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ENTREPRENEURIAL ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN TOURISM: THE CASE OF MACEDONIA

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Abstract

This paper elaborates the main findings from a survey undertaken in the line of evaluating the role of women working in tourism and hospitality in Macedonia. Moreover, the paper intends to assess the current position of women in tourism and to detect the most profound obstacles for their entrepreneurial advancement in tourism sector. To that purpose, a self-administrated questionnaire was distributed among managers and employees working in travel agencies and tourism service facilities in several locations in Macedonia. While women share the same view with men concerning many investigated issues, their perception towards participation of women entrepreneurs in tourism in Macedonia strongly differs. So, while man did not have unique attitude, women's perception is that their participation in tourism entrepreneurship is moderate and needs to be improved. Furthermore, the paper outlines the specific problems that women are faced with when being employed in tourism and hospitality sector in Macedonia. The contribution of this paper lies in the fact that enriches poorly developed academic work in Macedonia addressing this issue.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Women advancement, Tourism, Macedonia.*

INTRODUCTION

The state of gender equality in the labor market is a phenomenon that is increasingly gaining importance as in the European Union and the of Macedonia. Gender mainstreaming and the balanced participation of men and women in the labor market is a crucial indicator for further action and initiate policies that will improve society. At the same time, employment as a separate element of the economic system in Macedonia is characterized by a very unfavorable gender structure of unstable economic and social conditions in the country and the mismatch between the available and needed profiles on the labor market, even though gender equality in Macedonia is guaranteed by the 1991 Constitution as a fundamental human right is one of the most important goals and priorities.

The state of gender equality in the labor market is a phenomenon that is more and more important. The labor market is defined as more Factorial market on which the "sale" of the specific service - work (work). The labor market arranged on different levels and institutional structures, and can cause many variations in market-competitive behavior on the supply side and the demand side of labor. The labor market is influenced by many factors that are determinants reflecting the overall market interaction. In order to propose policies to improve the situation of gender equality in the labor market, should first take into account the current situation and the factors that affect this situation. According to the ILO¹ main objective is to promote the rights in the workplace, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen social dialogue. Also, in cooperation with the ILO adopted a NPDW² which is in line with the national strategy for employment, the Operational Programme for Human Resources Development, etc.

¹ International Labour Organization dedicated to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity

² National program for decent work where they set strategic priorities for the period 2010-2013 years.

Table 1. Employment by economic status and sex in 2011 in Macedonia

Employment status			Status structure %		Gender structure %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Employee	193,959	269,116	76	69	42	58
Employer	9,121	27,633	3	7	25	75
Self-employer	14,988	68,563	6	18	18	82
Unpaid family worker	38,054	23,651	15	6	62	38
Total	256,122	388,963	100	100	40	60

Source: Labour Force Survey, Statistical Office of Macedonia

Table 1 shows that the total number of employees in Macedonia in 2011 are 42% women and 58% men. Drastic disproportion between men and women exists in the category employer: only 25% are women and 75% men. Big difference between women (18%) and men (82%) who have decided to work for their own account. And if you look at the fourth category will be recognized the great difference between women (62%) and men (38%) entering the category of unpaid family workers. According to the structure by status, women are with 76% before men with 69% of the total number of employed women/men in the category of employees. In the category employer picture is quite different: only 3% of the total number of women employers and recruiters to 7% of the total number of engaged men. Only 6% of the total number of self-employed women, while for men it is 18%. The power and strength of the employers with regard to women and men are most visible in the category unpaid worker. Of the total number of working-age women, 15% are not paid effort, and in men is only 6%. At the end of the table shows that the total number of employees in all these categories are 40% women and 60% men. These parameters once more confirm the discriminating attitude towards women and shortening of equality with men.

- According to the Charter for equality of women and men in local life-2006 provides moral and a clear commitment to the principle of equality between men and women. According to the Charter, "equality between men and women is a fundamental right of everyone and is essential for the value of any democracy." In practice we need all stakeholders in society to strive for its application and through the 6 basic principles: equality between men and women is a fundamental right;
- Equality between men and women is provided through overcoming any

kind of discrimination and vulnerability;

- Balance in the participation of men and women decision-making is a prerequisite for a democratic society;
- Elimination of all types of patterns to achieve equality;
- Integration of a gender perspective in all activities to promote equality between men and women; and
- Necessity of action plans, programs and resources that promote equality between men and women.

On the other hand, Macedonia is a signatory to all international documents that assume equality between men and women such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979, which came into force in 1991. Macedonia also signed the Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2000).

Macedonian citizens enjoy the rights and freedoms regardless of their differences (Constitution of Macedonia). The right to employment promotes gender equality in confirming the principle of equality which means equal pay for equal work with equal requirements and equal treatment. Based on the foregoing, it is clear that a major challenge facing Macedonia to reduce the unemployment rate of women in all sectors of social life and encouraging the participation of women in employment by gender equality. Some of the recommendations that can facilitate the process: clear and effective communication between governmental institutions, the business sector and civil society,

- Drafting of training programs for vocational education based on needs (proper needs assessment and research of trends in the labor market);
- Stimulate local and rural development by the system of vocational education by creating specific centers for specific education that will help overcome the deficient staff, and it will be given equal "treatment" for gender equality and women and the women;
- Greater functionality employment agencies in view of the strategies and policies for employment;
- Necessity of an effective flow of information on the labor market;
- Direct fiscal incentives such tactics of support to offset the disadvantages faced by first-time job seekers (especially for women);
- The existence of a continuous and good coordination of efforts of various stakeholders in order to truly influence the reduction of unemployment;

- Greater accountability and participation of the state in coordinating all actions related to employment;
- Planning and creating quality strategies that would solve the problems of the labor market accompanied by appropriate monitoring, finance, etc.; and
- Control and monitoring like more relevant mechanisms for collecting information not only on the practical implementation of strategies, but possible.

BACKGROUND MATERIAL

Participation of women in the workforce

While the representation of women in the workforce in the country is comparable to the regional average, the share of women is far lower. In 2010, the share of women in the workforce (women aged 15 to 65 years) in the country was 51%, which is lower than the regional average of 62%. Also, between 2004 and 2010, the share of men in the labor force increased by 7 percentage points, while the share of women in the labor force increased by 4 percentage points (from 47 to 51%). It indicates the gender gap in labor force participation in 2010 of 27 percentage points.³

In this process, measures to boost the labor market is accompanied by higher investments in human capital of countries, resulting in increased participation of women in the workforce.⁴

Now, Macedonia is one of the countries at the bottom of the curve and achievements and are under the average.⁵

Entrepreneurship among women

Entrepreneurship is the strongest expression of man's individual freedom to realize their potential, as a free and sovereign and has realized ideas.⁶ On the other hand, by increasing the number of managers and professional within the existing businesses within the old existing companies, the term entrepreneur is used to describe those individuals who operate as entrepreneurs within existing companies.

³ Gamberoni E. and J. Posadas. (2012).

⁴ Goldin. (1995).

⁵ World Bank. (2009).

⁶ Morgan Stanly. (2005)

These are people who possess entrepreneurial qualities, and also represent entrepreneurs in larger firm.⁷

Yet, very few businesses run by women, and women managers work mainly in businesses owned by women. The analysis based on Enterprise Survey of the World Bank (2009), which reviews based small, medium and large businesses, shows that 36% of surveyed businesses are owned by women⁸, and 18 are managed by women. Women manage 10% of businesses owned by men and 33% of businesses owned by women.

Contrary to other countries, men and women in Macedonia slightly differ in sectors in which they are engaged, no matter whether it is male or female business depending on the gender of the manager or the owner. The majority of businesses run by men and women in the retail sector, while a larger percentage of men managed businesses than businesses run by women are found in the transport, construction, clothing and metal processing. More businesses run by women than by men managed businesses can be found in the sectors of retail, chemicals, food industry and plastics and rubber. Similar patterns of distribution by sector can be found when you do a breakdown by gender of the owner.

Businesses run by women are equally productive and businesses run by men whether you measure productivity by the volume of sales or by the value added per worker. We found no statistically significant differences whether it is about the volume of sales or value added per worker.

International evidence shows that men are more likely to manage businesses than women; however, the findings on possible gender gap in productivity are diverse. The literature generally suggests that ownership of businesses women lag behind men⁹ and thus they are untapped "source of entrepreneurial energy".¹⁰ Women entrepreneurs are also more concentrated in certain sectors while men are present in all sectors of the economy. They usually retail sectors, clothing, hospitality.¹¹ Finally, although the concentration by sector and informality explains much of the gender gap in productivity of firms, results in productivity in various

⁷ Giffot Pinchot, (1990).

⁸ Businesses owned by women define as a business in which at least one of the owners is a woman. Businesses run by women are those managed by women.

⁹ Minniti, (2010).

¹⁰ Van der Zwan et al, (2011).

¹¹ Bardasi et al, (2011).

sectors.¹² In the context of the ECA, a recent study by Saumik and Sattar (2008) found a gender gap of 6.5% participation in self-employment, making control over several features. The biggest gender gaps in participation were established in the Balkan countries. It is very important that Saumik Sattar and found that self-employed women in middle income countries in the Balkans and the CIS are more likely to pay bribes to complete a self-employed women work than in other regions. In Russia, working with different database, Gamberoni and Posadas (2012) found that the gap in earnings is 26 percent. However, using data from the survey of businesses found that those businesses run by women sell less of businesses run by men, but have a high value added per worker.

METHODOLOGY

The study involved a field survey conducted in July 2014 with the main aim to evaluate the role of women working in tourism and hospitality in Macedonia. In that line, a self-administered questionnaire was distributed among managers and employees working in travel agencies, and catering facilities like hotels, motels, private villas, restaurants and taverns.

The respondents were previously well informed about the aims of the survey undertaken in several locations in Macedonia i.e. Gevgelija (63 questionnaires), Bogdanci (20 questionnaires), Dojran (17 questionnaires), Krusevo (18 questionnaires), Resen (45 questionnaires), Prespa villages (Grncari, Rajca, Asamati, Kurbinovo, Pretor, Slivnica, Krani, Strbovo, Brajcino, Ljubojno, Nakolec and Dolno Dupeni – total of 51 questionnaires), Mavrovo & Rostusa (39 questionnaires), and the Povardarie wine region (Vardar Valley central region – 17 questionnaires). A total of 317 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 270 were complete and usable yielding an overall response rate of 85.2%. The highest response rate was noted in location of Mavrovo & Rostusa (100%), while the smallest in Krusevo (66.7%).

The respondents were asked to assess the current position of women in tourism. Hence, they were asked to express their level of agreement with the statements posed in Table 2. More precisely, the respondents chose just one choice from the five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree). Furthermore, the respondents were asked to detect the most profound obstacles for women entrepreneurial advancement in tourism. So,

¹² Minniti and Naude, (2010).

they chose between the options of “not present,” “present in low/medium/high intensity,” and “I do not know” (Figure 1).

Due to lack of standardization, limited reliability, and scarce measurement, simple tests were applied and processed in SPSS.

ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 presents the statements for assessing the current position of women in tourism. It is interesting to note that women share the same view with men regarding some issues. Namely, they agree that there is an equity in payment of women and men (for the same job), that the opportunities for employment and career development in tourism and hospitality are equal, that women have sufficient knowledge and skills to work in tourism, that working in tourism and hospitality requires knowledge and skills.

Yet, women have completely different opinion with men concerning other issues. Namely, women absolutely oppose to men who disagree that the work in tourism is safe and secure. They also disagree with men and strongly share that prejudices do exist regarding the ability and expertise of women. Another confronting attitude is to the statement that women working in tourism should be attractive and should know how to cope with indecent comments of guests, namely, men agree, while women totally disagree. While men disagree that if working in rural areas they can be employed much easier than women, the female have neutral opinion.

The situation is the same referring the statement that male family members have priority in job search. In the cases of investigating the opinion for the unavailability of funding sources as an obstacle for tourism business run by women entrepreneurs, and the membership of woman in the Tourism Committee can improve the position of women entrepreneurs in tourism sector, the female respondents strongly agree opposite of male respondents who did not have unique attitude. Concerning the following statements that in tourism the work is well paid, much easier for men than women and the existence of sexual harassment and mobbing, one may not draw any statistically significant conclusions with gender cross-tabulation, due to very split opinions of the respondents.

Table 2. Summary of statements

There is an equity in payment of women and men (for the same job).
Employment opportunities in tourism are equal for women and men.
Opportunities for career development are equal for women and men.
Work in tourism and hospitality sector is safe and secure.
Prejudice exists regarding the ability and expertise of women.
Men more often participate at training, specialization or other types of specialization compared to women.
Women working in tourism and hospitality should be attractive and should know how to cope with indecent comments of guests.
Living in rural areas is a barrier for employment.
Men working in rural areas get employed much easier than women.
Women have sufficient knowledge and skills to work in tourism and hospitality.
Male family members have priority in job search.
The work in tourism and hospitality is well paid.
Working in tourism and hospitality requires knowledge and skills.
Working in tourism and hospitality is much easier for men than women.
There is sexual harassment and mobbing in the tourism and hospitality sector.
Unavailability of funding sources is an obstacle for tourism business run by women entrepreneurs.
Membership of woman in the Tourism Committee can improve the position of women entrepreneurs in tourism sector.

Figure 1 presents the key findings upon the summarized survey results on the main profound limits for improvement. Namely, the processed data gave an in-depth conclusions concerning the entrepreneurial advancement of women in tourism in Macedonia. It is interesting the fact that women share the same view with men concerning many investigated issues. Yet, their perception towards participation of women entrepreneurs in tourism in Macedonia strongly differs.

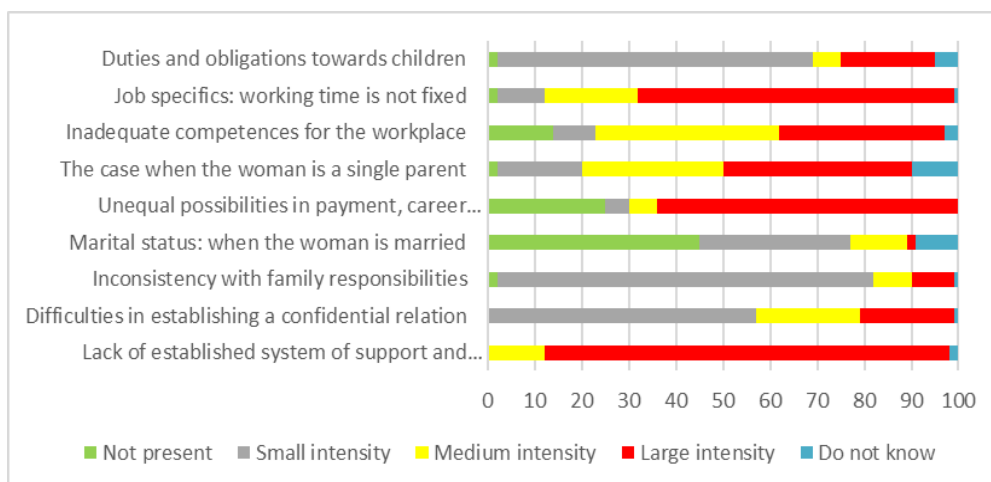


Figure 1. Summarized survey results

The following indicators were most commonly selected, with between 70% and 98% of respondents denoting presence at a medium to high level of intensity:

- 1) Lack of established system of support and understanding by the employer;
- 2) Job specifics: working time is not fixed;
- 3) Inadequate competences for the workplace;
- 4) Unequal possibilities in payment, career advancement, participation and professional development of women; and
- 5) The case when the woman is a single parent. Four-fifths of respondents identified the 'Difficulties in establishing a confidential relation' as being of medium significance.

The results also reflected significant variation in respondents' attitudes toward the indicators regarding the 'Duties and obligations towards children' as well as the 'Inconsistency with family responsibilities', which most probably stems from

different understandings of the issues. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that the 'Marital status: when the woman is married' as significant obstacle for women enhancement in tourism was generally indicated as "not present" by large number of respondents, which does not, however, detract from the importance of being a factor that may profoundly affect entrepreneurial advancement of women.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to over-bridge the gap and move from the current to the vision of change, based on the research finding, the following interventions are recommended:

- Interventions for career awareness
 - Media and marketing blitz focusing on promoting tourism as attractive career choice.
 - Tourism awareness campaign that will help raising the profile of tourism and hospitality as challenging and prosperous working environment.
- Interventions for recruitment
 - Media and marketing blitz focusing on employment of women under the slogan "Tourism is a career of choice".
 - Promotion of stimulating courses and career programs for unemployed women as new recruits for tourism.
- Interventions for employment of women entering and empowering tourism and hospitality sector
 - Sponsoring best-practice tourism management policy from the destination in the line to promoting and coordinate establishment of tourism as preferred employer (known as performance through people).
 - Dissemination of materials for raising awareness for necessity of introducing systems and support mechanisms to encourage and facilitate women's participation in decision-making process.
 - TV and radio campaign for creating positive attitude for women's entering tourism, particularly assisting women to return to work after pregnancy and maternity period.
 - Workshop on promoting a fair and equitable sharing of benefits from tourism. Special modules on: Valuing and paying for work carried out by female; Adopting and enforcing equal pay for equal work policies; Ensuring equal access to all resources etc.

- Informative meetings and dissemination of materials on promoting “Women’s Voices and Leadership”. Information on approaches for promoting women’s involvement in all aspects of tourism and hospitality functioning. Spreading the importance and necessity of ensuring that women’s voices are heard at local level.
- Capacity building of women for running tourism business with special focus of funding.
- Round table for clarifying the importance of the membership in the Tourism Committee in terms of improving the position of women entrepreneurs in tourism. Supporting credit cooperatives or other schemes providing groups of women with access to credit, technology and market linkages.

The study underscores the importance of continuous, systematic analysis of specific problems that women are faced with when being employed in tourism and hospitality in Macedonia. This research may be enhanced by broadening it with additional significant indicators to better assess possibilities for entrepreneurial advancement of women in tourism. Yet, besides the limitations of the scope of the research, this article poses relevant conclusions upon which serious measures and activities may be initiated for detecting the negative impacts for women empowerment in tourism sector in Macedonia.

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