իրենց կրթական մակարդակին: Բազմաթիվ գործատուներ նշում են, որ դժվարանում են գտնել այնպիսի աշխատողների, որոնք ունեն իրենց բիզնեսը զարգացնելու և նորարարությունն առաջ մղելու անհրաժեշտ հմտություններ: Հետազոտության նպատակն է պարզել, թե արդյոք ՀՀ աշխատողների կրթական մակարդակը համապատասխանո՞ւմ է աշխատանքի համար պահանջվող հմտություններին:

Հիմնաբառեր. *աշխատաշուկա, անհամապատասխանություն, հմտություններ, կրթական մակարդակ, մասնագիտություն, զբաղվածություն*

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Проблемы несоответствия образования и профес- сий на рынке труда Республики Армения.

Каждый день люди, компании, образовательные учреждения и государства задаются вопросами, связанными с рынком труда. Какое образование должен получить мой ребенок? Есть ли квалифицированная рабочая сила в том регионе, где наша компания планирует открыть новый бизнес? Нужно ли пересмотреть образовательные программы? Необходимы ли дополнительные стимулы для привлечения студентов? Растёт озабоченность тем, что современные навыки рабочей силы не соответствуют стремительно меняющимся требованиям экономики.

Примечательно, что несоответствие квалификаций и навыков стало предметом беспокойства для политиков как в развитых, так и в развивающихся странах, что объясняется быстрыми изменениями на рынке труда, глобализацией, технологическим развитием и демографическими изменениями. Многие люди занимают рабочие места, которые не соответствуют их уровню образования. Однако многие работодатели отмечают трудности в поиске работников, обладающих навыками, необходимыми для развития бизнеса и продвижения инноваций. Цель исследования – выяснить, соответствует ли уровень образования работников Республики Армения требованиям, предъявляемым к навыкам на рабочем месте.

Ключевые слова: рынок труда, несоответствие, навыки, уровень образования, профессия, занятость

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