Chapter 6

Statistical Analysis of Women’s Labor Force Data of OECD Countries

Fatih Çemrek
Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Turkey

Füsun Yenilmez
Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Women take part in working life less in proportion to men due to the reasons such as the value judgments of the societies in which they live, the roles of motherhood and housewifery which the society have imposed on them, and social gender inequality. Making use of the economic potential of the country fully and effectively depends on increasing the employment rates of women which remain behind the male employment for various reasons. In this study, it was tried to reveal differences of OECD countries in each other in terms of women’s labor force variables. To realize this aim, 9 indicators of women’s labor force pertaining to 32 countries, which were received from OECD Employment Outlook 2015, OECD Labor Statistics Book and OECD official website www.oecd.org, were compared with the help of Multidimensional Scaling. The study was carried out for 32 countries both two dimensionally and three dimensionally. Additionally, Factor Analysis was utilized. Determining the most remote countries together in dimensions, variables leading to differences were shown in graphics.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Women’s taking an active role in social and economic development process and increasing women participation in the labor force are quite important issues to enhance sustainable development from a social perspective. In this context, more female participation in the labor force will prevent female poverty, and promote better living conditions (Korkmaz, Alacahan, Cesim, Yücel, & Aras, 2013, 1847).

Even if the rates of women’s employment have increased in the globalization period, this increase is seen mostly at works which are low paid and deprived of social security and legal protection. Women
are employed mainly in the service sector. This situation is related to both implemented policies and the role which the society has imposed on women. This case is expressed with the concept of “gender mainstreaming”. Gender roles are behaviors which have come up until today since the first communities, having the characteristics of cultural inheritance.

Furthermore, the wage differences between men and women are also an issue in question. The secret behind unequal positions of women in work, career, economic and political participation lies in the definition of women as housewives socially (Mies, 1994).

It is generally possible to handle the reasons of women’s participation in the labor force economically and socially. Lack of income, changes in marital status, having a child or not and level of education are ranked among the reasons why women labor force participated in work life. Taken into consideration sociologically, gaining prestige or self-realization comes to the front (Öztürk & Çetin, 2009).

On looking into the rates of women employment in OECD countries in 2015, the average of OECD is found out as 45.13%. Estonia and Finland are seen with 48.90% in the first place. Among 34 countries, Turkey is in the last place with a 29.60%. Above Turkey, the country in the 33rd place, Mexico takes place with a 33% rate.

Over time, women’s labor market positions and way of working have also changed. How this change happened on sectoral basis is an important subject since the sectoral distribution of employment in a country is the significant indicator of the developmental level of that country. While the employment together with the development has been decreasing in the agricultural sector, it has been increasing in non-agricultural sectors. This condition prevails exactly in the women employment. Whereas women labor force in developing countries is concentrated in the agricultural sector, in developed countries it is concentrated in the service sector. Correspondingly, in developed countries, paid woman labor takes the place of unpaid family labor in developing countries (Berber & Yılmaz Eser, 2008). When it is evaluated from this perspective, women’s labor force participation is an important issue for sustainable development.

Considering the sectoral distribution of the women workforce in OECD countries; the women employment rate in the agricultural sector OECD average stood at 4.8. Turkey is in first place with 41.70% in this classification. Poland takes the second place with 14.20% proportion. The United Kingdom takes in the last place with 0.5%. Looking at these figures, we can say that nearly half of women employment is in the agricultural sector in Turkey.

Looking into the rates of women employment in the industrial sector, OECD average stood at 13.74%. In this classification, Czech Republic is located in the first place with 26%. The Slovak Republic comes in the second place with a rate of 24.10%. In the last rank located the United Kingdom with a rate of 7.40% as well as in agricultural sector.

Looking at the women employment rate in the services sector; OECD average stood at 81.63%. The United Kingdom is located in the first rank with 91.20% in this classification. Norway comes in the second place with a rate of 90.50%. Turkey takes the last place with a rate of 43%.

On studying the researches about women’s labor force participation, it is stated that schooling rate, age, marital status and the number of children are the main factors which influence women’s decision to take part in the labor force (Dayıoğlu, 2000; Dayıoğlu & Kasnaçoğlu, 1997; Tunali & Ercan, 1998; Tunali, 1997). Çınar (1994) indicates that “security” concerns affecting the women’s working decisions led them to prefer to work at home in comparison to formal working. Yenilmez and Işıklı (2010), comparing the rates of women labor force participation in Turkey with the ones in the other countries taking place in different groups, detected that in this ranking, Turkey stood at the last ranks in the list of many countries such as OECD, EU and Islamic countries took place.