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The Administrative Position of Female Academics in Turkish Universities and Their Geographical (Spatial) Distribution

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to determine to which extent the female academics at all the public and private universities in Turkey take part in administration and to open this participation rate to debate. As there has never been a statistical study on female executives at universities before, the data have had to be collected by a meticulous teamwork from the websites of all the Turkish public and private universities and through phone calls to the relevant units of universities and then their frequency analysis had been carried out with SPSS package program. Furthermore, the geographical distribution of female administrators and professors at Turkish universities have been shown in maps. In Turkey, female academics cannot get their rightful place in university administration. It seems that by wiping out the traditional patriarchal mentality from every aspect of life, establishing the precautions to eliminate the disadvantages of women in their career life and grant equal opportunities to them, women can get their rightful place in management positions.

Key words: Female academic, geographical distribution, Turkish universities, top administrative, female executives

INTRODUCTION

The opportunities for women to have higher education, to achieve a scientific career and to occupy a managerial position in a country depend on various political, historical, social, cultural and economic factors.

Glass ceiling means apparent barriers that prevent women from reaching the top of the corporate hierarchy. This situation is referred to as a ceiling as there is a limitation blocking upward advancement and glass (transparent) because the limitation is not immediately apparent and is normally an unwritten and unofficial policy that cannot be overcome. A woman can determine a certain career target for herself; however, the top point she has struggled for is closed for her just because she is a woman (Aytaç, 1999).

No matter which institution they work in, it is a universal observation that women are not represented in the administration (Senesen-Günlük, 1996). While women can get up to middle stages and vice-levels easily, they come up against a transparent ceiling before the top levels and mostly can't overcome it (Burke and Mckeen, 1991). We cannot say that there are legal obstructions preventing women from advancing to the top stages in. According to Roberts (1990), the obstructions can be categorized into three main groups: the first one is the administration system; the second is the environment surrounding women, that is, conditions beyond them; the third is how they perceive the world, that is, their own characteristics.

The distribution rates of the academics in Turkey according to their genders show us that women are quite included into the academic life. According to the Anonymous (2006a), statistics, 32642 of 82250 lecturers are women, which is 39.7%. The rate of female professors is 26.9%. These figures are at such a level that can compete with those in many western developed countries. In other words, the existence of women in academic life in Turkey can by no means be underestimated.

As women show no accumulation in one particular academic field, they are not excluded from any, either. The rate of female academics in natural science, in which they are supposed to struggle, is 39% and that of female professors is 23.8%. Also in technical sciences- where women have little accession in many other countries as Hrubos (1994) proposed in one of his studies Women still have less opportunity to get into higher positions in science compared to men-the rate of female academics is 30.1% and that of female professors is 18.3% in Turkey. Here, we can see a comparison, thanks to the studies of Viefers, Viefers *et al.* (2006), of female professors in technical sciences in that In Sweden today women professors of physics (both appointed and promoted) typically represent 10% or less of the total professorial staff. The biggest rate of female academics in Turkey is in arts (47.5%), where their number is almost the same as the men's. The second field is health sciences, where the rate of female academics is 43% and that of female professors are 33.7%. The field with the biggest rate of female professors is language and literature with 39%.

With regard to the general outlook of the female academics in Turkey, it can be argued that they are in better situation than their counterparts in developed countries. As for the status of women in top administrative positions, it can also be observed that Turkey has a relative superiority despite the fact that the rate of the women representation at the top academic administrations (16.4%) is lower than the rate of academic representation (39.7%).

The aim of this study is to determine the extent at which the female academics in Turkish public and private universities participate in the administration (especially top administration) and to open a debate on the rate of this participation. The study mainly focuses on rectors, vice-rectors and deans, but also involves the rates of male and female professors in Turkey as there is a prerequisite of being a professor so as to be appointed to these positions. Moreover, since they are the heads of the academic units at universities, Director of Institute, Director of Technical Vocational School of Higher Educational and Director of School of Higher education have also been included. Because there has not ever been a statistical study on female executives at universities before, the data have had to be collected by a meticulous teamwork from the websites of all the Turkish public and private universities and through phone calls to the relevant units of universities and then their frequency analysis has been carried out with Spss package program. Furthermore, the geographical distribution of female administrators and professors at Turkish universities has been shown in maps (Fig. 1).

One of the shortcomings of this study is not having included the opinions of female executives about their representation in their career and in administration. It is believed that the results will be more concrete by including the opinions and suggestions of both male and female administrators to a more extensive research.

The Status of Male and Female Academics at University Administration

There are 53 public, 25 private universities in Turkey with total 1734 academic male and female administrators (rectors, vice-rectors, deans, Director of Institute, Director of School of Higher education and Director of Technical Vocational School of Higher Educational) (Anonymous, 2006a), 83.6% of whom are male academics (1448) and 16.4% of whom are (286) female. Only 5 of the 53 public universities have a female rector. Although the rates of female administrators of public and private universities are quite close to each other, only 1 private university has a female rector.

The rate of female academics is rather low at the top level of rector (7.7%), but it gets higher as it gets to lower levels. The university units with the highest rate of female administrators are Director of School of Higher education (Anonymous, 2006b), (36.5%). Furthermore, this rate is determined to be higher than that of the male administrators at private universities (53.8%). After the rate of rectors, the second lowest female administrator rate is Director of Technical Vocational School of Higher Educational (10.8%), which is low at both private and public universities (Fig. 2).

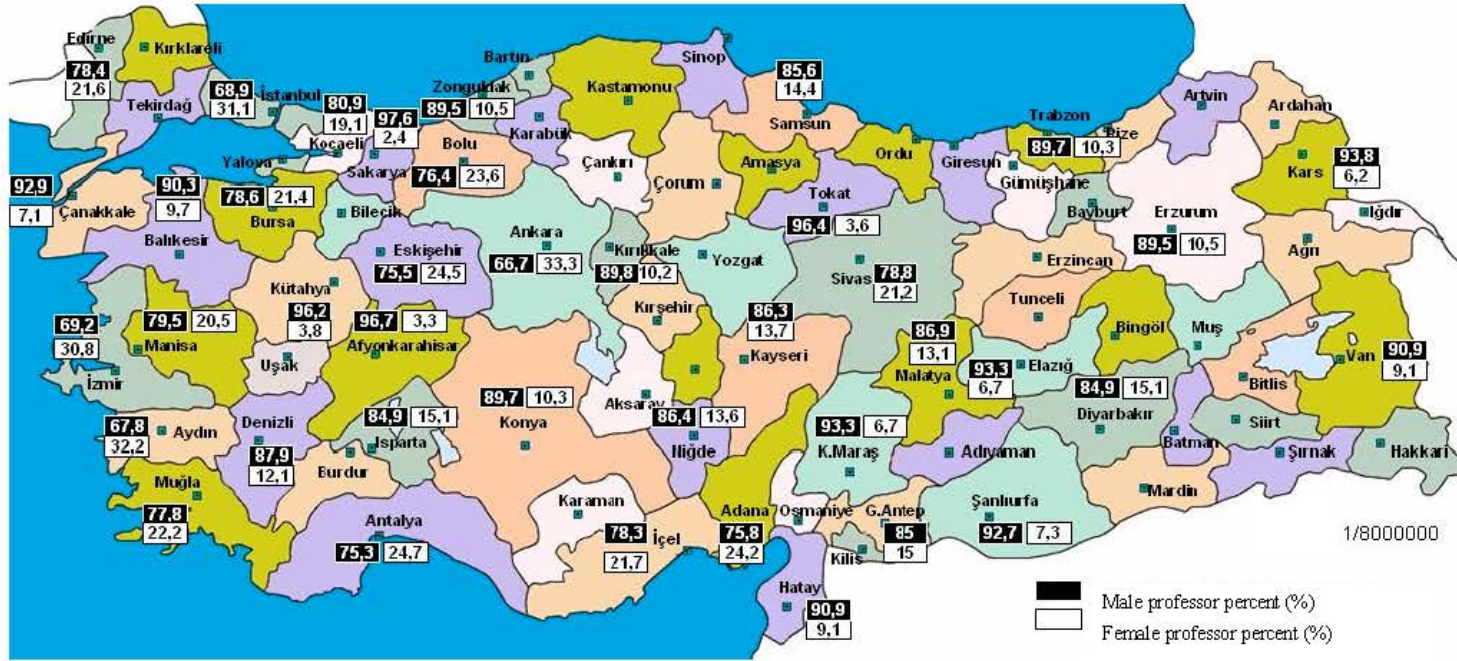


Fig. 1: The geographical distribution of female and male professors in the province of Turkey

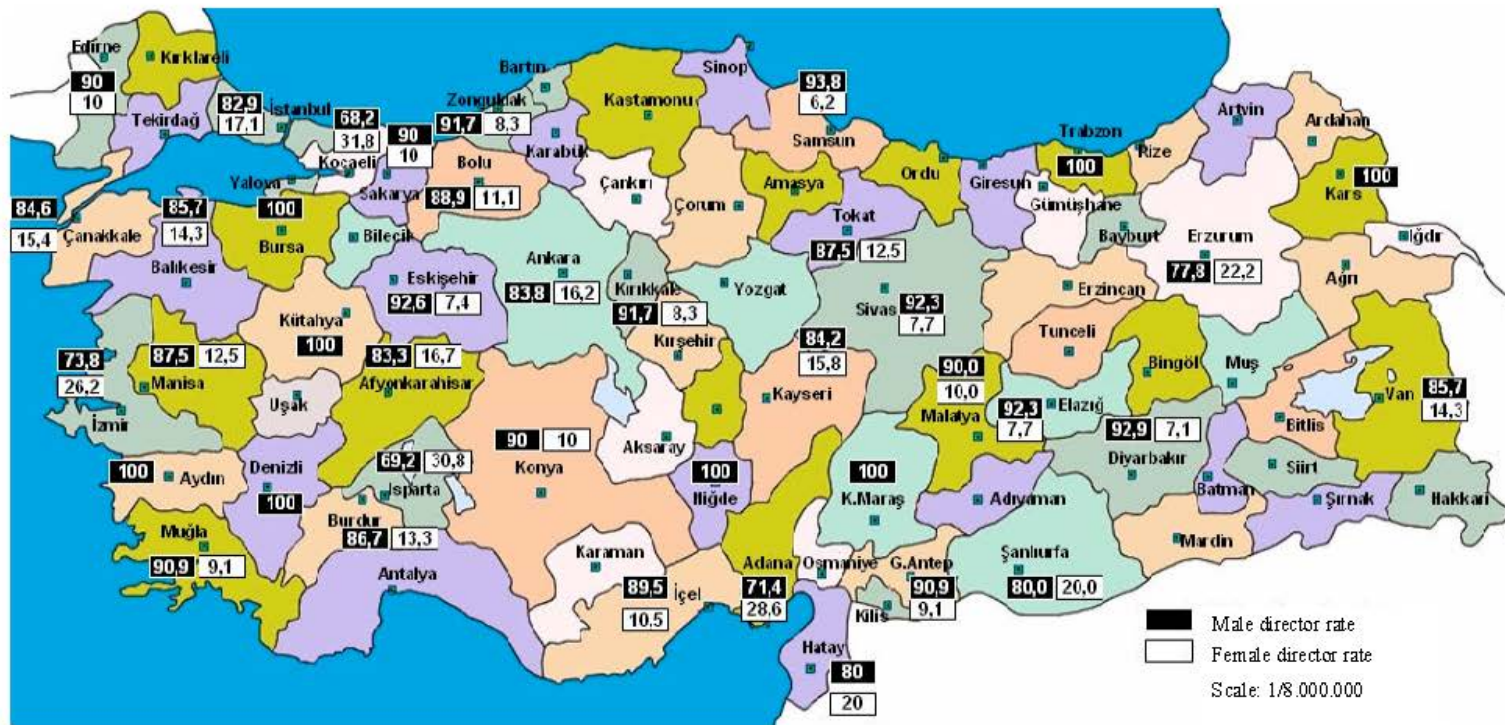


Fig. 2: The geographical distribution of female and male academic administrators in the province of

Table 1: The numbers and rates of female/male administrators in Turkish Universities (2006)

Administrative position	Male No.		Male rate		Female No.		Female rate		Total			
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Male No.	Male rate	Female No.	Female Rate
	Rector	48	24	90.6	96.0	5	1	9.4	4.0	72	92.3	6
Vice rector	124	26	855.0	86.7	21	4	145.0	13.3	150	85.8	25	14.2
Dean	383	93	85.0	83.8	68	18	15.0	16.2	476	84.7	86	15.3
Director of institute	170	49	80.6	845.0	41	9	19.4	15.5	219	81.5	50	18.5
Director of school of higher education	114	6	64.8	46.2	62	7	35.2	53.8	120	635.0	69	365.0
Director of technical vocational school of higher education	385	26	89.2	89.7	47	3	10.8	10.3	411	89.2	50	10.8
Total	1224	224	83.4	84.3	244	42	16.6	15.7	1448	83.6	286	16.4

Resource: Calculated personally from the data of university websites and personnel departments and from relevant units through telephone

Even though the rate of female academics at Turkish universities is 39.6% (32642 women), this rate falls down to 16.4% when it comes to administration. In other words, the rate of female representation at top academic administration is lower than that of academic representation.

The prerequisite for the top administrative positions (rectors, vice-rectors and deans) is to have achieved professor degree. The rate of female professors in Turkey is 26.9%. There are 117 female upper-level executives (rectors, vice-rectors and deans) (14.4%) compared to 698 male ones (85.6%) in Turkey (Table 1).

As can be concluded from these results, female academics are poorly included in the upper-administrative levels and decision making mechanisms at universities. It is other universal fact that the more competition there is and the higher we get, the lower chance there is for women to get involved (Sandler, 1985).

Female academics haven't been able to get their rightful place at university administration. Their marital status also has something striking to do with their being administrators. According to a survey, a great majority of female executive academics are not married. According to the findings, 20.9% of female executives are single and 7.7% are either divorced or widowed, while the rates are 5.4% and 1.6% for men respectively. The study has shown that the divorced or widowed women (13.9%) are more inclined to undertake administration in their academic career than single (3.0%) or married (9.8%) ones. These rates are especially higher for female academic at top-level administration. For instance, almost one third of these women (29.8%) are single. The same rate is only 3% for men (Acar, 1996).

The Comparison of Female Executives at Metropolitan and Provinces Universities in Turkey

There are 78 universities in Turkey; 53 public and 25 private (Anonymous, 2006b). Almost half of them (38) are in three metropolitan cities (Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir). The rest 40 are in other provinces in Anatolia. With respect to how universities have come to their current state, we can say that the establishment years of higher education in Turkey were between 1930 and 1950, during which three new universities were set up in Ankara and Istanbul and the share of women in the scientific staff increased constantly. From 1950s to 1973, Turkish higher education began to spread to the other metropolitan cities and the number of universities reached to 8. From 1973 onwards, in order to balance the education level between the west and the east, governments started to open new universities in the east and this trend continued until 1980s. Within the 1990s the process of balancing continued and in 1992, in a very short time, 22 universities were set up and the total number became 51. During this process, mid-scale provinces in Anatolia were given priority, but these new universities were harshly criticised. Therefore, it is believed that comparing these universities according to their female administrator content will be beneficial to see how much progress have been made within the last 15

Table 2: The numbers and rates of female/male professors at Universities in Metropolitan Cities (Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir) and in Provinces

Universities in Metropolitan Cities (Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir)				Universities in Provinces			
No. of male prof.	No. of female prof.	Rate of male prof.	Rate of female prof.	No. of male prof.	No. of female prof.	Rate of male prof.	Rate of female prof.
4716	2218	68	32	3811	923	81	19

Resource: Calculated from the 2006 data of OSYM

Table 3: The numbers and rates of top executives at Universities in Metropolitan Cities (Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir) and in Provinces

Administrative position	Universities in Metropolitan Cities (Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir)				Universities in Provinces			
	No. of male	No. of female	Rate of male	Rate of female	No. of male	No. of female	Rate of male	Rate of female
Rector	35	3	92.1	7.9	37	3	92.5	7.5
Vice rector	53	14	79.1	20.9	97	11	89.8	10.2
Dean	191	44	81.2	18.7	285	42	87.1	12.8
Total	279	61	82.0	18.0	419	56	88.2	11.8

Resource: Calculated from the university websites and personnel departments

years. As mentioned above, the prerequisite to be appointed to an administrative position at Turkish universities is to have got the professor degree, so it will be better to analyse the professor rates at all the universities before comparing the top-level administrators at metropolitan and provinces universities. Naturally, this unbalance is reflected to the rates and numbers of female administrators (Table 2).

As can be seen in Table 3, the rate of female professors at metropolitan universities is 32%, while that of those at provinces universities is 19%. From another perspective, 2218 of the total 3141 female professors in Turkey are at universities in the three metropolitan cities. There are only 923 female professors at the 40 universities in the other provinces in Turkey, which is to say that there is an imbalance and unfairness in the numbers and rates of female professors in the metropolitan and provinces universities.

The rate of top-level female administrators at universities in provinces decreases to 11.8%, while this number is 18% in metropolitan cities. The reasons why the rate of top level female executives is low at these universities lie in both the former reliance on patriarchal values in the provinces which causes higher probability of discrimination against women- and that women in these areas accept their roles as housewives and mothers and thus give in competition against men in such a patriarchal environment (Acar, 1996). However, current the situation is no longer so bad as before. Whereas the number of female professors at metropolitan universities is about 2,5 times the number at provinces universities, when it comes to the rate of women in top executive levels, this disparity decreases in favour of those at provinces universities (18-11.8%).

Although the rate of female professors at metropolitan universities is 32% and that of those at provinces universities is 19%, there are 3 female rectors in both places (besides, regarding the public universities, there are 2 female rectors at metropolitan universities compared to 3 at provinces ones). The rates and numbers of vice rectors and deans have come closer. In other words, the status of female academics at provinces universities have been improving rapidly. Among the main reasons for this improvement are that governments have allocated more resources and staff especially recently in order to complete the development of these universities; that the shift of academics from metropolitan universities to provinces ones due to harsh competition for all levels of career at metropolitan universities; and that the traditional patriarchal state of provinces universities have been crushed gradually.

Table 4: The rate of female professor and academic administrator in the Province of Turkey

Province	Rate of female administer	Rate of female professor	Province	Rate of female administer	Rate of female professor
Istanbul	17.1	31.1	Kocaeli	31.8	19.1
Ankara	16.2	33.3	Sanliurfa	20.0	7.3
Izmir	26.2	30.8	Malatya	10.0	13.1
Bolu	11.1	23.6	Kars	0.0	6.2
Aydin	0.0	32.2	Kahramanmaraş	0.0	6.7
Afyon	16.7	3.3	Trabzon	0.0	10.3
Antalya	13.3	24.7	Kirikkale	8.3	10.2
Eskisehir	7.4	24.5	Içel	10.5	21.7
Erzurum	22.2	10.5	Mugla	9.1	22.2
Balikesir	14.3	9.7	Hatay	20.0	9.1
Manisa	12.5	20.5	Nigde	0.0	13.6
Sivas	7.7	21.2	Samsun	6.2	14.4
Çanakkale	15.4	7.1	Denizli	0.0	12.1
Adana	28.6	24.2	Sakarya	10.0	2.4
Diyarbakir	7.1	15.1	Konya	10.0	10.3
Kütahya	0.0	3.8	Isparta	30.8	15.1
Kayseri	15.8	13.7	Edirne	10.0	21.6
Elazig	7.7	6.7	Bursa	0.0	21.4
Gaziantep	9.1	15.0	Van	14.3	9.1
Tokat	12.5	3.6	Zonguldak	8.3	10.5

Resource: Calculated personally from the data of university websites and personal departments and from relevant units through telephone

In fact, the improvement regarding the female academics can be seen not only at provinces universities but also all over the country. For instance, there were no female rectors at the 30 universities in Turkey in 1989 and there were only 26 female deans at 229 faculties (Table 4). The rates of women in higher education councils and several scientific institutions (Tübitak and academy of sciences) were rather low (Arat, 1996). But today, at our universities 6 female rectors, 25 vice rectors and 86 female deans exist. The head of Tubitak is also a woman.

DISCUSSION

Due to the fact that women have to undertake traditional domestic responsibilities, the planning and execution of house chores, the responsibility of the maintenance and education of the children and carry out their scientific studies at the same time, while their male colleagues can spend their whole time on their career, they have to suppress their desire for participating in the administration however much they yearn for it. According to a survey carried out at Bogaziçi and Istanbul universities in 1993, the number of women academics who wants to do executive career was not more than 5% (Arat, 1996).

Another finding about the female administrators in another study is that women are seen more at vice chairperson, chairperson etc levels than dean, vice rector, rector levels (Acar, 1996). On the other hand, although the possibility of being promoted to an executive position gets smaller when traced back from the professor degree to downwards regardless of gender, it is more difficult for young and lower rank women than men with the same qualifications to achieve an administrative position in an institution (Cotterill and Letherby, 2005). In other words, it is harder for them to achieve a decision-making position. The data of the interviews carried out with female academics in Turkey have showed that women at the former metropolitan universities believe that they have to sacrifice a lot to perform an administrative task and that they are better-suited for managerial positions than men they can be more flexible, hardworking and sensitive than men. The only factor forcing them to step back from administrative competition, as the interviewees have stated, is the increasingly depressing burden of their family responsibilities that increase day by day. According to most female academics, the

reason for them to keep off managerial positions at universities is not gender discrimination but the role-conflict they go through (Acar, 1996). As a result, that women don't participate in the academic administration in favourable environments as much as their numbers require and that participation of women in academic administration at different universities in various geographical locations shows a negative direction indicate that academic management concept is a considerably serious problem for women.

Again, in another study among female deans about the reason why the rate of female deans at Turkish universities is low, 32% of them state that women are not willing for these positions, while 32% say that their male colleagues don't want to work with a female dean (Senesen-Günlük, 1996). Naturally, there is no one who thinks the managerial skills of women are inferior, but in today's appointment system, due to the traditional prejudice of men at upper-level positions, they don't want to appoint women to senior positions and as the numbers of women in line is not so big, they don't stand out in the crowd of men.

According to many relevant studies (Griffin, 1993, as cited in Aytaç, 1999), the reasons preventing women from advancing to top ranks are those:

- Women either slow down or quit their career so as to bring up their children, which is a major barrier.
- Women are not prepared for the ultimate management due to their lack of engineering, business and leadership skills.
- Women, in general, are in search for a balance between their family life and their career, which keeps them from allocating enough time and energy for the top management.
- Owing to the low-pay at universities, many successful and genius women leave big institutions and set up their own business.
- Their work experience for top positions is low.
- Marriage and children keep women from spending their full time on their career.

It can be concluded that only by wiping out the traditional patriarchal mentality from every aspect of life, establishing the precautions to eliminate the disadvantages of women in their career life and grant equal opportunities to them can women get their rightful place in management positions.

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