

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO ASSESSING GENDER EQUALITY

Aigul KOSHERBAYEVA* *Doctor of Economics, Associate Professor, Visiting Scholar, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, Syracuse, USA*
akosherb@syr.edu

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Abstract. The article presents an overview of methodological approaches to assessing gender inequality. The analysis of the results of research by international organizations on the gender gap index of the World Economic Forum and the United Nations Development Program has been carried out. The article tests the hypothesis that economic growth contributes to the reduction of gender inequality through good governance.

Keywords: sustainable development goals, gender equality, GDP, employment, good governance.

Аңдатпа. Мақалада гендерлік теңсіздікті бағалаудың әдістемелік тәсілдеріне шолу берілген. Дүниежүзілік экономикалық форум мен Біріккен Ұлттар Ұйымының Даму бағдарламасының гендерлік алшақтық индексі бойынша халықаралық ұйымдардың зерттеу нәтижелеріне талдау жасалды. Мақалада экономикалық өсу жақсы басқару арқылы гендерлік теңсіздікті азайтуға көмектеседі деген гипотезаны тексереді.

Түйін сөздер: тұрақты даму мақсаттары, гендерлік теңдік, ЖІӨ, жұмыспен қамту, тиімді басқару.

Аннотация. В статье представлен обзор методических подходов к оценке гендерного неравенства. Проведен анализ результатов исследований международных организаций по индексу гендерного разрыва Всемирного экономического форума и Программы ООН по развитию. В статье проверяется гипотеза - экономический рост способствует снижению гендерного неравенства за счет надлежащего управления.

Ключевые слова: цели в области устойчивого развития, гендерное равенство, ВВП, занятость, надлежащее управление.

Introduction

Achievement of qualitatively new positive transformations in all spheres of life of modern society, the creation of "working" guarantees of human and civil rights and freedoms, of course, are organically linked with the effectiveness of the functioning of all institutions of state power. The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan has become an unshakable guarantor of ensuring state stability, consistent improvement of the activities of state bodies, development of the political system, progressive and dynamic implementation of radical political, legal and socio-economic reforms, overcoming social contradictions and conflicts.

It has been 6 years since the UN member states unanimously ratified the SDGs, and at first some government leaders may have considered the issues under the 17 goals to be somewhat abstract and

disconnected from the main priorities of public administration. However, today, as government leaders (along with international investors, regulators and other stakeholders) assess their future in an increasingly volatile and uncertain world, the growth opportunities associated with these goals are becoming increasingly evident. By shifting to the economic models necessary to achieve the SDGs and discovering the benefits of responsible and inclusive practices associated with them, we are shaping the long-term future of organizations and society at large.

Good governance is one of the most important factors in achieving the economic, environmental and social SDGs.

Good governance is broadly related to institutional issues, social justice and inclusiveness.

Public administration must be responsible for two areas of development: a

* Corresponding author: A. Kosherbayeva, akosherb@syr.edu

society that is increasingly asserting its demands for high standards of services, and an economy that functions in an increasingly closely interconnected world.

There are several qualitative characteristics of a good governance related to rule-making processes and their institutional framework and embodies values such as:

- involved participation
- transparency
- accountability
- and public access to information.

Much has been said and written about the importance of achieving the sustainable development goals by 2030. Realizing the full responsibility of this, the UN Statistical Office developed methodological approaches for assessing and measuring all 17 sustainable development goals. Many SDG indicators have a qualitative and quantitative dimension. The purpose of this study is to analyze approaches to the economic evaluation of goal 5 - gender equality. Also we are going to test the hypothesis that economic growth contributes to the reduction of gender inequality through good governance.

Literature review

Issues of gender equality are among the most relevant for scientific and practical discussions. In general, the analysis shows that all publications can be divided into three conditional groups: economic assessment of gender, sociological analysis of gender equality processes and publications of international organizations.

All publications basically support the idea that the economic growth of the territories is also ensured through the participation of women. However, country differences in culture, norms, values and beliefs have a significant impact on gender equality.

A number of authors have tested the hypothesis that gender wage inequality promotes economic growth by reducing costs. In particular, this hypothesis was confirmed by empirical studies conducted back in 2000 (Seguino, 2000). The author comes to the conclusion that GDP growth is associated with gender inequality in wages.

Experts from the McKinsey Global Institute prepared a report in 2015 that

addressed issues of gender parity. The analysis was prepared through the evaluation of 95 indicators. One of the conclusions of the authors of the report is the thesis that women, who make up half of the economically active population of the planet, generate only 37 percent of world GDP (McKinsey, 2015).

International organizations are also involved in the study of gender inequality issues. Among them, we highlight the United Nations Development Program, which annually publishes the Gender Inequality Index report. The Gender Inequality Index is a combined indicator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) that measures human development in countries around the world in terms of the current level of gender equality in three main categories: Reproductive health; Civil rights and opportunities; Economic activity and opportunities in the labor market (Human Development Report, 2022).

The World Economic Forum also publishes its Gender Gap Report annually. Global Gender Gap Index is a global study and the accompanying ranking of countries in the world in terms of an integral indicator of gender equality. Calculated according to the methodology of the World Economic Forum, based on a combination of publicly available statistical data in the field of socio-economic development for various countries of the world.

The index is designed to measure gender differences in access to resources and opportunities in individual countries, not the actual level of available resources and opportunities in those countries. Thus, the Index measures only gender differences in the countries of the world, regardless of their level of development (Global Gender Gap Report, 2022).

The Asian Development Bank published the CAREC GENDER ASSESSMENT report in 2021. For the sectoral gender assessment, 107 projects implemented by CAREC and development partners in 2014–2018 were analyzed. This selection includes national and regional projects that represent all 11 CAREC countries in transport, trade, energy, or multisectoral projects, including loans and technical assistance. The gender assessment draws conclusions about gaps, missed opportunities, and ultimately entry

points across the five CAREC operational clusters (CAREC Gender Assessment, 2021).

The OECD sees gender equality not only as a moral imperative, but also as a necessary and far-sighted political strategy. For example, a study of the experiences of OECD member countries suggests that if women's labor force participation rates reach the level of men's by 2030, then such convergence will provide GDP growth of 12%. This is the conclusion of the authors of the report published by the OECD (OECD, 2021).

Methodology

In carrying out the analysis, we used the methodological approaches of the UN (Gender Inequality Index), the World Economic Forum (Global Gender Gap Index) and the McKinsey Global Institute (Measures of Gender Parity).

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) is a composite score based on gender equality in education and labor markets, maternal and teenage mortality rates, and women's representation in parliament.

Global Gender Gap Index shows the degree of existing gender gaps according to four key indicators: economic participation and career opportunities, education, health, political rights.

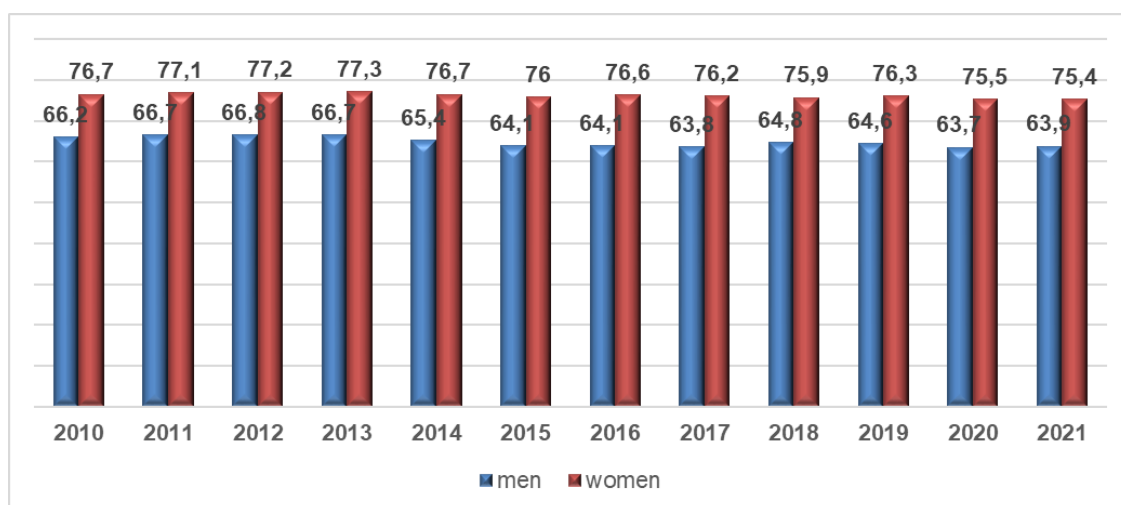
A “gender parity” score is a composite measure of how close women are to gender parity in a given country.

In preparing this article, we used the method of comparative analysis, the method of testing hypotheses and the method of statistical analysis.

Analysis

Women's economic empowerment is critical to achieving gender equality and poverty alleviation, as well as in terms of women's economic potential and their contribution to a country's economic development. The positioning of women in the labor market is a determining factor in their participation on an equal footing with men in projects that expand employment opportunities, as well as a factor in economic growth in general.

According to the Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the share of women in the total population in 2021 was 51.2%. At the same time, the participation of women in the labor market is quite high. In 2021, the proportion of women in the total number of economically active and employed population of Kazakhstan amounted to 63.9% (Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan, n.d.). The employment rate of men slightly increased and women decreased in comparison with 2010 (Picture 1).



Source: Calculated based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Picture 1 – Employed population, %

According to the latest World Economic Forum report on the Gender Gap, Kazakhstan ranks 65th out of 146 countries. The first three places remain with Iceland, Finland and Norway (Global Gender Gap Report, 2022). In 2006, Kazakhstan in this rating took 32nd place among 115 countries,

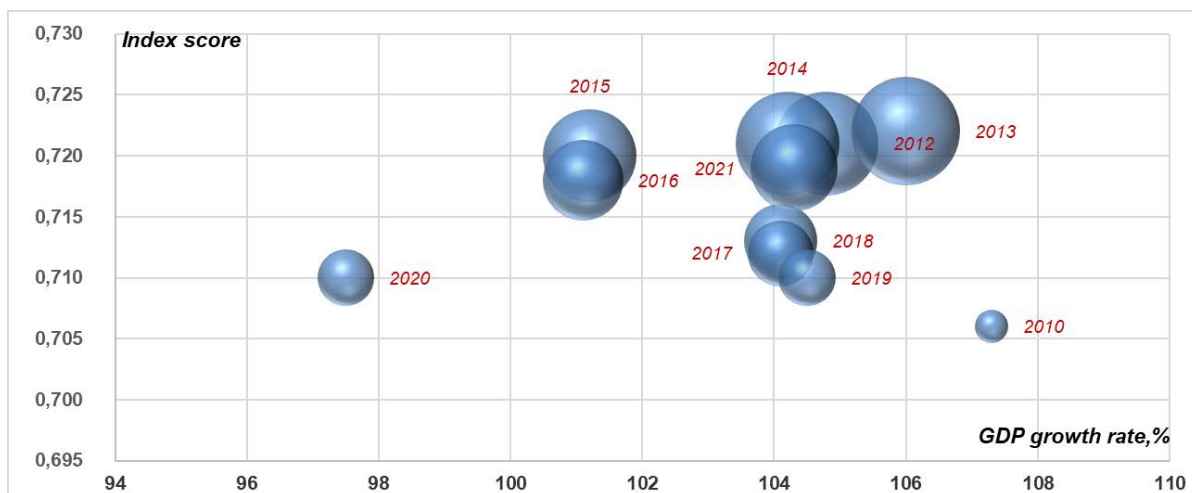
while having 0.693 points. In 2022, we see an improvement in scores of 0.026 percentage points, however, among 146 countries, it only ranks 65th. Compared to 2021, the gender gap in Kazakhstan decreased by 0.09 percentage points (Table 1).

Table 1 - Dynamics of the Global Gender Gap Index

	2006		2021		2022	
	score	rank	score	rank	score	rank
Global Gender Gap Index	0,693	32	0,71	80	0,719	65
Educational Attainment	0,99	53	0,995	47	1	27
Health and Survival	0,979	36	0,975	55	0,977	44
Economic Participation and Opportunity	0,713	16	0,728	47	0,756	29
Political Empowerment	0,089	69	0,141	106	0,143	103

Source: Global Gender Gap Report, 2022

Our analysis shows that the gender equality index does not depend on real GDP growth rates (Picture 2).



Source: Calculated based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the World Economic Forum

Picture 2 – Gender Equality and GDP growth

The UN, in its Human Development Report, argues in favor of the fact that the positive development of gender processes is

noted in countries with a high human development index. This leads them to achieve gender equality (Table 2).

Table 2 - Human Development Index and Gender Equality

Place of the country in the ranking	Country	Human Development Index	Gender Development Index**	Gender Inequality Index (Rank)
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** Gender Development Index groups: Countries are divided into five groups by absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values. Group 1 comprises countries with high equality in HDI achievements between women and men (absolute deviation of less than 2.5 percent), group 2 comprises countries with medium to high equality in HDI achievements between women and men (absolute deviation of 2.5–5 percent), group 3 comprises countries with medium equality in HDI achievements between women and

Very high human development				
1	Switzerland	0,962	0,967 (2)	0,018 (3)
2	Norway	0,961	0,983 (1)	0,016 (2)
3	Iceland	0,959	0,976 (1)	0,043 (8)
56	Kazakhstan	0,811	0,988 (1)	0,161 (41)

Source: Human Development Report, 2022

** Countries are divided into five groups by absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values

Gender Inequality Index: A composite measure reflecting inequality in achievement between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market. As we can see from the table 3 Kazakhstan in

comparison with high ranked countries has some limits of growth. First, it regards Political Empowerment and a bid ratio of a maternal mortality. It should be note that labor force participation today is very important factor.

Table 3 - Gender Inequality Index

	Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15–19)	Share of seats in parliament (% held by women)	Population with at least some secondary education (% ages 25 and older)		Labour force participation rate (% ages 15 and older)	
				female	male	female	male
Switzerland	5	2,2	39,8	96,9	97,5	61,7	72,7
Norway	2	2,3	45	99,1	99,3	60,3	72
Iceland	4	5,4	47,6	99,8	99,7	61,7	70,5
Kazakhstan	10	21,9	24,5	99,8	100	63,3	75,5

Source: Human Development Report, 2022

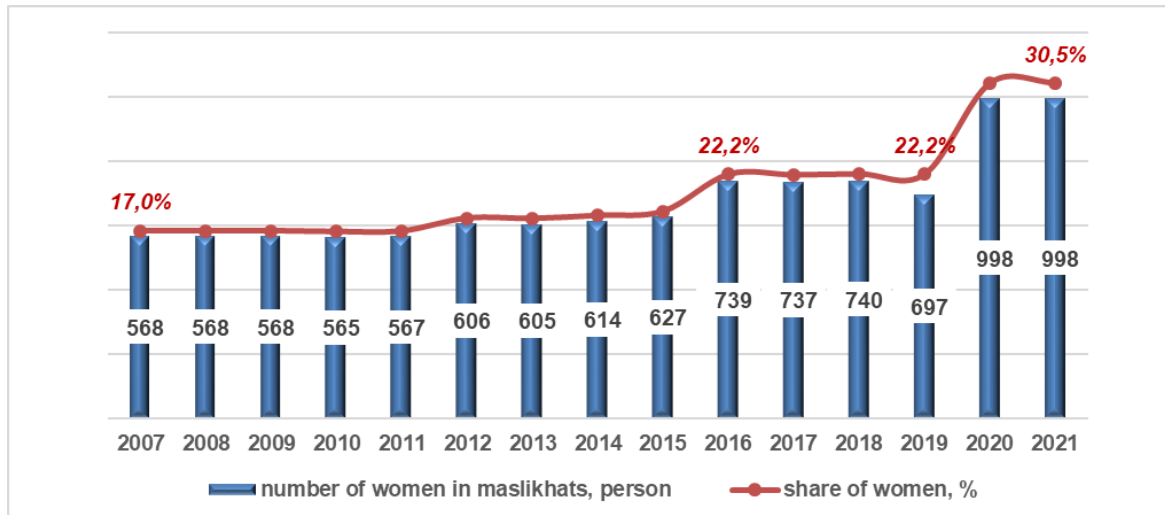
If we turn to the Global Gender Gap Index (Table 1) we have to stress that there is a same limitation: Political Empowerment.

In Kazakhstan, women's participation in politics and decision-making is at a low level (10%) with no noticeable changes since joining the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1997. Measures taken are recognized by the state as insufficient and/or ineffective compared to the best practices recommended for promoting women in politics.

The data of the Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2021 clearly demonstrate the

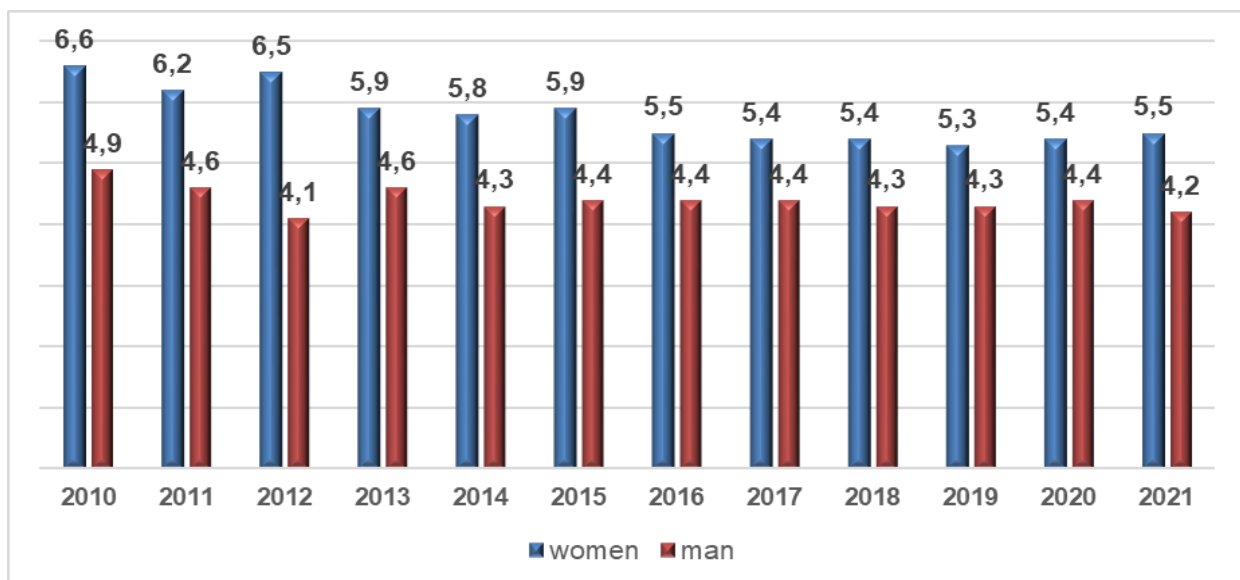
continuing gender imbalance in women's participation in politics and public administration (Picture 2). According to the data of National Bureau of Statistics the share of women in Maslikhats increased from 17% in 2007 to 30.5% in 2021. It's real evidence that Kazakhstan has to lay attention to the political reforms. However, we can state that the problem of gender inequality on political levels also exist in European countries too. For example, the situation at national, regional, and local and regional levels shows similar levels of gender inequality with an average of 32.1 % of women in regional assemblies in the EU (Women in politics in the EU, 2021).

men (absolute deviation of 5–7.5 percent), group 4 comprises countries with medium to low equality in HDI achievements between women and men (absolute deviation of 7.5–10 percent) and group 5 comprises countries with low equality in HDI achievements between women and men (absolute deviation from gender parity of more than 10 percent)



Source: Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Picture 3 – Gender distribution of Deputies of Maslikhats



Source: Calculated based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Picture 4 – Unemployment rate, %

One of the limits to growth could also be high unemployment (Picture 4). In this regard, it is important to apply the principles of good governance.

Three dimensions need to be assessed: mechanisms, processes, and results to ensure that governance is effective.

Good governance mechanisms mean transparent and democratic institutions and the provision of productive and efficient public services.

Governance processes refer to the quality of participation necessary to ensure that political, social, and economic are grounded in broad consensus in society and

that the voices of the excluded, the poorest and most vulnerable are heard in decision-making.

Good governance can result in peaceful, stable, and resilient societies where services are provided and the needs of societies are reflected, including the voices of the most vulnerable and excluded groups.

It is worth noting that accountability for these dimensions is critical and moves vertically from government to people or horizontally between parts of the state.

Therefore, the structure of sustainable development requires civil servants who are responsible for actions taken on behalf of

society and at the expense of public resources. This ensures economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Turning to the indicators for assessing the noted parameters of stability, we highlight the following:

In terms of economic sustainability:

- use of energy efficient technologies;
- smart work initiatives to facilitate traffic / pollution, etc.;
- technology-based information and services provided to businesses and people to stimulate engagement and growth.

In terms of social sustainability:

- availability for the choice of technologies;
- E-gov support service;
- public health efforts;
- E-gov in remote places;
- E-gov initiatives should narrow the digital divide.

In terms of environmental sustainability:

- the use of environmentally friendly (green) information and communication technology equipment for government operations;
- setting up notification services for the population (severe weather conditions, etc.);
- smart metering service for water management.

To achieve the SDGs, it is necessary to monitor and evaluate the performance of such areas of public administration as: long-term planning, integration of various aspects of sustainable development policies, cooperation and innovation.

Addressing the priority tasks of the SDG agenda presupposes:

- creating political support for sustainable development;
- involving the public in identifying and developing solutions that will help them better than others;
- the use of institutional mechanisms and international cooperation for sustainable development.

Results

The main factors behind the high ratings of the Nordic countries are the implementation of policies aimed at the general welfare.

Analysis of the new principles of public administration in the Republic of

Kazakhstan, outlined in the New Concept and National Development Priorities until 2025 with the eleven Principles of Good Governance for Sustainable Development (Principles of effective governance for sustainable development, 2018), showed that it is a time for the implementation the standard of Good Governance.

In this regard, it is very important to follow the OECD recommendations on gender equality in public life (OECD, 2021, pp. 11-12):

- Ensuring equal access to participation in public life, including politics, the judiciary and public administration;
- Ensuring accountability and sustainability of gender initiatives.

Based on the analysis carried out, the following can be summarized: the hypothesis proposed for testing that economic growth contributes to the reduction of gender inequality through good governance mechanisms is partially proven.

We cannot claim that GDP growth will unequivocally contribute to the reduction of gender inequality.

However, we can assume, as noted in the Human Development Report, that good governance is an important element of a strategy to reduce gender inequality.

Conclusion

Thus, reducing gender inequality largely depends on the answer to the following questions:

1. Why don't measures to ensure gender balance in politics and public administration work?
2. How can the situation be changed?

Today, on the agenda of the civil sector is the task of stimulating state and public institutions to work to ensure effective equality between men and women. Gender balance is considered as an indispensable condition for true democracy, which is enshrined in the Concept of New Kazakhstan proclaimed by the President of the country. And one of the tools for its implementation can be the organization and holding of positive gender events at the national level, aimed at helping the state to fulfill its obligations.

In many countries, national and international civil society organizations

actively support the expansion of women's participation in political and public decision-making through various measures, namely:

- through the organization of training and capacity building for prospective candidates and networking opportunities,
- raising awareness of the imbalance between women and men in parliaments and other bodies,

- and, in some cases, providing direct funding for the campaigns of potential women candidates.

In this way, civil society organizations can act as catalysts for change at the legislative level, and by promoting understanding and recognition of the importance of women's equality, they can change the minds of citizens.

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ГЕНДЕРЛІК ТЕҢДІКТІ БАҒАЛАУДЫҢ ӘДІСТЕМЕЛІК ТӘСІЛДЕРІ

Айгүл КӨШЕРБАЕВА, Экономика ғылымдарының докторы, доцент, шақырылған ғылыми қызметкер, Сиракьюз университеті, Сиракьюз, АҚШ, akosherb@syr.edu

МЕТОДИЧЕСКИЕ ПОДХОДЫ К ОЦЕНКЕ ГЕНДЕРНОГО РАВЕНСТВА

Айгуль КОШЕРБАЕВА, Доктор экономических наук, доцент, приглашенный ученый, Сиракьюзский университет, Сиракьюз, США, akosherb@syr.edu