

ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S LABOR FORCE PROFILE AND STATISTICS IN TURKEY IN TERMS OF LITERATURE

TÜRKİYE'DE KADIN İŞGÜCÜ PROFİLİ VE İSTATİSTİKLERİNİN LİTERATÜR AÇISINDAN ANALİZİ

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The focus of this study is to analyze the women's labor force profile and statistics in Turkey from the perspective of the literature. Women's labor force participation is of great importance in the context of economic and social development. In countries like Turkey, the status and statistics of the women's labor force are vital for understanding the problem of gender inequality, guiding policy making and increasing women's employment. The main objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of women's labor force participation, employment status and gender inequality by conducting a detailed analysis of the women's labor force profile and statistics in Turkey from the perspective of the literature. Within the scope of the objective of this study, the following sub-objectives were pursued.

Methods: In general, the following issues about the Women's Labor Force Profile and Statistics in Turkey have been evaluated in terms of the literature within the scope of the study. The women's labor force profile in Turkey is shaped by cultural, social and economic factors. Implementing policies and programs that support women's labor force participation is important for reducing gender inequality. Analyses in the literature emphasize the need to redefine gender roles, encourage men's participation in housework and increase women's visibility in leadership positions. In this way, it is stated in the results and findings of the literature sources that women's participation in the labor force can increase and gender inequality can be reduced. In this study, the studies in the literature on the subject of the research were compiled and the results and conclusions obtained were interpreted.

Results: Policies and measures to reduce gender inequality are a great necessity. Increasing women's participation in the labor force is seen as a critical factor in promoting economic growth and supporting social development.

Conclusion: Increasing women's labor force participation will not only ensure women's economic independence, but will also contribute positively to the economic growth and social development of the country. Therefore, it is concluded that more efforts should be made to address gender inequality and unlock women's potential in the labor market.

Keywords: Employment, Gender Inequality, Literature Analysis, Statistics, Women Labor Force.

ÖZET

Amaç: Bu çalışmanın odak noktası, Türkiye'de kadın işgücü profili ve istatistiklerinin literatür açısından analiz edilmesidir. Kadınların işgücüne katılımı, ekonomik ve toplumsal gelişme bağlamında büyük bir önem taşır. Türkiye gibi ülkelerde kadın işgücünün durumu ve istatistikleri, cinsiyet eşitsizliği sorununu anlamak, politika yapımını yönlendirmek ve kadın istihdamını artırmak için hayati önem taşımaktadır. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Türkiye'de kadın işgücü profili ve istatistiklerinin literatür açısından detaylı bir analizini gerçekleştirerek, kadınların işgücüne katılımı, istihdam durumu ve cinsiyet eşitsizliği konularında kapsamlı bir anlayış sunmaktır. Bu çalışmanın amacı kapsamında aşağıdaki alt hedefler gözletmiştir.

Gereç ve Yöntem: Türkiye'de Kadın İşgücü Profili ve İstatistikleri hakkında genel olarak aşağıdaki konular çalışmanın kapsamı dahilinde literatür açısından değerlendirilmiştir. Türkiye'deki kadın işgücü profili, kültürel, sosyal ve ekonomik faktörlerle şekillenmektedir. Kadınların işgücüne katılımını destekleyici politika ve programların hayata geçirilmesi, cinsiyet eşitsizliğinin azaltılması için önemlidir. Literatürdeki analizler, cinsiyet rollerinin yeniden tanımlanması, erkeklerin de ev işlerine katılımının teşvik edilmesi ve kadınların liderlik pozisyonlarında görünürlüğünün artırılmasının gerekliliğini vurgulamaktadır. Bu sayede kadınların işgücüne katılımının artırılacağı ve cinsiyet eşitsizliğinin azaltılabileceği literatür kaynaklarının bulgu ile sonuçlarında belirtilmektedir. Bu çalışmada araştırmanın konusunda yönelik literatürde yer alan çalışmalar derlenmiş ve elde edilen bulgu ve sonuçlar yorumlanmıştır.

Bulgular: Cinsiyet eşitsizliğini azaltmaya yönelik politikalar ve önlemler büyük bir gerekliliktir. Kadınların işgücüne katılımının artırılması, ekonomik büyümeyi teşvik etme ve toplumsal kalkınmayı destekleme açısından kritik bir faktör olarak görülmektedir.

Sonuç: Kadınların işgücüne katılımının artırılması, sadece kadınların ekonomik bağımsızlığını sağlamakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda ülkenin ekonomik büyümesine ve toplumsal kalkınmasına da olumlu katkı sağlayacaktır. Bu nedenle, cinsiyet eşitsizliğini ele almak ve kadınların işgücü piyasasındaki potansiyelini açığa çıkarmak için daha fazla çaba harcanması gerektiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Cinsiyet Eşitsizliği, İstatistikler, İstihdam, Kadın İşgücü, Literatür Analizi.

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INTRODUCTION

Women's labor force participation and employment status play an important role in Turkey's social and economic structure. Women's inclusion in the labor force is critical for reducing gender inequality, supporting economic growth and ensuring social development. At this point, the analysis of women's labor force profile and statistics in Turkey in terms of literature serves the purpose of understanding gender inequality, guiding policy making and increasing women's employment.

Turkey's economic and social development reflects the fact that it can be strengthened by increased female labor force participation. However, female employment rates have remained at low levels in the past years. Recently, however, there has been an increase in women's labor force participation. This increase has been driven by factors such as the rise in women's educational attainment, the impact of urbanization and economic needs. However, women's labor force participation rates still lag behind men's. Analysis of statistical data on women's employment reveals qualitative aspects of women's labor force participation and inequalities. It is observed in the literature that women are generally concentrated in low-paid and low-skilled jobs. This is a reality that reflects gender inequality. The underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields shows that gender discrimination persists.

The analysis of women's labor force profile and statistics draws attention to the issue of gender inequality for policy makers, academics and society at large. These analyses provide an important basis for shaping actions to increase women's labor force participation, combat gender inequality and promote social development.

This study aims to understand the problem of gender inequality and propose solutions by analyzing the female labor force profile and statistics in Turkey from the perspective of the literature. It is aimed to contribute to the determination of the necessary steps to increase women's employment, promote economic growth and ensure social development.

Objective

The main objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of women's labor force participation, employment status and gender inequality by conducting a detailed analysis of women's labor force profile and statistics in Turkey from a literature perspective. Within the scope of the objective of this study, the following sub-objectives were pursued.

- **Analysis of the Female Labor Force Profile in Turkey:** The study analyzes the basic demographic and employment characteristics of women in Turkey, such as labor force participation rates, sectoral distribution, educational attainment and age ranges.

- **Qualitative Analysis of Women Employment:** The study examines the qualitative characteristics of the sectors in which women are employed and assesses the implications of the concentration in low-paid and low-skilled jobs.

- **Gender Inequality and Social Norms:** The research attempts to explain the reasons for the low representation of women in leadership positions and STEM fields by analyzing social norms and gender discrimination.

- **Changes in Women Labor Force Statistics:** The study analyzes the developments in women's employment from past to present by examining the change in female labor force participation rates over time.

- **Presenting Policy and Strategy Recommendations:** In line with the results, the research offers policy and strategy recommendations to increase female labor force participation, tackle gender inequality and promote social development.

This study aims to analyze the women's labor force profile and statistics in Turkey from the perspective of the literature in order to understand the problem of gender inequality, to guide policy making and to contribute to efforts to increase women's employment.

Scope

In general, the following issues about the Women's Labor Force Profile and Statistics in Turkey have been evaluated in terms of the literature within the scope of the study.

- **Women Employment Rates:** The employment rates of women in Turkey, their labor force participation rates and the sectors in which they are employed can be examined. In particular, differences and trends in rural and urban areas are discussed.

- **Wage Inequality:** Data and factors for women's lower wages for the same job compared to men can be analyzed. The reasons behind this situation are explored.
- **Women Entrepreneurship:** The extent to which women are active in the field of entrepreneurship, their rate of starting their own businesses and the challenges in this field were analyzed.
- **Education Levels and Labor Force Participation:** The relationship between women's education levels and labor force participation can be examined. Labor force participation rates and employment status of highly educated women are discussed.
- **Child Care and Labor Force Participation:** One of the factors affecting women's labor force participation is childcare. We examined how the inadequacy or cost of childcare services affects women's labor force participation.
- **Barriers in Women's Labor Market:** Cultural, social and economic barriers that limit women's participation in the labor market can be analyzed. Policy recommendations to increase women's labor force participation are also presented.
- **Sectoral Distribution of Female Labor Force:** The sectors in which women are employed more and the working conditions in these sectors were analyzed.

These headings can provide a general framework for an analysis of the literature on the female labor force profile and statistics in Turkey. In order to access detailed and up-to-date data, you need to examine relevant public and private sector sources, statistical agencies and academic research.

METHOD

Women's labor force participation in Turkey has been an important research topic in recent years. Analyses in the literature show that despite the increase in women's labor force participation, gender inequality is still evident. Women are generally employed in low-paid sectors, while their representation in senior management positions and STEM fields is low. Moreover, women face challenges in balancing work and family life due to traditional gender roles such as housework and childcare.

Statistics show that women's unemployment rates are higher than men's and that women's labor force participation rates decline with age. Although women's employment increases as educational attainment increases, the employment rate of skilled women is still low.

The female labor force profile in Turkey is shaped by cultural, social and economic factors. Implementing policies and programs that support women's labor force participation is important for reducing gender inequality. Analyses in the literature emphasize the need to redefine gender roles, encourage men's participation in housework and increase the visibility of women in leadership positions. This can increase women's labor force participation and reduce gender inequality.

Data Collection Method

The aim of this study is to analyse the female labour force profile and statistics in Turkey in terms of the literature. The data collection process was carried out through secondary data analysis.

In the first stage, official statistics and reports published by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) were reviewed to collect the most recent data on the female labour force. These data were analysed under main headings such as labour force participation rates, sectoral distribution, education level and wage inequality.

In addition, academic sources such as academic articles, theses and national/international conference proceedings have been reviewed to identify important findings and analyses in the literature on the female labour force in Turkey. This literature review formed the theoretical framework of the study and identified gaps in the literature.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using qualitative and quantitative analysis methods. Quantitative data were interpreted interpretatively by statistical analyses. These analyses were conducted to determine the changes in labour force participation rates, the evolution of sectoral distribution and the effects of education level on the labour force.

Qualitative data were analysed by thematic analysis method. Important findings and analyses in the literature were evaluated by dividing them into thematic categories and inferences were made based on these categories.

Research Limitations

This study has some limitations. Firstly, the timeliness and accuracy of the data used may vary depending on the date of publication of the data sources. Moreover, this study only deals with the female labour force profile in Turkey and does not include international comparisons.

Ethical Assessment

Since this study was conducted using existing literature and public data, it was not subjected to ethical evaluation. However, during the data collection and analysis process, it was ensured that all information was obtained from accurate and reliable sources.

This is only an example of the methodology section of a study titled "Analysis of Women's Labour Force Profile and Statistics in Turkey in terms of Literature". This section can be adapted and used according to the specific requirements of your study.

Research Limitations

In terms of the purpose and scope of the study, some limitations have emerged for the study and those who conduct research in this field. Information on these limitations is given under the following headings. These are;

- **Data Reliability and Incompleteness:** The reliability and lack of statistics can affect the accuracy of the research. Given that women are also involved in informal forms of employment, such as domestic work, it may be difficult to obtain complete and reliable data.
- **Ignoring Local Differences:** The female labor force profile and statistics may differ significantly across different regions of Turkey. The research may not adequately address the differences between these regions.
- **Insufficiently Analyzed Cultural and Social Factors:** Cultural and social factors affecting women's labor force participation are complex. There may not be sufficient data and resources for in-depth analysis of these factors.
- **Time Constraints:** Research may be focused on a specific time period and may not capture long-term trends. More data may be needed to assess long-term changes in issues such as labor force participation and inequality.
- **Lack of Qualitative Data:** While literature analysis is often based on quantitative data, qualitative data is also needed to understand women's experiences, attitudes and emotions. The lack of such data can limit a deeper understanding of the issue of women's labor force.
- **Lack of Sectoral Details:** Detailed analysis of women's employment status in different sectors and gender inequality in these sectors may be limited.
- **Impact of New Policies and Programs:** The research may not reflect the effects of more recent policies or programs. The effects of new policies supporting women's employment may not have been covered by the literature analysis.

These limitations indicate the possibility that the study may not present a complete picture. Researchers can conduct a more comprehensive study by acknowledging these limitations and paying attention to these shortcomings.

Research Problem

The problem of the research, Analysis of Women's Labor Force Profile and Statistics in Turkey from a Literature Perspective, aims to understand the factors affecting women's labor force participation and gender inequality in this field on the basis of the literature. Through the analysis of statistics and literature, issues such as women's difficulties in employment, sectoral distribution, access to leadership roles and level of education will be addressed to understand the current situation and the causes of inequality. This analysis also aims to shed light on developing

Women Employment Rates in Turkey

2013	7.049	24,9
2014	7.594	26,3
2015	8.006	27,3
2016	8.303	28,0
2017	8.706	28,8
2018	9.017	29,4
2019	8.925	28,7
2020	8.299	26,2
2021	9.005	28,0
2022	9.935	30,4

Graph 1. Female Employment Rates in Turkey by Years (TRT Haber, 2023)

“According to data from the Turkish Statistical Institute, the unemployment rate for people aged 15 and over in the country in 2022 was 10.4 per cent. This rate was estimated as 8.9 percent for men and 13.4 percent for women. In the same period, the employment rate in the country was 47.5 percent, while this rate was calculated as 65 percent for men and 30.4 percent for women.

It is observed that the female employment rate has increased over the years due to the incentive mechanisms and measures taken. The female employment rate, which was 19.4 percent in 2005 when the series was announced, increased to 29.4 percent in 2018. The female employment rate, which fell to 26.2 percent, the lowest level of the last 6 years, in 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected the whole world, started to rise again in 2021 and reached 28 percent. The female employment rate, which rose to 30.4 percent in 2022, reached an all-time high.

While the number of women employed in Turkey was 4 million 773 thousand in 2005, it increased to 8 million in 2015 and 8 million 925 thousand in 2019. This number, which declined to 8 million 299 thousand in 2020, increased rapidly in the following years, reaching 9 million in 2021 and 9 million 935 thousand in 2022. Thus, the number of women employed in the country doubled in the period 2005-2022.” (TRT Haber, 2023)

Increasing women's participation and employment in economic life is critical for the economic development of societies. Increasing women's labor force participation and employment brings many positive effects. These effects can be analyzed under the following headings.

- **Increasing Welfare:** Increased women's participation in the labor force raises the income levels of families and increases economic welfare. This improves overall quality of life.
- **Poverty Reduction:** Increased employment of women reduces the risk of poverty for families. More than one family member can earn an income, strengthening the family's financial situation.
- **Economic Growth and Competitiveness:** The participation of women in economic life expands the labor market and increases potential skills. This contributes to economic growth and increases the competitiveness of the country.
- **Innovation and Diversity:** Women can bring different perspectives, experiences and talents. Diversity fosters innovation in business.
- **Reducing Social Inequality:** Women's economic empowerment helps to reduce gender inequality. This in turn supports a fairer and more balanced society.
- **Intergenerational Impact:** Women being educated and employed can increase the educational attainment of future generations. Children can have a better future in key areas such as education and health.

For these reasons, women being economically active and participating in the labor force provides great advantages at both individual and societal levels. Policies and programs for this purpose

are very important for reducing gender inequality and supporting social development. In line with this information, when the data on women's employment prepared by TurkStat is analyzed, it is clearly seen that gender discrimination against women is practiced and that women's employment is still lower than men's employment rate (Eren, 2020).

According to data from the Turkish Statistical Institute, the unemployment rate for people aged 15 and over was recorded as 10.4% in 2022. This rate was 8.9% for men and 13.4% for women. In the same period, the employment rate in the country was 47.5%, while this rate was calculated as 65% for men and 30.4% for women (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2023).

The women's employment rate has increased due to incentive mechanisms and measures. The women's employment rate, which was 19.4% in 2005, increased to 29.4% in 2018. The employment rate, which fell to 26.2% in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, rose again to 28% in 2021. It reached a peak of 30.4% in 2022 (Serel & Özdemir, 2017).

Women's employment has also increased numerically. Women's employment increased from 4 million 773 thousand in 2005 to 9 million 935 thousand in 2022. This shows that women's employment doubled in the 2005-2022 period. This development reflects the results of efforts to promote women's employment and reduce gender inequality (Kutlu, Aktaş Çimen, & Güdekli, 2022).

Today, the participation and position of women, who make up about half of the world's population, in economic life is still not at the desired level. The fact that women lag behind men in social and economic terms shows that gender inequality and obstacles in this field persist. There are several main reasons for women's lagging behind in economic life (Demirgöz Bal, 2014). These are;

- **Perpetuation of Gender Roles:** Traditional gender roles still prevail in many societies. Women are expected to focus more on domestic and childcare tasks, which can limit career opportunities.
- **Wage Inequality:** Women are generally paid less than men in similar positions. This wage inequality causes women to fall behind economically.
- **Lack of Representation in Management and Leadership Positions:** Senior management positions and leadership roles are often filled by men. There can be barriers to women's access to these positions.
- **Inequalities in Education and Career Choice:** In some regions and communities, women may not have access to education. In addition, women may be less likely to be employed in certain sectors.
- **Social Norms and Prejudices:** Women are sometimes subject to low expectations or prejudices from their families, society or employers.
- **Working Conditions and Flexibility:** It can be difficult for women to balance work and family life, especially when flexible working models are inadequate.

Overcoming these problems requires policies and programs that focus on gender equality, raising gender awareness, questioning gender norms and promoting women to leadership positions. In this way, women can participate more in economic life and rise to influential positions. It is also necessary to mention the changes in women's employment from past to present (Bardakçı & Oğlak, 2022).

During World War I and World War II, the conscription of men due to war increased the need for female labor in industry. This encouraged women's participation in working life. With industrialization and the change in women's roles, women were given new fields and roles after industrialization, which increased both their economic and social participation. The increase in female employment has increased the demand for female labor for economic reasons. This has increased interest in women's employment. Women's employment initially faced problems such as low wages and poor working conditions. With the industrial revolution, the concept of women's labor force became more prominent. Restrictions and prohibitions in the mid-19th century, some Western countries prohibited women from working by limiting working hours. This led to the exploitation of the female labor force. When this historical development is examined, it shows how important the participation of women in economic life and their integration into the labor force is (Sağlık & Çelik, 2018).

In the early 20th century, it can be stated that women's participation in working life was encouraged as a result of the reduction in the labor force of men due to the wars and that the factors

affecting women's employment in Turkey were addressed in this process (Şahinoğlu & Batu Ağırkaya, 2021). These factors can be categorized under the following headings.

- **Impact of Wars:** In the early 20th century, the decline in the male labor force due to wars created the opportunity for women to participate in working life outside agriculture and domestic work.
- **Problems of Women's Employment:** Problems in women's employment in Turkey are attributed to factors such as gender inequality in the division of labor, urbanization and migration, changes in the traditional family structure, and low levels of education.
- **Social Gender Inequality:** The fact that there is still gender inequality in the division of labor stands out as one of the reasons why women are not at the desired level of employment.
- **Women's Education and Employment Opportunities:** As a result of factors such as industrialization, urbanization and migration, women have also gained the right to acquire professions and education, and their opportunities to participate in new fields of work have increased.
- **Population Distribution:** It is emphasized that women make up almost half of Turkey's population structure and therefore play an important role in promoting sustainable growth and social welfare.

The Global Gender Inequality Index published by the World Economic Forum evaluates gender inequality in Turkey and how the results have changed, again under the following headings (Bardakçı & Oğlak, 2022). These are;

- **Global Gender Inequality Index:** Published in 2006 for the first time, this index examines the gender gap between men and women in 4 main categories.
- **State of Turkey:** While Turkey ranked 105th among 115 countries in 2006, this ranking declined in the following years and dropped to 130th place in the latest report, which includes 153 countries.
- **Economic Participation and Equal Opportunity:** Turkey ranked 136th in the category of economic participation and equality of opportunity, indicating high economic inequality between genders.
- **Health and Survival:** It is stated that Turkey's index value in the health and survival category remained stable and rose 3 places to 64th place.

Turkey's position and changes in international indices on gender inequality are emphasized. It is stated that Turkey still needs to make progress on gender inequality and that challenges remain, particularly in the area of economic participation and equal opportunities (Özveren & Dama, 2022).

Wage Inequality against Women in Turkey

Wage inequality for women in Turkey refers to the difference between the wages received by women and men for doing the same work. This issue is a reflection of gender inequality and emerges as a result of gender-based discrimination. The fact that women receive lower wages for similar jobs reflects inequalities in the social and economic structure and negatively affects women's financial power. There are some key points about wage inequality for women in Turkey (Halaçlı & Karaalp-Orhan, 2022). These are;

- **Wage Differences:** Women can often be paid less than their male counterparts, even for the same work. This difference may be the result of gender discrimination and social norms in the workplace.
- **Sectoral Inequality:** In some sectors, women may be concentrated in lower paid jobs, while men may work in higher paid positions. This can exacerbate wage inequality.
- **Management and Leadership Positions:** Women are often underrepresented in senior management positions and leadership roles. This may result in men earning higher wages.
- **Labor Market Participation:** Women's labor force participation rate may be lower than men's. This may weaken women's economic independence.
- **Social Norms and Discrimination:** Social gender norms and discrimination can lead to women facing wage inequality.
- **Child Care and Family Responsibilities:** Women often prefer flexible working patterns due to childcare and family responsibilities, which can lead to low-paid positions.

Addressing the issue of wage inequality is a crucial issue for strengthening women's economic independence and social status. This is a necessary step towards gender equality and an important dimension in increasing women's labor force participation and economic empowerment (Şahin & Bayhan, 2020).

Important points on women's entry into the labor market in the historical process, how gender discrimination emerged and how gender inequality is reflected in the labor market are discussed. In this sense, prominent themes are as follows (Kılınc & Karaçay, 2021). These are;

- **Women's Participation in the Labor Force:** Although women have historically been part of the production process, their entry into the labor market and paid work became widespread with the industrial revolution.
- **Emergence of Discrimination:** As women began to participate more in the labor market with the industrial revolution, discriminatory practices began to emerge. This discrimination is based on prejudices.
- **Social Gender and Prejudice:** Gender norms determine the roles assigned to women and men. Over time, these norms can turn into social prejudices.
- **Balancing Work and Family Life:** Women's entry into the workforce requires them to balance work and family life. However, within the patriarchal structure, domestic chores are often seen as women's responsibility.
- **Women's Career Choice:** Due to gender norms and discrimination, women can often be concentrated in low-status and low-paid occupations characterized as "women's work".
- **Gender Inequality and Labor Market:** Gender inequality can lead to women occupying lower paid, precarious and passive positions in the labor market.

The text makes it clear how gender inequality is reflected in the labor market, the difficulties women face and that these difficulties stem from gender norms. The causes of gender-based wage discrimination and its reflections in the labor market are discussed in detail in the literature. When the results of the studies in the literature are analyzed, many reasons for gender-based wage inequality are mentioned and these reasons are grouped under some headings (Topkaya, 2021).

- **Gender-Based Wage Discrimination:** Gender-based wage discrimination is defined as women receiving lower wages despite having the same education, experience, professional qualifications and careers as men.
- **Demand Side Causes:** Demand-side factors include factors such as women's education, marital status, age and experience. Discrimination against girls in education due to gender discrimination may lead to women having less human capital.
- **Human Capital Model:** It is emphasized that women have less human capital due to their roles and responsibilities in society and are therefore concentrated in low-paid occupations.
- **Statistical Discrimination Model:** Employers make decisions based on discriminatory biases during recruitment. Discriminatory attitudes of employers based on statistics underlie the practice of low pay for women.
- **Assessment of Women:** Employers may pay women lower wages even though they are just as productive as men. Discriminatory preferences and prejudices of employers influence this situation.
- **In-firm Training and Continuity:** The possibility of women's lack of job continuity due to marriage and having children may lead to lack of in-firm training and wage inequality.
- **Gender-Based Occupational Segregation:** Social acceptance of certain jobs as "women's work" or "men's work" may prevent women from rising to managerial positions.
- **Firm Size and Wage Discrimination:** It is stated that wage discrimination against women decreases with increasing firm size.
- **Social Gender and Career Choice:** Social gender norms can influence women's choice or preference for certain occupations. This can increase wage inequality.

There are gender-based wage gaps in the Turkish labor market. Inequality and discrimination pose serious obstacles to a country's social and economic development. Increasing women's labor force participation and preventing gender-based discrimination is an important step towards sustainable development and social welfare. There are different reasons for the low labor force participation rate of women in Turkey. Some of these reasons are summarized under the following headings (Kaya, 2009).

- **Social Norms and Cultural Factors:** Traditional gender roles may lead women to be more involved in domestic work and childcare. Society's norms that discourage women from participating in the workforce may reduce labor force participation rates.
- **Education Opportunities:** Education level is an important factor affecting labor force participation. Providing women with educational opportunities can increase their labor force participation.
- **Child Care and Family Responsibilities:** Women may often find it difficult to participate in the labor force due to childcare and family responsibilities. Inadequate availability of appropriate childcare services may prevent women from returning to the labor force.
- **Gender-Based Discrimination:** Gender-based discrimination faced by women in the labor market can lead to inequality in areas such as recruitment, promotion and remuneration.
- **Wage Inequality:** The fact that women are paid less than men for similar jobs is a reflection of gender-based wage inequality. This can undermine women's economic independence.

Various steps can be taken to solve these problems. These steps are;

- Providing equal educational opportunities for women and prioritizing girls' education.
- Development and expansion of childcare services.
- Prohibition of discrimination based on gender and implementation of equality policies in workplaces.
- Closing the gender-based pay gap to reduce wage inequality.
- Education campaigns and awareness raising activities to change gender norms.

These steps can increase women's labor force participation, reduce economic inequality and contribute positively to social development.

Women Entrepreneurship in Turkey

The importance of entrepreneurship is emphasized more today. Especially with the transition from the industrial society to the information society, its importance has gradually increased. Developing technology, communication and information flow have radically changed the ways of doing business and economic dynamics. In this context, the role and importance of entrepreneurship has greatly expanded (Çöğürçü, 2016).

There are distinct personal characteristics that define women entrepreneurs. These characteristics are usually listed as dynamic, independent, self-confident, competitive and goal-oriented (Zapalska & Fogel, 1998). In addition, women who pursue entrepreneurial activities are also characterized by being ambitious, risk-taking and in control of their own affairs (Zhao, 2005). The main characteristics of entrepreneurial women in Turkey include self-confidence, courage and patience (Yetim, 2002). Ardak and other researchers (1994) found that women are combative, ambitious, carry household chores to work and set difficult goals for themselves (Örücü, Kılıç, & Kılıç, 2007). However, it should be noted that these characteristics are not inclusive of all women entrepreneurs and may vary according to sectors, socio-cultural values and place of business. Therefore, it is important to assess the characteristics of entrepreneurial women in this context.

In this context, the personal characteristics of women entrepreneurs can be considered in three main contexts. First, entrepreneurial personal characteristics include self-confidence, creativity, innovation, risk-taking, rationality, independence and competitiveness. On the other hand, entrepreneurial traits related to socio-cultural values include characteristics such as being in a respected position in their environment, the ability to make good use of resources and relationships in their environment, being protective and supportive, and being prone to cooperation. Another approach to identifying the personal characteristics of women entrepreneurs is the characteristics arising from gender roles. These traits include the ability to communicate well, to solve problems easily, to be tolerant, to be selfless and to be emotional (Yetim, 2002). These characteristics were also considered as factors that were taken into account in the context of identifying the personal characteristics of women entrepreneurs in the study (Keskin, 2017).

The concept of knowledge society refers to a period in which knowledge, technology and innovation have moved beyond traditional areas of production and services and have taken center stage. In this period, knowledge, innovation and creativity play a major role in production in addition to physical labor. Today, the competitiveness of a country or company depends not only on the processing

of raw materials, but also on the generation of new ideas, the continuous renewal of products and services, and the focus on innovations based on advanced technology. The importance of entrepreneurship in this context centers on several points (Gözü, 2015). These are;

- **Innovation and Novelty:** In the knowledge society, entrepreneurs create new products and services by developing innovative ideas. This is a critical factor for gaining competitive advantage and responding to customer demands.
- **Creativity:** Entrepreneurs can fill market gaps through their ability to think creatively and come up with different solutions. This is important in better responding to consumer needs and enabling businesses to grow.
- **Risk Taking and Management:** Entrepreneurs are often willing to take risks. This includes the ability to manage financial and operational risks when bringing new business ideas to life.
- **Employment Creation:** Entrepreneurs create employment by establishing new businesses. This contributes to the growth of the economy and the reduction of unemployment.
- **Competitiveness:** The information society brings with it an intense competitive environment at national and international level. Entrepreneurs play an important role in making their businesses more efficient and effective in this competitive environment.
- **Adaptation to Change:** Entrepreneurs make their businesses sustainable through their ability to adapt to rapidly changing technology and market conditions.

It would not be wrong to say that entrepreneurship has an increasing importance in the information society. Factors such as innovation, creativity, risk management and employment generation make entrepreneurship indispensable in today's economic and social structure. For this reason, both individuals and societies develop various policies and programs to encourage and support entrepreneurship. In Turkey, there are as many female entrepreneurs as male entrepreneurs. Women struggle to exist in many fields. In terms of historical development, we can see that Turkish women have an entrepreneurial spirit from past to present (Aytaç, 2015).

The 1980s have gone down in history as the period when liberal economy and entrepreneurship culture were adopted both in western countries and in our country. Ljunggren and Kolvereid (1996), emphasized that the number of women entrepreneurs increased rapidly in western countries compared to male entrepreneurs during this period. Studies on women's entrepreneurship in the Western literature cover a wide range of fields such as business administration, psychology and sociology (Gökakın, 2000).

Research on women's labor force participation is a process whose contribution to economic growth was negatively evaluated until the 1980s. However, in this period, it was closely associated with the promotion of small business entrepreneurship. Since then, small business entrepreneurship has been considered as a way out of poverty and unemployment in Third World countries. In Third World economies, the importance of small entrepreneurship beyond the agricultural and industrial sectors was emphasized. It has been noted that this phenomenon has a greater weight in the maintenance and repair, trade, transportation and other service sectors than in the industrial sector (Yetim, 2002).

In this framework, it has been aimed to encourage small entrepreneurship for political, economic and social reasons and to reveal the entrepreneurial potential of women. Policies and practices to support these efforts have become increasingly prominent. These efforts to promote and develop small entrepreneurship and to increase the competencies of women entrepreneurs have gained significant momentum in line with political and economic developments (Özkaya, 2009).

Turkey stands out as an important country with its rich cultural heritage, strategic geographical location and dynamic population. However, half of this potential power, namely the women population, has to struggle with challenges in many areas from labor force participation to entrepreneurship. In Turkey, where gender inequality is still deeply rooted, it is crucial to strengthen women's presence in the business world and support them in entrepreneurship (Erdoğan & Okudum, 2015).

Women's labor force participation and entrepreneurship play a vital role for a country's economic growth and sustainable development. However, Turkey's performance in this area is not at the desired level. The 34.2% and 30.9% women's labor force participation rate in 2018 and 2020, respectively, is an important indicator of the country's challenges in this area. When women enter the labor market, they face gender-based discrimination in recruitment processes, career progression and remuneration (Yılmaz Şahin & Alp, 2020).

The World Economic Forum's 2020 Global Gender Inequality Report shows that Turkey ranks 130th in gender inequality. This reflects the impact of gender norms on women's equal opportunities in the business world. Wage inequality stands out as one of Turkey's biggest problems. Women are paid less than men for the same work, which limits women's economic power. According to a report published by ILO-TUIK (2020), women in Turkey earn 15.6% less than men (Bardakçı & Oğlak, 2022).

Women's entrepreneurship is an important element that promotes economic growth and supports innovation and creativity. However, the potential of women's entrepreneurship in Turkey has not yet been fully utilized. Women entrepreneurs face significant challenges in access to finance, business development processes and market access during the business start-up phase. These challenges limit women's visibility and influence in the business world and have a negative impact on the country's economic growth. Reducing gender inequality and supporting women's entrepreneurship is crucial for Turkey to realize its full potential (Arslan & Toksoy, 2017).

Women's Education Levels and Labor Force Participation in Turkey

Turkey's human rights commitments and the provisions on the right to education in international conventions constitute an important basis for assessing education and gender equality in Turkey. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international conventions emphasize that the right to education is a fundamental right of every individual. However, despite Turkey's commitments, there are still challenges and inequalities in women's educational attainment and labor force participation (Şensoy, 2022).

The fact that Turkey was among the first countries to ratify the Universal Declaration of Human Rights shows the importance it attaches to human rights. Article 26 of this declaration states that everyone has the right to education and that the purpose of education is to promote the full development of the human personality and respect for human rights. Similarly, instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women emphasize Turkey's obligations on gender equality and the right to education (Sağlam, 2019).

The Beijing Declaration defines education not only as a human right but also as a necessary tool for social development and gender equality. These documents recognize the importance of affirmative action with a special emphasis on women's education (Özkan, 2017).

Turkey's domestic law also emphasizes the right to education. Article 42 of the Constitution states that every citizen has the right to education and that primary education is compulsory and free of charge. However, despite these provisions, there are obstacles to women's full enjoyment of their right to education (Algan & Algan, 2013).

Girls and women are among the disadvantaged groups in education. This situation is concretized by statistical data. Especially in rural areas and low-income families, girls' access to education may be limited. In addition, gender roles and traditional norms may limit women's opportunities to attend school and participate in the labor force (Yaşar, 2018).

Despite Turkey's international commitments and domestic legal provisions, there are challenges for women to fully exercise their right to education. Further efforts are needed to promote gender equality and women's social participation. Education remains an important tool for women to empower themselves and expand their social roles (Kaşıkırık & Gülümser, 2021).

Women's educational attainment and labor force participation is one of the determinants of a country's economic, social and cultural development. Although Turkey has taken important steps to increase women's educational attainment and labor force participation, it still faces many challenges in this area (Kızılgöl, 2012).

Statistics prepared by TUIK reflect the current situation in Turkey in many areas such as gender inequality, labor force participation, education level, family structure and social perceptions. Some of the key points that emerge from these statistics are presented under the headings below.

- **Labor Force Participation Rate and Education Level:** While the labor force participation rate is generally higher for men, the labor force participation rate of women increases as their level of education increases. Especially the labor force participation rate of higher education graduates is high.
- **Employment Status and Management Positions of Women:** The employment rate of women is lower than that of men, but the employment rate of women with higher education has

increased. Although the proportion of women in senior management positions has increased, it is still low.

- **Household Chores and Gender Roles:** Most household chores are undertaken by women. Women are more involved in domestic care work, while men usually take on tasks such as paying the monthly bills.
- **Security Perception:** Women are generally less likely to feel safe walking alone at night in their neighborhood and less likely to feel safe alone at home.
- **Social Gender Indicators Data Set:** The Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) is publishing the Gender Indicators Data Set, which includes 141 indicators on gender inequality and gender. This dataset can be an important resource for policy makers.
- **United Nations (UN) Indicators:** The UN also provides a minimum set of indicators including gender indicators. These indicators enable data generation at the national level as well as comparisons at the international level.

These statistics clearly show the challenges and progress Turkey faces in gender inequality and gender issues. More efforts, policies and awareness are needed to achieve gender equality and change gender norms (Bardakçı & Oğlak, 2022).

In the statistics prepared and published by TUIK are examined; they provide important information on the population structure, education level and labor force participation in Turkey. Based on these statistics, we have the opportunity to make various observations and evaluations. We have presented these assessments under the following headings (Kavak, 2011). These are;

- **Gender Distribution:** In Turkey, 49.9% of the population is female and 50.1% is male. Due to the longer life expectancy of women, the proportion of the female population increases with increasing age. In particular, the female population aged 60 years and over makes up 72.4% of the total population in this age group.
- **Education Level and Gender Inequality:** Among the population aged 25 and above, the proportion of individuals who completed at least one level of education increased between 2008 and 2021. However, men have a higher rate of completion of at least one level of education compared to women. In 2021, this rate was 87.3% for women and 97.1% for men.
- **College and Faculty Graduates:** Among the population aged 25 and above, the proportion of individuals with a college, faculty, master's or doctorate degree has also increased. While this rate was 9.8% in 2008, it increased to 23.0% in 2021. However, this rate is still higher for men than for women. In 2021, it was 20.9% for women and 25.1% for men.
- **Labor Force Participation Rate and Education Level:** Labor force participation rate varies according to education level. While the labor force participation rate of women with higher education is 67.6%, the rate of women with less than high school education is 25.3%. This data shows that education level plays an important role in labor force participation.
- **Regional Employment Differences:** Employment rate varies by region. TR21 region (52.0%) has the highest employment rate, while TRC3 region (29.9%) has the lowest employment rate. Female employment rate also varies by region, with the highest rate in TR90 (36.8%) and the lowest rate in TRC3 (14.5%).

These statistics show that women's labor force participation in Turkey is generally lower than men's and that education level is an important factor in labor force participation. In order to reduce gender inequality and increase women's social economic participation, access to educational opportunities and employment opportunities need to be further improved. Various policy measures should be developed taking into account regional differences (Korkmaz & Korkut, 2012).

Developments in Women's Education in Turkey

In recent years, Turkey has taken important steps towards women's education and made significant progress in this area. The enrolment rate of girls in primary and secondary education has increased, while the gender disparity in university entrance has gradually decreased. Increasing the level of education increases women's access to information and positively affects their social participation (Özaydınlık, 2014).

I. Importance of Female Labor Force Participation

Women's labor force participation is a critical factor for economic growth and sustainable development. However, the labor force participation rate of women in Turkey is still low compared to men. There are several factors behind this situation, including traditional gender roles, excessive domestic responsibilities and discrimination at work (Zeren & Kılıncı Savrul, 2018).

II. Challenges in Women's Labor Force Participation

There are many factors that prevent women from participating in the labor force in Turkey. Low educational attainment is the most important one. In addition, factors such as gender-based discrimination in business life, inadequate daycare and childcare facilities, lack of flexible working models also negatively affect women's labor force participation (Kıral & Karlılar, 2017).

III. The Effect of Education on Women's Labor Force

Education is a key tool for increasing women's labor force participation. Women with higher levels of education have access to a wider range of job opportunities and higher earnings. At the same time, education helps women to become socially and economically empowered (Kızılgöl, 2012).

Women's education levels and labor force participation in Turkey are critical for the country's sustainable development. Advances in education positively support women's labor force participation by increasing their social inclusion. However, traditional gender roles, discrimination and structural challenges still constrain women's labor force participation. Therefore, further efforts are needed to achieve gender equality and increase women's active participation in the workforce (Korkmaz & Korkut, 2012).

Childcare and Labor Force Participation in Turkey

Today, gender equality is an important agenda item at national and international level. Gender equality is a concept that aims to achieve a balance between men and women on the basis of equal opportunities, equal rights and responsibilities. Achieving this balance involves reassessing the social roles and expectations of women and men and eliminating gender-based discrimination. Many countries, such as Turkey, are implementing various policies and reforms to support gender equality goals and address gender-related issues (Kaşıkırık & Gülümser, 2021).

Childcare and labor force participation is a particularly important issue from a gender equality perspective. Traditionally, childcare has largely been seen as women's responsibility, limiting women's participation in the labor force. In recent years, however, perceptions and attitudes towards childcare have changed in order to increase women's participation in economic life and reduce gender inequality. At this point, the effects of childcare on labor force participation and policy developments in this area come to the fore (Korkmaz & Korkut, 2012).

An analysis of Turkey's demographic structure shows that children and young people, who constitute a large share of the youth population, have great potential for the country's future. However, this situation can sometimes be a factor that makes it difficult for individuals who are responsible for childcare to participate in the labor force. In particular, expectant mothers and mothers face various difficulties in their labor force participation during the care and upbringing of children. At this point, when the impact of childcare on labor force participation is examined, the difficulties women face in maintaining their careers and ensuring their economic independence gain importance (Tunç, 1989).

Various statistics and data are evaluated to understand the relationship between childcare and labor force participation in Turkey. In this context, studies and statistics by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) show women's efforts to strike a balance between childcare responsibilities and labor force participation. According to TUIK data, the labor force participation rate of women who take care of children in their households is low. This indicates that childcare may have a negative impact on women's labor force participation (Kızılgöl, 2012).

In recent years, Turkey's steps and policies on gender equality reflect the aim of balancing childcare and labor force participation. Government policies to increase childcare services and daycare facilities aim to encourage women's participation in the labor force. In addition, flexible working models and telecommuting aim to enable women to better balance childcare and labor force participation (Şahin & Bayhan, 2020).

Steps towards gender equality and childcare not only increase women's participation in the labor force, but also encourage men to take more responsibility for household chores and childcare. This is

considered an important step towards changing gender norms and roles. Given that labor force participation plays a key role in reducing gender-based inequalities, balancing childcare and labor force participation is an important step towards achieving sustainable development and gender equality goals (Yazicioğlu, 2019).

The relationship between childcare and labor force participation in Turkey is an important issue from a gender equality perspective. In order to increase women's labor force participation and reduce gender inequality, childcare needs to be better balanced. Various steps are being taken to achieve this balance, such as flexible working models, increasing daycare services and changing gender norms. Turkey's progress in this area demonstrates the extent to which it complies with its national and international commitments to gender equality (Özveren & Dama, 2022).

Barriers in the Female Labor Market in Turkey

Gender inequality is still a serious problem in Turkey, as it is in many countries. Women's participation in the labor market and economic independence is one of the main indicators of gender equality. However, in Turkey, women face barriers in the labor market, which leads to a lack of participation at the desired level despite their level of education and qualifications. This situation leads to inequality of opportunity for women in terms of individual development and economic independence and wastes resources for the economic growth and development of the country (Şeker, 2020).

Turkey has made various national and international commitments to overcome women's barriers in the labor market and ensure gender equality. However, the practical implementation of these commitments has at times been limited. Women's low participation rates in the labor market are the result of a number of complex factors. These include gender norms, cultural expectations, the education system, gender discrimination in the workplace and childcare (Yıldırım & Gül, 2021).

Gender norms and cultural expectations are based on the idea that women should assume more responsibility within the home. Thus, women are generally more oriented to undertake tasks such as housework and childcare, while men are expected to be more active in the workplace. These norms are a major barrier limiting women's active role in the labor market and trapping them in specific sectors or in low-paid jobs (Tuna Uysal, Tan Eren, & Şimşek, 2019).

Education plays a critical role in women's labor force participation. However, gender-based discrimination in the education system may limit women's access to qualified jobs. Moreover, while it is expected that the barriers women face in the labor market decrease as their level of education increases, this is not fully realized in Turkey. Even with higher levels of education, women are underrepresented in employment compared to men (Korkmaz & Korkut, 2012).

Gender discrimination at workplaces is also one of the barriers for women in the labor market. Women may face problems in the workplace such as not being promoted, not being considered for higher positions and working in low-paid jobs. In addition, pregnancy and motherhood can also lead to discrimination and dismissal of women in the workplace (Bulut & Kızıldağ, 2017).

Childcare is also an important factor preventing women from participating in the labor force. In Turkey, childcare is largely seen as the responsibility of women. This situation causes women to need flexible working models and makes it difficult for them to participate in the labor market. Inadequate childcare services stand out as another factor limiting women's presence in the labor market (Kakıcı, Emeç, & Üçdoğruk, 2007).

In this context, various policies and measures need to be taken to overcome barriers in the labor market for women in Turkey and to ensure gender equality. Steps such as promoting flexible working models, improving childcare services, expanding gender equality trainings and changing gender norms can be considered as steps to strengthen women's role in the labor market. Through these measures, women can be more active in the labor market, achieve economic independence and contribute to reducing gender inequality (Kıral & Karlılar, 2017)

Sectoral Distribution of Female Labor Force in Turkey

The role of women in the labor market is of great importance for economic growth, development and gender equality. However, in Turkey, women's labor force participation and sectoral distribution are stuck in certain patterns due to gender inequality and stereotypes. The sectors in which women's labor force is concentrated affect the economic structure and social dynamics. In this context, understanding

the sectoral distribution of the female labor force in Turkey is an important issue from a gender perspective (Akdemir, Davarcıoğlu Özaktaş, & Aksoy, 2019).

While Turkey is a developing country, there are some characteristic trends in the sectoral distribution of the women labor force. In general, agriculture, industry and services sectors play an important role in the economic structure of the country. However, there are significant differences between women's representation rates and labor force participation levels in these sectors (Akdemir et al., 2019).

Although the agricultural sector has an important place in the Turkish economy, women's labor force participation rate in this sector is low. Since agricultural work often requires heavy and seasonal labor, women are left without adequate job security and social rights. This often results in women being forced to work in low-paid and precarious jobs in the agricultural sector.

The industrial sector plays an important role in the transformation process of the economy. However, women are underrepresented in the industrial sector and often work in low-skilled jobs. Women are underrepresented in areas such as technology, engineering and innovation, reflecting gender stereotypes and inequality (Özdemir, Unakitan, Keskin, Yılmaz, & Er Ülker, 2017).

The service sector is one of the areas where the women's labor force is concentrated in Turkey. In particular, women are overrepresented in sub-sectors such as education, health, tourism, retail and cleaning. However, even in these sectors, women's opportunities to rise to leadership positions and earn high incomes are limited. In particular, women working in low-paid and precarious jobs are deprived of social security and have limited economic independence (Sar, 2021).

The main reasons for these inequalities in the sectoral distribution of women's labor force in Turkey include gender norms, gender discrimination, limited educational opportunities and childcare. Therefore, policies and measures that promote gender equality are crucial to increase women's representation in the labor market and diversify sectoral distribution. The aim of these policies is to increase the representation of women in leadership positions, technology sectors and other high-income areas, thereby reducing gender inequality and supporting economic growth (Turgut, 2019).

CONCLUSION

In recent years, research has shown that women's labor force participation and employment profile play a central role in combating gender inequality and ensuring sustainable economic development. The analysis of women's labor force participation and employment conditions in countries such as Turkey is of great importance to address the problem of gender inequality, shape policy making and strengthen women's presence in the business world. At the end of this study, the main points such as education, labor force participation, sectoral distribution and leadership positions were addressed, clarifying the current status and future potential of women's employment in Turkey

Education level has a determining effect on women's labor force participation and employment profile. As the level of education increases, women's labor force participation rate rises. However, despite this, it is still observed that women in Turkey face obstacles in their employment process. Factors such as domestic responsibilities, social norms and gender discrimination are among the main factors limiting women's labor force participation. In particular, domestic responsibilities such as childcare prevent women from developing their careers and advancing to higher positions.

The profile of women's labor force participation shows that they are concentrated in low-paid and unskilled jobs. This is recognized as a reflection of gender inequality. While women are overrepresented in low-paid fields such as the service sector, they are underrepresented in industry and technology. Especially in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields, women are underrepresented. This shows that gender inequality still exists in business and society.

The low representation of women in leadership positions and high-income fields reveals that gender inequality is one of the reflections of gender inequality in the business world. In order for women to rise to management positions and assume leadership roles, both social norms need to change and the business world needs to adopt a more sensitive approach to gender inequality.

Improving Turkey's women's labor force profile is critical to support economic growth and ensure social development. In this context, policies and measures to reduce gender inequality are a great necessity. Increasing women's labor force participation is seen as a critical factor in promoting economic growth and supporting social development.

Increasing women's labor force participation will not only ensure women's economic independence, but will also contribute positively to the economic growth and social development of the country. Therefore, it is concluded that more efforts should be made to address gender inequality and unlock women's potential in the labor market.

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