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## Impact of the Turkish Labor Market on Physical Activities and Sports

By Ersöz, Gözde<sup>1</sup> and Meltem İnce-Yenilmez<sup>2\*</sup>

### Abstract

The sports industry is growing fast on a global scale and is inclusive of both the manufacturing and service sectors because of its versatility and diversified workforce. In Turkey the growth rate in college graduates with degrees aligned to the industry is significant. However, despite the representation of women in the industry as athletes and teachers, within sports management women remain significantly underrepresented. This discussion highlights the cultural norms that contribute to gender representation and forecasts the gender equity benefits that would accrue to greater female representation in the sports industry.

*Keywords:* Sports, labor market, physical activities, sports economics

### Introduction

Sports and exercise exist within the service sector; however, these activities are also beneficial to social and individual health and can be a useful advertising tool. Sports are also a vital economic activity. Sporting activities heighten entertainment consumption and attract people's attention from all social and economic levels (İyem, 2013; Desbordes and Richelieu, 2012; Houlihan and Groeneveld, 2011). Beyond the versatility of sports impacts, sports globalization also plays a vital role in strengthening the sports economy (Andreff, 2008). Sports globalization is further defined around three principal tenets of development (1) Television broadcasts, (2) Extended vacation schedules, and (3) Emerging information, and communication technologies. The sports industry is defined as the market responsible for offering sports, recreational activities, fitness, and associated products, service, places, and people to sports consumers (Devecioğlu, 2005).

Sports tourism is a separate market segment and sports increases the number of local and foreign tourists. Further, sports contribute directly to the economy through employment. The indirect economic contribution of sports, on the other hand, include better health, lower healthcare costs and greater labor productivity (Gratton and Henry, 2002; Gratton, Shibli and Coleman, 2005. Sanderson, Harris, Russell, and Chase, 2000). The total direct economic impact of sports is in the

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range from 0.5% to 2% of GDP. In Canada, the 1% contribution to GDP is similar to that made by the wood, logging, and paper industry, and one-half the size of the food industry. In the UK, the sports contribution is one quarter the size of the health industry. From these examples, sports are a relatively "big business" in these countries (Sanderson, Harris, Russell, and Chase, 2000).

There are diverse channels by which sports contribute to the economy (Murathan and Murathan, 2019). The sports sector encompasses social, economic, and political arenas and through these as well as media are a significant source of overall employment (İyem, 2013). With these high employment rates, it is evident that the sports industry can foster economic growth in any country as high employment rates are vital indicators for industry development (Han, 1995). However, if employment gains from the sector are gendered, the sports industry may be implicitly maintaining gender norms despite active policies to eliminate gender bias.

This paper addresses the gendered employment in sports in Turkey with the perspective of aligning education and employment to more closely align to government policies to facilitate gender equity. In this direction, the aim of this study is to reveal the supply and demand in the field of sports with accessible statistical information and contribute to the regulation of a gender-neutral workforce plan in sports. The discussion will include a focus on the adverse impact to women resulting from gender discrimination in society to increase the awareness of individuals about women's issues.

### **Labour Market in Sports**

Sports is an industry where billions of dollars in revenue can be generated (Rein, Kotler, and Shilelds, 2007). Furthermore, sports are now witnessed as a platform that transforms an athlete's skills into commodities that could be sold, or the establishment of an economic market where physical capabilities can be traded (Talimciler, 2008). Because sports have become entertainment, the most physically and psychologically gifted athletes, become stars and celebrities. However, in the sports sector, these are workers, stars, products, and entrepreneurs. Therefore, they are more than just employees, a characteristic unique to the sector (Aydın, 2007). Nevertheless, the earnings and popularity determine athletes' labor demand. In Turkey, football is a single sport that remains popular professionally and has significant traction across the globe.

Turkey's love for football began in the second half of 1980. It was a sports game at the time - a fun-filled activity. Today, it has been augmented by the global impact of participation (Akşar, 2005).

### **Assessing Labor Raised in Europe and Sports Schools in Turkey.**

The European Union implemented the AEHESIS (Aligning a European Higher Education Structure in Sports Science) framework to help transition sports education into facilities for higher learning. The project AEHESIS was meant to help Higher Education in Europe conform to the demands of Sports Sciences and identify with the four principal fields in Sports: Physical Education, Sports Coaching, Sport Management, and Health and Fitness (Karakaya and Çoban, 2014). Sports management encompasses a few roles:

- Manager of a Fitness outfit (e.g., clubs)
- Sports Club Director or Manager
- Local Sports Director or Manager in any Municipality or City
- Director and Manager at the National Sports Federation

Correspondingly, physical education broadly spreads into three unique groups to give rise to the following teaching roles: Physical Education Teacher with specialties on a single subject; Physical Education Teacher with specialties in three or two subjects (such as teaching physical education alongside extra-curricular sports physical education while emphasizing on an extensive and balanced curriculum that fosters skill, understanding, and knowledge), and General Teacher Teaching All Subjects. Fitness and Health categories identified under four different occupations include Public Health Promoter, Fitness and Health Manager, Health-related Exercise Specialist/Tutor, and Advanced Personal Instructor/Gym Tutor. Concerning the field of Professional Sports Coaching, there are two traditional occupations identified and include: Coach of Participation-Oriented Sportsperson (s) and Coach of Talent Identified/Performance Athletes (child, junior, adult).

There are four sports departments in sharp contrast, including coaching education, sports management, sports teaching, physical education, and recreation within the Universities and related to the Turkish sports sector. Turkey also has job definitions for the fitness and health sectors, but universities have no dedicated departments for these areas. Therefore, when students graduate from sports-related institutions, they can participate in various coursework within the fitness and health industries. Furthermore, Turkish universities have recreation departments for sports-related professionals, which is quite different from the rest of Europe. However, students from these departments often have no employment. Nevertheless, about 130 faculties and schools provide those programs, and 2018's students' admissions into these department are provided in Table 1 below:

**Table 1. Number of students' admission in sports related departments in Turkey in 2018**

Departments of Sports Science	Female	Male
Physical Education and Sports Teaching	1.393	2.107
Coaching Education	1.342	2.271
Sports Management	973	1.522
Recreation	424	617

Source: Ersöz et al., 2019.

Turkey further classifies coaches in the following way, which is entirely different from the European Union:

- Grade 1 (Assistant Coach): Those in charge of assisting participants in sports activities. An upper-tier coach will supervise this group.
- Grade 2 (Primary Coach): Those that plan, implement, and assess training for minors and stars
- Grade 3 (Senior Coach): These individuals plan, implement, and assess the training of all national teams and age categories. They will also help athletes plan their careers.

- Grade 4 (Head Coach): These individuals plan, implement, assess, analyse, and update medium-term training programs for national teams and all age categories. They also help athletes plan their careers.
- Grade 5 (Technical Director): These individuals co-ordinate all national teams and age categories. They also plan medium and long-term training schedules, ensure they are implemented, supervise, analyze, assess, and develop strategies. These individuals report to the Ministry and help the athletes with their careers (Turkish Official Newspaper, 2019).

### Labor Statistics on Turkey’s Sports Sector

Turkey's sports participation dates back centuries, even as overall participation in sporting activities is still low (Erkan and Uslu, 2019). History states that sporting activities such as horseback riding, wrestling, and archery, were high-end sports activities, primarily due to the Turk's combativeness. Perhaps, this is mimicked in the present fact that Turkey's highest number of gold medals won from the past Olympic games were in wrestling (TGF, 2019).

Nevertheless, Turkey still has a deficient number of registered athletes. Furthermore, a recent increase in sports participation came from foreign and naturalized athletes, which indicates that Turkey's sports policies may be inadequate to encourage sports participation. It is important to note that any country's human capital accurately depicts the quantity and quality of that country's labor force. Furthermore, the total labor supply depends on population growth. In contrast, labor demand constitutes the economic climate, all of which make up the labor market dynamics of a country (Şentürk, 2015).

**Table 2. Number of licensed athletes and population change by year in Turkey**

Number of licensed athletes in Turkey by year			Ratio of licensed athletes to population		Population change by years in Turkey		
Years	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
2007	352.06	910.831	1%	3%	35.209.723	35.376.533	70.586.256
2010	492.465	1.272.291	1%	4%	36.679.806	37.043.182	73.722.988
2014	989.778	2.229.546	3%	6%	38.711.602	38.984.302	77.695.904
2018	1.646.102	3.261.853	4%	8%	40.863.902	41.139.980	82.003.882

Source: Öztop and Karalar, 2019.

Table 2 reveals the number of female and male athletes from census outcomes for the years 2007, 2010, 2014, and 2018, alongside the proportion of registered athletes to the population. The table shows that female athletes comprised only 1% of the female population in 2007 and increased to 4% in 2018. Regardless, these figures indicate growth. Furthermore, only 3% of the male population were registered male athletes in 2007, and the figure increased to 8% in 2018. Further analysis reveals that male and female participation rates are almost the same. Nevertheless, it is evident that males have more licenses than females, and therefore compete more than females at different sports levels (Öztop and Karalar, 2019).

**Table 3. Number of coaches by year in Turkey (per mille)**

Number of coaches in Turkey by year			Ratio of coaches to population
Years	All Branches	Total Population	
2007	75.984	70.586.256	‰1
2010	110.705	73.722.988	‰2
2014	192.088	77.695.904	‰3
2018	266.379	82.003.882	‰3

Source: General Directorate of Youth and Sports, 2019.

Table 3 provides the census results for the overall number of coaches across all sports branches in 2007, 2010, 2014, 2018, alongside proportion to the general population. The data suggests that even as coaching figures have increased over the years, coaches' supply is not significant enough in terms of numbers to be considered beneficial to sports success in Turkey (Öztop and Karalar, 2019).

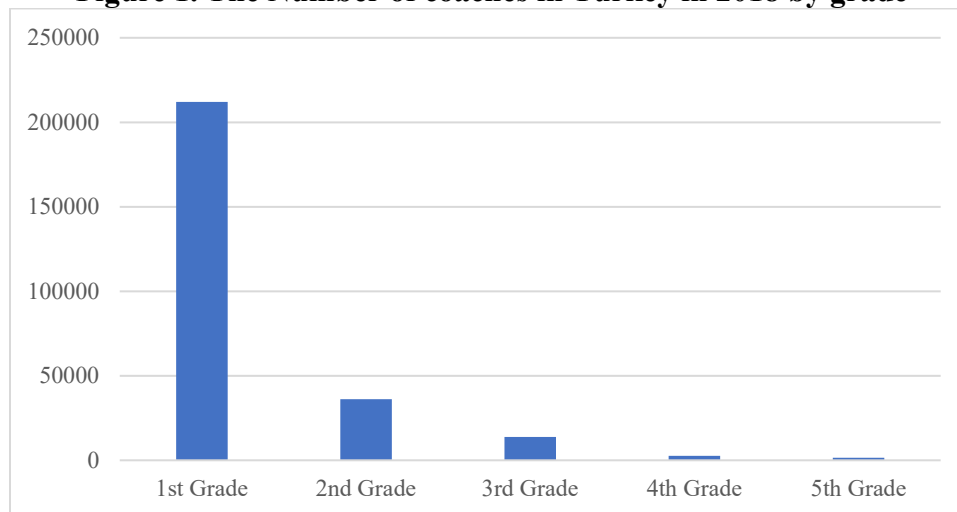
**Table 4. Number of coaches in Turkey in 2018 by grade**

1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
212.054	36.209	13.902	2.733	1.476

Source: General Directorate of Youth and Sports, 2019.

Table 4 depicts coaching numbers across all sports branches differentiated graphically and in tiers. As shown, Grade 1 coaches have the most significant number of coaches, with the numbers decreasing in Grades 2 and 3. Grade 4 and 5 coaches are very small (General Directorate of Youth and Sports (GDYS), 2019).

**Figure 1. The Number of coaches in Turkey in 2018 by grade**



Source: General Directorate of Youth and Sports, 2019.

**Table 5. Number of referees by year in Turkey**

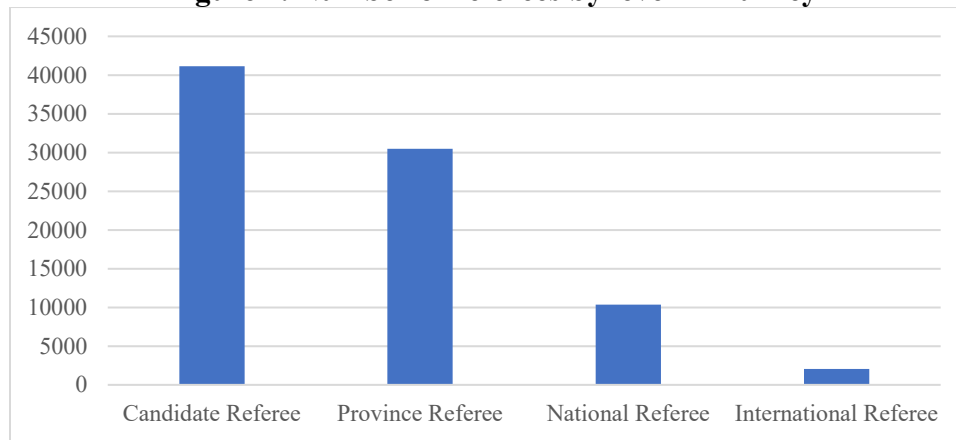
<b>Number of referees in Turkey by year</b>	
<b>Years</b>	<b>All Branches</b>
<b>2007</b>	49.597
<b>2010</b>	43.485
<b>2014</b>	70.276
<b>2018</b>	84.028

Source: General Directorate of Youth and Sports, 2019.

Table 5 depicts referee numbers overall across all sports subsectors in 2007, 2010, 2014, and 2018. Although referees have increased over the years, the numbers are still figuratively insignificant (Öztop and Karalar, 2019; GDYS, 2019).

Table 6 outlines referee numbers relative to their levels, and this is further represented graphically in Figure 2. As shown, provincial referees and referee candidates have the highest numbers. In contrast, Turkey has a meagre number of national and international referees.

**Figure 2. Number of referees by level in Turkey**



Source: General Directorate of Youth and Sports, 2019.

**Table 6. Number of referees by level in Turkey**

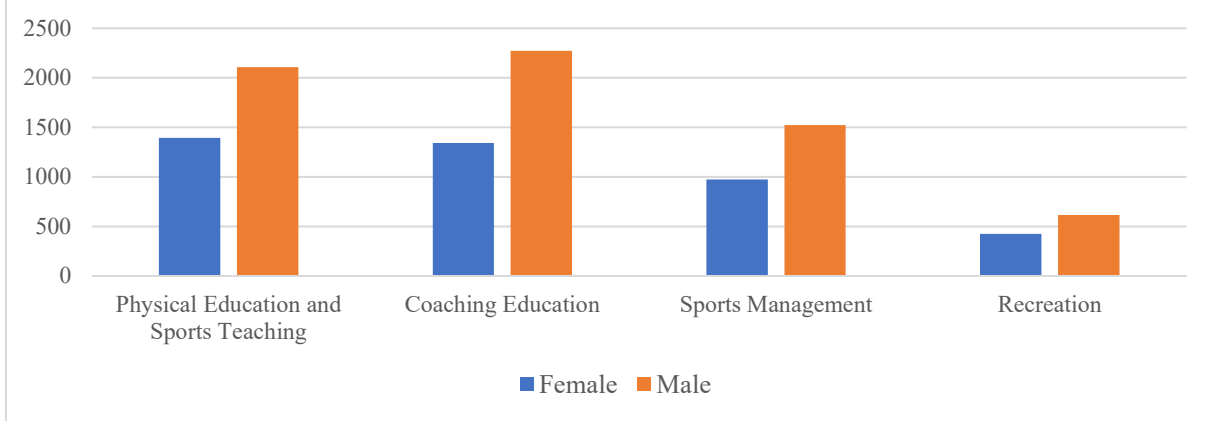
<b>Candidate Referee</b>	<b>Province Referee</b>	<b>National Referee</b>	<b>International Referee</b>
41.129	30.484	10.377	2.038

Source: General Directorate of Youth and Sports, 2019.

The 2018 data also shows that 2107 males and 1393 females were accepted into the School of Physical Education and Sports in Turkey (Ersoz, Huyuklu, and İnce, 2019). However, the Ministry of National Education employed 1893 in 2015, 702 in 2016, 1261 in 2017, 1514 in 2018, and 867 in 2019. Physical education and sports teachers do not work in Turkey's primary schools. Primary school teachers are in charge of supervising physical activities for primary schools. Furthermore, the numbers show 5.627.75 for secondary school students and 5.649.594 for high school students. Nevertheless, as of 2017, the number of physical education teachers were 31.403 (TME, 2019).

Considering the myriad of opportunities in other areas of the sports industry, it is evident that more physical education teachers should be employed, as the current numbers are not sufficient when compared to the population of students in the country. Furthermore, graduates for physical education and sports education are not employed accordingly to fill that need. Accordingly, here is the gender distribution for students in sports-related departments: Coaching Education Department (1342 males and 2271 females), Sport Management Department (1522 males and 973 females), Recreational Education Department (614 males and 424 females). Overall, the number of students is 10.649 (Ersoz, Huyuklu, and İnce, 2019).

**Figure 3. Number of students' admission in sports related departments in Turkey in 2018**



Source: General Directorate of Youth and Sports, 2019.

There are five professional football leagues in Turkey: The U-22 league, 3<sup>rd</sup> League, 2<sup>nd</sup> League, 1<sup>st</sup> League, and Super League. The distribution of registered referees, professional footballers, and coaches under the Turkish Football Federation is outlined below. In Turkey, professional football leagues are Super League, 1<sup>st</sup> League, 2<sup>nd</sup> League, 3<sup>rd</sup> League, and U-22 league (TFF, 2020).

**Table 7. Numbers of Turkish and foreign athletes playing at the professional level in the 2019-2020 season in Turkey**

League	Turkish Player	Foreign Player
Super League (18 team)	388	235
1. League (18 team)	513	116
2. League (36 team)	1.038	0
3. League (53 team)	1.431	0
U21 (18 team)	855	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4225</b>	<b>351</b>

Source: Turkish Football Federation, 2020.

Professional footballers' distribution in the 2019-2020 season comprises 351 foreigners and 4225 Turkish citizens, making up about 4576 footballers overall. There are 38% (235 of foreign footballers and about 62% (388) of Turkish citizens in the Super League. The 1<sup>st</sup> League has 18% (116) foreign footballers and 82% (513) Turkish footballers. However, foreign footballers are not allowed in the other leagues. 1038 footballers are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> League, 855 footballers in U21, and



1431 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> League. Footballers within the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> leagues are the highest ranked, mainly because more teams are in those leagues (TFF, 2020).

**Table 8. Numbers of employees working at the professional level in the 2019-2020 season in Turkey**

League	Head coach	Assistant coaches	Technical director	Goalkeeping coach	Physiotherapist	Doctor	Masseur	Nutritionist
Süper League	17	65	152	57	57	38	106	15
1.League	15	42	112	38	18	23	50	10
2.League	36	96	200	73	55	59	78	7
3.League	53	101	82	99	13	33	53	0
<b>Total</b>	121	304	546	267	143	153	287	32

Source: Turkish Football Federation, 2020.

Concerning the staff workforce for the football league, these numbers are shown in Table 8. Currently, the football leagues have over 1853 personnel constituting 153 doctors, 32 nutritionists, 287 masseurs, 267 goalkeeping coaches, 304 assistant coaches, 143 physiotherapists, 546 technical directors, and 121 head coaches (TFF, 2020).

**Table 9. Number of registered referees in Turkish Football Federation**

Category	f
Upper Division Referee	43
Upper Division Assisting Referee	88
Division	155
Assisting Division	293
Regional Referee	263
Assisting Regional Referee	453
Woman Regional Referee	45
Woman Assisting Regional Referee	57
Country Referee	5416
<b>Total</b>	<b>6813</b>

Source: Turkish Football Federation, 2020.

Table 9 provides data on the number of registered referees and depicts Turkey has over 6813 registered football referees. The General Directorate of Sports (GDS) is responsible for managing sports, and further analysis here provides insights into the number of employees working within GDS. This data on the workforce at GSS is further categorized by education level, gender, and age and shown below (The General Directorate of Sports, 2019).

**Table 10. Employee distribution by educational status**

<b>Education level</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Primary/ Elementary School	1.000	7
High School	2.520	17
Upper Secondary Education	1.522	10
Bachelor' s degree	8.474	56
Master degree	1.450	10
Ph.d	35	0,2

Source: General Directorate of Youth and Sports, 2019.

The employee distribution using educational status shows that 1000 employees have received primary education, while 2520 have received high school education, 1522 employees received upper secondary education, 8,474 workers hold bachelor's degrees, while 1450 hold master's degrees and Ph.D. holders are only about 35.

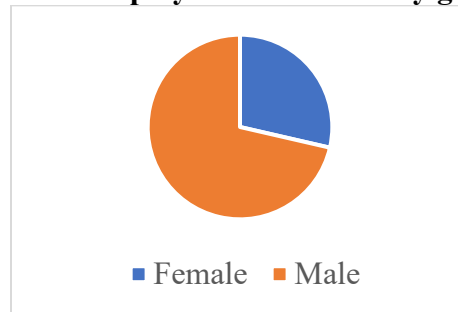
**Table 11. Employee distribution by age**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
18-25	132	1
26-30	806	5
31-40	4.874	32
41-50	4.409	29
51-60	4.334	29
61+	446	3

Source: General Directorate of Youth and Sports, 2019.

Table 11 depicts the age group distribution for employees. The table shows that over 131 employees are between the ages of 18 and 25, 806 employees between 26 and 30, 4874 between 31 and 40, and 4409 between 41 and 50. Additionally, there are about 4,334 employees between 51 and 60 are about 4,334, while those over the age of 61 are about 446 employees. (GDYS, 2019).

**Figure 4. Employee distribution by gender**



Source: General Directorate of Youth and Sports, 2019.

By examining employee gender distribution, 71% (10, 711) of men work within GDS compared with 29% of women (4290). This highlights the inequity in gender distribution but also creates a foundation for its maintenance to the extent that representation is needed to modify gender-based employment norms.

### **Sports Management and the Turkish Female Labor workforce**

Discrimination of women within the Turkish labor force is a significant issue as sexist roles are attributed to women. Such an approach further limits their access to employment opportunities and friendly work environments. As a result, women do not find employment opportunities where they have been historically underrepresented; specific to sports this can exacerbate pre-existing gender stereotypes, as women can be characterized as "weak," and the sports sector in general perceived as a "male" activity (Kara and Yıldırım, 2011).

Gender equity can be fostered if only males and females have equal job opportunities within sports organizations. However, a review of several literary works reveals that females face severe disadvantages within sports environments in the country. A study by General Directorate of Sports (Arslan, 2007) on employees' attitudes towards female administrators revealed that male employees do not encourage female advancement in their careers and often have a poor attitude towards male administrators. The same study further reveals the reasons participants gave for their lack of support towards women: that "women are not supported enough" and "women have responsibilities towards their families." Ayca (2004) further observed that females barely receive offers for administrative positions in Turkey and provide both individual and environmental factors responsible for this outcome. Ayca (2004) emphasized that success motivation, determination, self-reliance, relentlessness, and focusing on the career are crucial individual factors, while environmental factors include family support and barriers from entering into societal networks within patriarchal settings.

Therefore, it is quite clear that women and men are not represented equally, and this divide is even more evident within sports management positions (Koca, 2011). However, it is crucial to fully understand women's role in decision-making positions in sports in Turkey. These organizations include the Sports Federation and General Directorate of Sports (GDS) under the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports has two main units, a central office in Ankara, Turkey's capital city, and Provincial Directorates across the province. Concerning the Sports Federations, there are about 63 branches. However, it is worthy to note that even with the independence gained in 2004, the Sports Federation within Turkey is not free from the centralization and administration style of the Turkish political scene. The third institution with significant power over the Turkish sports administration is the Turkish Olympic Committee (TOC). The TOC is a non-governmental, non-profit organization responsible for upholding the good of the society. All employees here are volunteers. However, Koca (2011) carried out an extensive study on the representation of women in different Turkish sports organizations. Table 12 provides clear information on the men and women working at TOC, Federations, and GDS.

**Table 12. Gender distribution of employees working in central and provincial organizations in General Directorate of Sport**

Organization Type	Female		Male		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Central Organization	239	31.6	517	68.4	756	100
Provincial Organization	417	9.0	4211	91.0	4628	100
<b>Total</b>	656	12.2	4728	87.8	5384	100

Source: Koca, 2011.

The General Directorate of Sport (GDS) has two units, the centre found in Turkey's capital city, Ankara, while the other is a consolidation of provincial offices found in 81 other cities in the country. Table 10 depicts employee distribution at the GDS across its central and provincial offices. Further classifications by gender reveal that only 9.0% of female employees exist within the provincial offices as compared to 31.6% at the central unit.

**Table 13. Gender distribution at management level in General Directorate of Sport**

Line Management	Female		Male		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
General Director	-	-	1	100	1	100
Assistant General Manager	-	-	4	100	4	100
Departmental Manager	1	5,6	17	94.4	18	100
Provincial Director	-	-	81	100	81	100
<b>Total</b>	1	1.0	103	1.0	104	100

Source: Koca, 2011.

Further analysis with regards to the gender distribution of GDS management levels reveals that there are no females in general manager and assistant general manager positions within the senior management levels. In truth, only one branch out of 18 branches within the GDS central organization is headed by a female. Within GDS provincial organizations, all 81 provinces are headed by men. Further studies show that women only hold 1% of GDS management levels in general (Table 11). (Koca, 2011).

**Table 14. Gender distribution at management level in sport federation**

Line Management	Female		Male		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
President	2	3.3	58	96.7	60	100
Vice President	6	4.0	145	96.0	151	100
Secretary-General	7	11.7	53	88.3	60	100
Executive Board Members	38	5.4	662	94.6	700	100
<b>Total</b>	53	5.5	917	94.5	970	100

Source: Koca, 2011.

Across Sporting Federations, females only make 4% of Vice-Presidents and 3.3% of Presidents. Furthermore, about 88.3% of males have performed in general secretarial positions and currently have middle-level management roles instead of 11.7% for women. Furthermore, women only make up 5.4% of the board. So, the outcome is that women only hold about 5.5% of upper and mid-level-managerial positions at the sports federations.

**Table 15. Gender distribution at management level in TOC**

Line Management	Female		Male		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
President			1	100	1	100
Vice President			2	100	2	100
Secretary-General	1	100			1	100
Executive Board Members	1	9.1	10	90.9	11	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>88.2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Koca, 2011.

Turkish Olympic Committee has 52 employees in management positions, with men having over 92.3% of those positions while women hold only 7.7%. Concerning senior executives, there are no women represented there. Within TOC's mid-level managerial roles, women hold only 11.8%. Therefore, analysis of all three institutions with total numbers at 5971, reveals that females only have 14% (833) of the total employee workforce as against 86% (5138) for the male gender. There are only eight females (3.7%) at top senior managerial positions, while only 48 females (5.5%) hold middle managerial roles. Combining all management levels (1090), women hold 5.1%, while men hold about 94.9% (Koca, 2011). Therefore, there is a glaring need to implement policies that will promote gender equity within sports organizations.

These organizations help foster Turkey's sports sector's growth as they are responsible for the policies and directing people to be recreational and professional sports in society. Without proper regulation within these organizations, it becomes difficult to achieve gender equity in other areas of sports, especially mainstream sports activities. Therefore, proper regulations and promotions of gender equity within them will foster equal men and women participation at all sports levels in the country.

## Conclusion

The sports industry offers a vehicle to drive greater employment equity in Turkey. Women are underrepresented in occupations across the industry in spite of education due to gendered norm that prevail and are inconsistent with gender equity policy stance at the government level. The significance of female visibility in the sector may not only provide employment opportunities in the present but by visibility may catalyse gender equity by changing perceptions. Future studies would benefit perception of gender inclusion by taking a longitudinal stand and incorporating societal perspectives related to gender representation in specific sports occupations.

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