

GENDER UNEMPLOYMENT GAP IN KOSOVO - EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract

The review and research on the persistence of unemployment and existence of difficulties to entry into the labour market for females has been carried out in this paper. Objective of this paper is to present the implementation of equal employment opportunity chances in the organization level and unemployment issues. There are quite level of studies that explored gender inequalities but just a few for persistence of unemployment in general in transition economies. In this independent research data were collected through questionnaires with the sample of 630 respondents, the econometric model used in this research paper is binomial logistical regression. We found that there is a gender inequality in accessing and having a chance to be active participants in labour market for females as a consequence of not applying equal opportunity procedures. Results indicate that females are weaker in having contacts with informal networks to find jobs than males. Age is also significant variable which resulted that workers with younger age were associated with a decreased likelihood of odds in unequal employment opportunity for both genders. We also find that increasing the level of education decreases the inequality in biased employment regarding gender even though there are some inequalities when it comes to older age of the respondents for both genders. Implications of this study can be used by policy researchers regarding causes of gender unemployment gap and its persistence.

Keywords: Unemployment, Labour Market, Inequality, Persistence

JEL classification: J24, J780, J64

1. INTRODUCTION

The transition to the market economy, the privatization of public utilities, economic restructuring and new technologies has contributed to the increase in unemployment, the decline in employment in the public sector, the growth of the

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informal market has affected the gender inequality in the labour market. Transition to modern market economies in SEE Europe is still in process, and many structural issues regarding labour market remain to be addressed. In this paper we argue that in states that are still in transition the policies that have to do with HRM equal employment opportunity in organizations are not always used. Therefore, barriers to enter in the labour market are higher for females than for males, mostly in Institutions that do not have proper recruitment and selection criteria and manuals according to the existing labour laws, even higher in the small businesses that do not have any Human resources staff and therefore do not apply any recruitment and selection criteria. According to (Lehmann, Muravyev 2011) labor markets in transition economies of Europe in many issues have similarities with those in developed economies of Europe, in positive matters there is productivity growth and also in negative aspects as high and stagnant high level of unemployment. Based on ILO (2016) in the recent 20 years (1995 – 2015), the global female labour force participation rate decreased for about 3 percent (52.4 to 49.6) , and the chances for females to participate in the labour market remain almost 27 percentage points lower than those for men, which can be translated in fewer employment opportunities. Results of employment gap when it comes to gender in 2015 were for 25.5 percentage points lower for females compared to males only 0.6 percentage points less than in 1995. It is only in Northern, Southern and Western Europe that employment gaps have closed marginally as women continue to enter the labour market in higher numbers in that region – but also as a result of the reduction of men’s employment rates due to the economic downturn (ILO, 2016). This tells us that South Eastern European Countries have still low level of active participation rate of females in the labour market, where Kosovo is a part and is a subject of our research. Findings from Hoti, (2017) suggest that demand-side restrictions in the labour market move forward to inactivity significant numbers of workforce in Kosovo, which in other circumstances would be searching for jobs. Females are disadvantaged when it comes to labour market and reducing gender gaps in the level of active participation in labour market, in the level of unemployment, and wage gaps is an objective of the states that are European Union Members, and is one of the main requests for the states that are in transition and are aiming European integration. Since, most of the females before the transition period were employed in the secondary jobs; they had little on job trainings, which influenced the possibilities of the future employment. Alternatively, the work that has to do with caring activities and family duties are disproportionately allocated to females. If we look at the table below from the report on enlargement countries and EU, “The highest unemployment rates in 2017 in the enlargement countries were recorded in Kosovo, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where more than one fifth of the labour force were without work. Unemployment rates in the remaining enlargement countries were above the EU-28 average and within the range of 11-16 %”(Eurostat, 2019, pg7).

Table 1. *Unemployment rates potential enlargement countries in EU 2007-2017*

Unemployment rates (persons aged 15-74), 2007-2017

(% of labour force)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
EU-28	7.2	7.0	8.9	9.6	9.6	10.4	10.8	10.2	9.4	8.6	7.6
Montenegro	19.3	16.8	19.1	19.7	19.7	19.7	19.5	18.0	17.5	17.8	16.1
North Macedonia	34.9	33.8	32.2	32.0	31.4	31.0	29.0	28.0	26.1	23.7	22.4
Albania	13.5	13.0	13.8	14.0	14.0	13.4	15.9	17.5	17.1	15.2	13.7
Serbia (*)	18.1	13.8	16.3	19.4	23.1	24.1	22.3	19.4	17.8	15.4	13.6
Turkey (*)	8.9	9.8	12.7	10.8	8.8	8.2	8.8	9.9	10.3	10.9	10.9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	29.1	23.5	24.1	27.3	27.6	28.2	27.6	27.6	27.9	25.5	20.7
Kosovo (*)	43.6	47.5	45.4	:	:	30.9	30.0	35.3	32.9	27.5	30.3

(*) 2008 and 2014: breaks in series.

(*) Based on 4 weeks criterion and using only active jobs search methods.

(*) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Source: Eurostat (online data code lfsa_uragan)

Slow increase in gender employment equality might be a specific characteristic of the transition process. Restructuring process emerged the need to introduce consistently the type of jobs and human capital that was held by men. If that were the case, the pronounced fall in female employment rate relative to men would reflect changes in labour demand. It could also be that the indirect effects of the rising unemployment dominate the direct ones as discouragement effects were stronger for female workers and leaving the labour market. (Goraus, Tyrowicz, & Van der Velde, 2017).

Table 2. *Number of unemployed and unemployment rate by gender and age group Kosovo %, year and sex*

age15-64									
Unemployment rate (%)									
2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
26,9	38,8	33,1	41,6	31,8	36,6	26,2	31,8	28,7	36,6
Total	30,0	Total	35,3	Total	32,9	Total	27,5	Total	30,03

Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics

Labour Force statistics in Kosovo during the years show very low labour force participation for both genders and a high level of unemployment, which might be due to informal economy and early stage of transition. From the labour force statistics in table 2 above we can see that unemployment is higher for females than there is for males during the years 2013-2017, and during this time this gap did not decrease except in year 2015 we have 31,8 % of unemployed active females in the workforce. According to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2016), labour force participation among females was much lower than among males: 18.6% of females were active compared with 58.3% of males. Males aged 45-49 years had the highest rate of participation (79.9 %), while for females the rate was

highest among the age groups between 25-29 years (28.5%). The unemployment rate was 27.5 %, higher for females than for males, respectively 31.8 % and 26.2 %. Unemployment is a burden for government it is also an economic problem specially in developing economies, and as a consequence might have discouraged workers that during the search for job might lose their working skills and talents. According to Verick (2014) Supply side of the labour market with higher level of female involvement and participation in developing countries can cause the faster economic growth, therefore it can be used as a driver and outcome of development. Furthermore, with development of the country, also the capabilities of females to improve skills in job searching and finding of the job outside their homes have developed. Accordingly, causing to lower the level of social constrains for those countries.

In Kosovo most of the females are employed in public sector since they have more job security and paid maternity leave, which usually is not the same in the private sector, where implementation of legislation regarding gender is not always implemented. Usually rural regions are more affected by unemployment; the main reason is less opportunities lack of demand side and obstacles of active labor force in mobility from one place to urban areas and the lack of reasonable priced houses and high transport costs, which usually have a higher effect for females when they are looking for job than for males. Therefore, in this research we aim to find which other obstacles are more related to females than males in employment and job searching, were we concentrate in all institutions that have higher level of female employment as public sector, small trade and service firms investigating the level of Implementation of labour laws, laws against the discrimination, and equal opportunity in employment. In this independent study we included 170 institutions, including government institutions, independent agencies, public enterprises, private enterprises, which operate in the entire territory of Kosovo.

2. LITERATURE RESEARCH ON UNEMPLOYMENT

The starting point of labour market research is the active labour population and the level of participation of both genders, which is an indicator of the labour force participation rate. This shows how many percent of the working age population participate in the labour force, which means they are employed or unemployed looking for work. "The inactive population in the labor market includes all persons who are not classified as employed or unemployed: pupils or students, housewives, retired, disabled, discouraged unemployed." (ILO 2006). Azmat, Güell, & Manning, (2006) found that in the OECD countries females when they quit their job due to family obligations, mostly childcare and other responsibilities usually does not follows unemployment but in the inactivity of those females. In addition, females spend twice as much time compared to men caring for children on a daily basis; on average they spend double hours than men.

Gender differences in unemployment are likely the result of more women being outside the labor force, probably due to traditional roles, such as mothers

staying at home because of care duties, especially in a region with larger gender gaps in relation to wages and with limited childcare facilities available (World Bank, 2012). For this reason, due to childcare and career disruptions, females have fewer incentives to invest in human capital. However, if the demand in the labour market is distributed between males and females equally, and they have equal skills and experience, sometimes the work will be offered to men because statistics show that many females leave the labour market when they reach the late twenties to engage in child caring. According to Miranda (2011) in most of the countries females do more of the household work than males, which is usually unpaid work and therefore females do less work in the labour market and have less encouragement to invest in human capital. And from those which are chosen to be employed the investment in their human capital will be lower since their skills will depreciate or be forgotten during the years that they will be engaged in family oriented obligations. Whereas Albanesi, & Şahin (2013) say that “As women have become more attached to the labor force, men have become less attached, reducing the difference in the degree of labor force attachment”.

Countries that have their economies in transition have a lot of challenges, there is a need to invest in human capital, increasing the efficiency of human resources, which also sets the need for professionals, and greater level of education for labour forces, which is considered as the vital part of the economies oriented to competition and labour. Gender discrimination at work has a negative effect on the labor market in general, because gender segregation at work causes lack of flexibility in the labor market and it does employers often pursue employment policies that are based on gender stereotypes and prejudice instead of personal qualifications and individual qualities. Separation in the labor market makes half of the workforce not exploit their talents by so doing an incomplete, inefficient and unstable development. One other reason of the high level of unemployment in SEE and decrease in employment might be due to the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Since the unemployment and employment dynamics in Bulgaria and Romania, which were not affected by the conflict, are quite similar to that in CEE (Lehmann, Muravyev 2011). Results regarding lower education and its impact in unemployment are also found from Jurajda and Terrell (2009), the groups most affected by unemployment are those with low education and skills these target groups have more chances to become unemployed. The level of population in a country can have an impact on the labour market of that country and the issue of labour market dynamics in the country, institutional theories of the labour market are different. Albanesi & Şahin, (2013) explored the unemployment of females taking in consideration age composition, education composition and industry composition, they found that various factors, like the aging of the population and the flattening of the female participation, suggest the possibility of a less attached labor force going forward. (Cipollone et al, 2014) found that women’s labour force participation in European Union is related to differences in the institutional setting of the labour market and the social policy environment. Whilst according to Acemoglu and Autor (2011) “The implications of different types of technical change are potentially quite different in the presence of labor market

imperfections". And we can say that these are the reasons to have an important effect on the quality of jobs available, chances to enter or re-enter the labour market and the opportunity cost of employment. Such policy and institutional factors play an important role in shaping the labour market equal opportunities. Females with small children have an actual increase in labour force participation for young women, and more than 30% for highly educated women. However, labour market reforms appear less related to the observed labour market participation of low skilled women. Institutions unlike classic labour markets introduce market rules and regulations which define the dimensions of the labour market, these rules and regulations may be formal and informal as customs, and traditions of one country. Furthermore women still encounter barriers to landing better paying jobs that have traditionally have performed by men.

A major employment obstacle for women is the stereotyped thinking that persists within society. Still another barrier has been that women in past were not as likely as men to have a professional trainings and preparations for entrance or preparation in management positions. This situation is changing at least when it comes to education of females (Snell, Bohandler & Morris, 2015, p. 163). It is the screening theory that argues that given the market and information imperfection, a better solution and explanation must be geared to theories that can accommodate the unique institutional characteristics of the labour market. Nevertheless both theories human capital theory and screening theory have common agreement on individuals and organizations interested in education and training are to forego present cost and raise their future value and returns, whether the process takes the form of investment or receiving certain qualifications (Dobbs at al, 2008). In Kosovo, female entrepreneurial participation is very low with only around 10 percent in total ownership of small and medium enterprises. Women are actually less inclined than men to try to start a business in the transition Region. This could be due to demands of child rearing, lower propensity to take risks, or lower availability of financial and non-financial resources for starting a Business (Nikolova, 2017).

Education and training are one of the main instruments that are needed for every country for achieving the skills needed for workers and their competitive place in the market oriented economy, as well as reaching the main equality issues regarding gender. It is also important for achieving a better living standards and this is especially important in Kosovo where the economic development is in its early stages. As explained in Beqiri & Selimi (2015) the process of globalization as well as new technologies is also reducing the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. In Kosovo the results of the analysis suggest that young women tend to have lower educational attainment than young men. Women are also less likely to be employed and those that do find employment tend to be the most educated. As a result, the disparities in educational attainment tend to narrow when analyzing only employed females and males (Pastore at al 2013).

3. DATA COLLECTION, ECONOMETRIC MODELING AND ANALYSIS

Equal employment policies have a major impact on the organizational culture, by finding suitable candidates to meet organizational needs, and must be conducted in a non-discriminatory manner. In this research we concentrate on unequal treatment in recruitment and selection as the first barrier to enter the labour market.

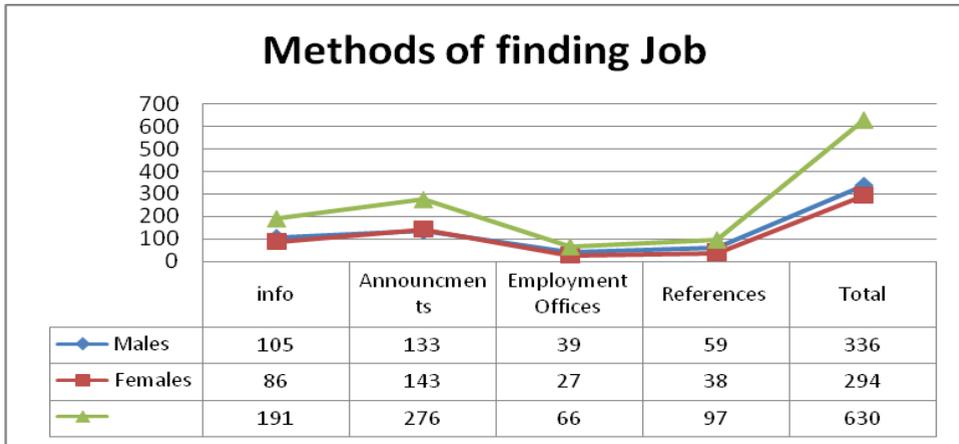
3.1. DATA COLLECTION

As the supply side of the females in the labour market has not increased during the years in Kosovo this research has been developed to see other issues that might discourage females, as lack of equal employment opportunities for them. The main aim of the study is to tests are there equal employment treatment regarding gender. The null Hypothesis is:

H₀: $\bar{a}=0$ Implementing gender equal opportunity regarding employment have an positive impact in decreasing gender unemployment;

For testing the explanatory hypothesis for the unequal treatment in employment opportunity regarding gender we have developed some research questions relevant to this issue. The questionnaire was developed for the employees of the different institutions, public, private businesses, governmental institutions etc. The questionnaire was formulated by optional and very clear questions for workers. The questions were related to job search, implementation of procedures of equal opportunities regarding gender which include equality issues under the existing labour law, (Law No.03/L –212, 2010). As well as, opinions of the respondents on Equal Employment Opportunities related to prejudice regarding gender during different phases until they reached the employment as; recruitment screening procedures, employment screening different test as interviews and the selection phase and so on. Data collection enables research to answer relevant questions, evaluate results, and make predictions about future probabilities and trends. Data for this research were collected during the second part of the year 2017 and first three months of 2018. From 630 respondents in our research sample, males make up 56 % of employees surveyed while females 44 % of those interviewed. The results are presented in the form of relevant statistical results.

Table 3. Methods of finding Job



Source: Authors

From the descriptive statistics of the first research question for the way females and males found their jobs, we can say that for males and females do not differ much in the ways they found their job, the higher is level through direct applications for males compared to females getting the job through application directly to the employer is higher for males, while from the announcements in the newspapers, web sites and other media is higher for females, main differences are from the references from acquaintances, relatives or from the former employers the proportion is 61 percent for males and 39 percent for females . We can conclude that females are weaker in having contacts with informal networks to find jobs than males. But in other ways through regular procedures the percentages do not differ a lot or we can say that they are almost equal in the ways of finding jobs between males and females in Kosovo.

3.2. ECONOMETRIC MODELING AND ANALYSIS

As an econometric model we have used Binary logistic model to investigate the effects of gender, age, Institution , ways of finding job , education and the procedures of equal opportunities in the institutions where the respondents work in the unequal recruitment and selection for females , for testing the Hypothesis . Binary Logistic regression concerns only a dichotomous dependent variable, therefore is appropriate for our research questions. Which in our research is: is there an unequal treatment regarding gender in employment. Therefore, it is aimed to introduce application processes of binary logistic regression analysis using real independent research data. Higher number of data which in our case are 630, reliability of the model increases.

Results from Table 4 of Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients explain the variance in the outcome. Here the chi-square is highly significant (chi-square=156.591 df=6, p<.000) so our new model fits. The model was assessed with p value of chi-square statistics.

Table 4: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

	Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step	156.591	6	.000
Step 1 Block	156.591	6	.000
Model	156.591	6	.000

Source: Authors

The Model Summary table 5, provides the -2LL on how much variation is explained by the model since the two results vary, we can say that they are approximations. The -2LL value for this model 688.054a is a good fit. Nagelkerke’s R Square suggests that the model explains roughly 30% of the variation in the outcome.

Table 5. Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	688.054 ^a	.220	.298

Source: Authors

Interpretation of Logistic models is in terms of odds ratios, the estimates below shows the increase if the sign is positive or decrease of the coefficient if the sign is negative in the predicted log of odds.

Below are the results in log-odds units for the logistic regression equation for predicting the dependent variable from the independent variable.

$$\text{Ln (odds)} = -3.350 + .865\text{gender} - .315\text{age} - .064\text{Inst} + .017\text{WFJ} - .416\text{Educ} + 2.143\text{EEO}$$

Independent variables are; $\alpha 1$ = Gender, $\alpha 2$ = Age, $\alpha 3$ =Institution, $\alpha 4$ = Way of Finding job, $\alpha 5$ = Education $\alpha 6$ = Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

Table 6. Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
gender	.865	.194	19.817	1	.000	2.374
age	-.315	.141	4.955	1	.026	.730
Institution	-.064	.145	.195	1	.659	.938
Step 1 ^a Way of Finding Job	.017	.093	.033	1	.856	1.017
Education	-.416	.121	11.827	1	.001	.660
EEO	2.143	.207	106.935	1	.000	8.524
Constant	3.350	.702	22.802	1	.000	.035

Source: Authors

From the results of the table 6 above Exponential function of the regression $\text{Exp}(B)$ for gender has the result of 2.374 which we can interpret that the results predicts that the odds for females to have discrimination when applying for job is 2.374 times more likely to happen than for males. The age is also significant and tells us that younger age was associated with a decreased likelihood of odds for 0.730 in unequal employment opportunity for both genders compared to older, the employees are divided in three age groups 18-30 years of age, 31-50 years and 51-65 years. Institution and way of finding job are not significant therefore we do not interpret. But according to our results from the model above, increasing the level of education was associated with a reduction in the biased and equal employment opportunities for 0.659, and we can interpret that in those organisations where procedures of equal employment opportunities are not implemented the likelihood of the odds to have an unequal, biased and prejudice screenings during recruitment, selection and employment of female employees increases for 8.524 keeping everything else equal. Therefore, we can say that the null hypothesis; $H_0=0$ is proven and the odds in institutions that do not implement procedures for equal opportunities in employment in Kosovo unequal treatment and discrimination divided by gender exists during employment process, which than gives less opportunities for females to find jobs, and as a consequence this can de-motivate females for job search and might be the reason for female inactivity in labour market.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The equal employment opportunity and labour laws create legal responsibilities for employers and affect all aspects of the employment relationship. For economic activity to take place, the sourcing of people to provide energy, creativity and skills that we need is essential. Most of the successes and all our failures in business and especially Human Resources Management, stem from the quality of the people in the organization. Based on different measurements, the informal sector of Kosovo's economy is high, and this is due to incomplete legal infrastructure. Though laws and other legal acts prohibit anything forms of discrimination and provide equal working conditions for both genders, in many cases this is not enough to encourage women to get involved in the work process. Equal employment policy rules and recruitment policy should include concerns the degree of flexibility, there will include also responding to recruitment demands. Equality initiatives motivated by a search for organizational benefits can lead to the targeting of initiatives to reflect employer needs, rather than the needs of the disadvantaged groups. An organization can benefit from partial selective approach to equality, perhaps addressing one particular problem a general approach may be more costly and thus clearly less in the interest of organization (Bach, Sisson 2002, pg153). The lack of skilled workers can also contribute to unemployment where more and more people are being sought with more skill and experience; moreover, education should be number one priority. Overall low participation of females in the labour force in Kosovo may also be associated with stereotypes of gender roles

and family traditions. In this research we concentrate on unequal treatment in employment opportunity as the first obstacle to enter the labour market. From our research we found also that the level of education is important since with the increase in education inequality inactivity decreases, one important issue is also the traditional families and rural area population and their lack of mobility to urban areas. Tatli, Vassilopoulou, and Zbilgin (2013) have an interesting idea of recommending quotas for women in the organizations, in order to initiate cultural changes and distinguish potentials of women and their skills in the labour market. The skills that women gain during their education and training before entering the labour market can be used as a first screening when they search for job. They should also help females in business start-ups. This will help in reducing horizontal segregation in education as well as that of employment; it will also help in reducing gender inequality and increase participation of females in the labour market. Economic Reform Programmes in Kosovo, 2016 have started to develop labour market programs from trainings for developing a start-up business to targeted trainings to match employment seekers with job vacancies; here part time jobs should be included as well. Though laws and other legal acts prohibit anything forms of discrimination and provide equal working conditions for both genders, in many cases this is not enough to encourage women to get involved in the work process. Procedural and legislative changes, for example, introducing formal selection and promotion procedures that promise bias-free, objective selection and assessment, may also help in increasing female participation in the workforce of Kosovo, and decrease the level of unemployment.

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