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Do Experience and Education Reflect Earnings in the Turkish Tourism Sector: A Mincerian Approach

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to reveal to what extent factors of education and experience in the Turkish tourism sector have an effect on workers' wages in terms of gender. In the study, the individual data of 4677 employees were used based on the 2011 Household Labor Survey of Turkish Statistics Institute; of this sample, 3782 were male and 895 were female. The Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method was used in order to estimate the Mincerian wage equation. As a result of the analysis undertaken, it was established that the Mincerian wage model is valid in the Turkish tourism sector; however, the effect of education and experience on wages is very low. Although female employees are paid less than their male counterparts, earnings from education and experience are higher for female employees.

Keywords: Human Capital; Wages; Employment; Tourism.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world affording a strong economic impact and employing approximately 255 million people worldwide, a figure which represented 8.7% of global employment in 2011 [1]. Since tourism is such a powerful source of employment, it is necessary to examine how wage, a basic factor closely affecting the demand and supply aspect of labour, is determined in this sector. Indeed, whether education and experience have any effect on wages is closely related to employers and employees in the sector as well as the tourism education institutions, social security institutions, economists and human resources planners. The analysis of factors determining wages implies important outcomes and practices for each shareholder in the sector. Needless to say, conclusions reached from analyzing wages will mostly help employers and employees. Employers will act according to the effects of education, experience and gender on wages in their personnel selections and in setting wage levels On the other hand, employees can try to further improve themselves by observing the effect of factors such as education and experience on wages in order to establish more balanced, better wages. Additionally, based on these analyses, institutions providing training in the field of tourism will have additional information to help them implement the necessary regulations in their curriculum.

Studies on the factors determining wages have their foundations in the "Human Capital Theory", which was developed by Mincer (1958, 1974) [2,3]. According to this theory, the investment that one makes in education and experience based on practical learning on the job is the factor that differentiates personal income earned during working the years. Extending this theory, gender is another important factor which determines wages.

The study covers information about human capital theory and related research and discussion in the field of tourism. First, the tourism sector in Turkey is briefly mentioned and explanations about aspects of employment in the sector are given. In the last part of the study, by using data from the 2011 Household Labor Survey (HLS) of Turkish Statistics Institute, income functions of individuals working in the tourism sector in Turkey are estimated separately for each gender group and compared with Mincer's theoretical explanations; and an attempt is made to identify the basic determinants of wages in the tourism sector.

2. Literature review

While in the period of classical economics, labour factors were considered homogeneous and it was argued that wages were determined by quantitative aspects, in the period of neoclassical economics, labour began to be seen as a heterogeneous factor and the view that education, experience and gender factors affect labour efficiency and wages became more dominant. Attempts were made to explain, in particular, the factors that determine wages within the framework of human capital theory, the foundations of which were developed by Mincer in 1958[2]. According to human capital theory, people see a direct relationship between "earnings" and "human capital investments" that people make, and the amount of human capital a person has determines his/her ability to earn income.

The investment one makes in order to increase human capital directly affects one's efficiency at work and thus causes a differentiation in the wage they receives. According to Mincer [3], income differences result from

education, experience and gender factors. People are in fact increasing their potential personal income with the direct investments they make in education by tolerating indirect investments resulting from possible earnings that they had to relinquish when they were not earning a wage while studying [4]. Mincer [3] argues that 'experience' in this context means the learning process based on practice on the job. Job experience is represented by the individual's age [5]. Further, several studies posit that the wages employees earn differ according to their gender is put forth by several studies [6,7,8].

Wodhall [9] states four common findings of the studies that deal with the Mincerian theory. The first of these is that the curve showing the average income of all employees shifts upward with age (experience), no matter what the level of education; it reaches the highest point towards the middle of a person's professional life and then it begins to shift downward. The second is that the curve showing income increase for employees with a high level of education is steeper (that is, the rate of income increase is higher) and the initial wages of these people are generally higher. The third finding is that those who are relatively more educated attain the highest income level later than others do, but their income in retirement is higher. The last finding is that people's human capital investments concentrate on their youth and decreasingly continue. Apart from these, there are various studies showing that factors such as marital status, being a parent, geographical region, size of the company, parents' level of education and working part-time or full-time, also have an effect on wages [10,11,12,13].

Simultaneity, heterogeneity, intangibility and perishability, which are the four main aspects of the services sector, explicitly differentiate the tourism sector from the manufacturing sector [14,15,16]. Due to these aspects of the sector, service is continuous, production and consumption are simultaneous, and action and reaction between the employees and customers mutually emerge at the same time. This has resulted in the emergence of working conditions that are peculiar to the tourism sector, which in turn has led to the differentiation of factors determining wages in the sector (education, experience, gender etc.) compared to other sectors.

The need for human capital in the tourism sector is very high and the sector offers a great many, varying employment opportunities in terms of both size and type [17]. Large presence of unskilled labour, high levels of labour turnover, absenteeism, low salaries, the transferability of skills between hotel and catering establishments, lack of career opportunities, poor working conditions, long and inappropriate hours of work and the dominance of small enterprises in the sector are mentioned as the main aspects and problems of labour in the tourism sector [18,19,20]. The result of these problems is that the tourism sector has gained an adverse image among employees. This negative image results in potential employees generally entering the sector with a short-term employment expectation [21], resulting in a high level of labour turnover in the sector. In Wasmuth and Davis' 1983 study, which covers five departments of 20 hotels in Northern America and Europe and which lasted for three years, the labour turnover ratio was found to be approximately 60% [22], while in Scotland, labour turnover ratio in all sectors is approximately 23%. In the tourism sector, however, the ratio for this sector is 44% [23]. Foley [24] states this ratio is estimated to range between 60 % and 300% [25]. These indicators show that experience, one of the human capital factors in the tourism sector, is scarce.

A study conducted in Portugal, which was undertaken with 252 hotel administrators in the tourism sector by applying the Mincerian model, revealed that there was a positive relationship between wages and education, experience and professional positions. The earnings based on the education variable among the estimated models range between 7.4% and 10.4% for all sectors while the same ratio is higher in the tourism sector (between 12% and 25%) [11]. Although education results in high earnings , employers do not understand the significance of education enough and subsequently fail to pay enough attention to it; thus, uneducated people are hired in businesses operating in the tourism sector [26]. However, a finding of a study show that employers are justified on some points; in a study by Muambe and Wyk [27] conducted in 11 hotels in Cape Town, 91% of the workers stated that their job did not require any specific training. On the other hand, in a study by Jenkins[28], which was done with English and German students of tourism hospitality, it was found that while students' level of education increased, their willingness to enter the sector decreased gradually from 71% to 13% (2001). Similarly, studies revealed that approximately 50% of the students who graduated from tourism and hospitality preferred to have a career other than in the tourism sector [29,30]. Discussions on this issue generally are the result of the nonconformity between the institutions providing training in the tourism sector and the expectations of the sector. Employers in the tourism sector blame the tourism education institutions for offering an education/curriculum that is grounded far more in theory than in tourism practice [31].

Research conducted in England with employees working in finance departments of hotels showed that male administrators received a higher wage than their female counterparts. As the reasons for this, it was stated that female administrators tended not to work in positions that require a high level of expertise and quality and that male administrators dominated the top positions in hotels [32]. On the other hand, Riley and Szivas [33] pointed out that women do not intentionally take on a job that is low paid; rather, the economic system itself denotes low wages, and the authors posited that this may be considered as discrimination against women. Thus, in this regard, the tourism sector may contribute to this. A study conducted with women working in hotels in Spain showed that female employees spent less time working due to housework and child-rearing responsibilities and consequently they had to choose part-time or low paid jobs [34]. It may be a result of countries' social and cultural value judgments that women receive a lower wage and work in lower positions. Indeed, due to some countries' value judgments, jobs undertaken by women are less valued or respected than jobs done by men [20].

The fact that simple and easily attainable organizational skills, little tenure and the personal characteristics of people working in the tourism sector are more prominent makes it hard to see the possible outcomes and effects of human capital theory in the tourism sector [33]. Employers pay less to the workers in such a sector where tenure is low and, due to the fact that simple organizational skills can be obtained more quickly, employees can only attract a limited amount of return. Skills that are easily attainable in the tourism sector form a combined effect with the attractiveness of the work in the sector, which results in low wages and differences among wages in the same professional group [33]. In a study by Lee and Kang [20], it was shown that wage differences in the tourism sector in terms of level of education are less compared to the case in other sectors.

In addition to all of the above, the seasonal aspect of the tourism sector affects its employment structure in terms of disproportionally high levels of temporary employment, underemployment and unemployment [35], causing instability in the sectorial labour force. As a result, the opportunities for employees to gain sectorial skills and

abilities, and their willingness to gain such abilities, decrease and employers lose their motivation to find permanent staff and make some investments in their training.

3. Employment and wages in the Turkish tourism

In Turkey, international tourist arrivals and tourism receipts have been growing rapidly over recent decades. International tourist arrivals and receipts reached 36.1 million and US$23.0 billion respectively in 2011 [36]. Alongside the rapid pace of growth in the sector, the number of employees the tourism sector reached nearly two million in 2011 [37].

The average weekly working period of male and female employees in the Turkish tourism sector is 45 hours on average and nine hours daily [38]. However, the analysis of HLS questionnaires show that approximately 70% of employees work more than 60 hours per week. Similarly, in a study conducted in Izmir, Turkey, it was found that 37% of those employed in four star hotels and five star hotels worked more than 16 hours; 29% worked between 13 and 15 hours daily and more than half of the employees are paid the minimum wage [39]. Long working hours and low wages give rise to the fact that potential employees do not regard their jobs as career opportunities and only enter the sector temporarily; thus, the factor of experience does not have a strong enough effect in the sector. When monthly average wages are considered, wages in the tourism sector are 18.5% lower than wages in other sectors, and male employees working in the tourism sector receive a slightly higher wage than female employees [38].

Table 1 shows female and male employees' gross annual earnings for all sectors according to their educational status. The results presented in the table support the need for foresight about education, which is one of the human capital factors. The increases in both female and male employees' level of education result in significant increases in wages.

Table 1: Annual average gross earnings of employees worked in all sectors (Turkish Lira-TL)

Educational Status	General	Male	Female
Total	**19 694**	**19 683**	**19 728**
Primary school and lower	13 099	13 526	11 065
Primary school and middle school	13 043	13 505	10 949
High school	16 414	16 907	15 049
Vocational school	21 280	22 195	17 109
Higher education	35 383	37 878	31 437

Source: TurkStat, 2010 Earnings Structure Questionnaire Results

4. Data and econometrical methods

The 2011 HLS data collected by the Turkish Statistical Institution were used in the study. A total of 7949 people, 6434 of which were male and 1515 of which were female, participated in the survey. Participants were

classified into the following professional groups: “accommodation”, “travel agency, tour operator reservation service and related activities” and “food and beverage service activities” according to the European Union’s Economical Activities Classification NACE Rev.2 [42]; People who did not express their income status and those who stated their monthly income as less than 500 TL were excluded from the survey, and 4677 participants were assessed in total, 3782 of which were male and 895 of which were female. The SPSS 16.0 program was used to analyse data. The education groups, divided into six in the survey, were classified again in the study and four groups were obtained (not graduated, primary school, high school and higher education). Participants were asked to state the duration of working time at their current job but no data were presented regarding duration of any previous employment. For this reason, the age variable was used to represent experience; this variable was discussed in the analysis, but the term ‘experience’ was used in the study in order to measure the effect of experience on wages by means of the age variable.

In the Mincer-type basic human capital model, income function is defined as concave. Since the age variable is stated in a quadratic way, as age increases, income increases as well; however, after a certain age, labour does not exercise any superiority over other factors in terms of experience, and in the later ages, labour wage decreases. The model is stated as follows:

$$\ln w_i = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 E_i + \beta_2 Age_i + \beta_3 Age_i^2 + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

While forming the equation, a model is developed, which represents individuals’ income at a certain “t” time, where the “i” index shows the individual, to represent the income earned by a single individual for his/her entire working life but not a model changing in time (t). In the model:

$\ln w_i$: annual income earned by individual “i”,

E_i : education of individual “i”,

Age_i : age of individual “i”.

In order to examine the effect of differences in levels of education on wages, model 2 below is estimated alternatively, where dummy variables formed according to each level of education were included in the model. Dummy variables were formed as not graduates (E_1), primary school graduates (E_2), high school graduates (E_3) and higher education graduates (E_4).

$$\ln w_i = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 E_{2i} + \beta_2 E_{3i} + \beta_3 E_{4i} + \beta_4 Age_i + \beta_5 Age_i^2 + \varepsilon_i \quad (2)$$

Descriptive statistics regarding the data used in the study are presented in Table 2. As seen in the table, the average earning of males is greater than that of females. On the other hand, the level of education of women working in the sector is higher than their male counterparts. Age averages of those working in the sector according to gender groups show similarities

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

Total	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	4677	15	80	33.5	10.3
Education		0	14	7.71	3.3
Experience		0	39	3.76	5.2
Annual Income		6000	84000	10520.9	5308.1
Male					
Age	3782	15	80	33.2	10.3
Education		0	14	7.7	3.2
Experience		0	41	3.9	5.4
Annual Income		6000	84000	10747.6	5411.1
Female					
Age	895	15	63	34.6	10.2
Education		0	14	8.34	3.95
Experience		0	33	2.92	3.92
Annual Income		6000	72000	9562.8	4733.2

4.1. Empirical results

The findings in Table 3 show that the general wage model applied for the tourism sector generates parallel results with the "basic human capital" model. When the results of Model 1 and Model 2 are examined, findings in all human capital factors that are assumed to affect labour efficiency and thus wages were as predicted. The more experienced and educated those working in the tourism sector are, the more they earn. As stated by Mincer [3], the relationship between age and wages is quadratic and wage starts to decrease in later age.

Results obtained show that investment in human capital is more in female labour. The earnings coefficient of education for male labor is α_1=0,010 while it is α_1=0,018 for female labour. The returns of age in models estimated for the tourism sector are determined as 1.9 % in total: 2.0 % for male and 1.4 % for female.

When the results of Model 2, where education dummies were used, are examined, it is seen that the coefficient representing primary school is negative in general; for male employee models it is positive, but it is statistically insignificant for female employee models. However, in dummy variable coefficients where the level of education increases, the earnings based on education level also increase and reach the highest level of earnings at the higher education level. In order to find the percentage effect of dummy variable coefficients obtained on wages, the ($100e^{coefficient}$-1) formula was used. The E_1 dummy representing the ones that did not graduate was not included in the comparison.

Table 3: Estimates of econometric models (dependent variable log annual wage)

(Model 1): $\ln w_i = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 E_i + \beta_2 Age_i + \beta_3 Age_i^2 + \varepsilon_i$

	Total	Male	Female
Constant	3.542*	3.537*	3.524*
	(161.602)	(145.998)	(74.634)
Education (E)	0.011*	0.010*	0.018*
	(17.106)	(13.057)	(14.704)
Age(Age)	0.019*	0.020*	0.014*
	(15.442)	(14.991)	(5.907)
Age Square (Age^2)	-0.000225*	-0.000240*	-0.000144*
	(-13.120)	(-12.719)	(-3.840)
N	4676	3781	894
R^2	0.111	0.111	0.214
F	194.171	157.030	80.792

(Model 2): $\ln w_i = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 E_{2i} + \beta_2 E_{3i} + \beta_3 E_{4i} + \beta_4 Age_i + \beta_5 Age_i^2 + \varepsilon_i$

	Total	Male	Female
Constant	3.599*	3.597*	3.604*
	(158.067)	(143.105)	(75.010)
E2	0.031*	0.020	0.062*
	(5.342)	(3.177)	(4.904)
E3	0.048*	0.043*	0.071*
	(8.539)	(6.903)	(6.498)
E4	0.160*	0.154*	0.217*
	(19.966)	(15.240)	(17.755)
Age (Exp)	0.019*	0.020*	0.014*
	(14.994)	(14.258)	(5.306)
Age Square (Age^2)	-0.000226*	-0.000236*	-0.000157*
	(-13.014)	(-12.347)	(-4.283)
N	4676	3781	894
R^2	0.132	0.128	0.282
F	141.560	111.001	69.692

t-Statistics in parentheses are below the parameters

* Significant at 1% level

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that higher education contributes more to level of wage; however, the wage changes among different levels of education remain at a low level. For instance, in model 1, the contribution of high school education to wages according to the general results is [(103.90-102.13)/102.13)*100] compared to middle school education. It is also seen that high school education accounts for only a 1.7% wage increase. When the contribution of a higher education graduate to wages is examined in the sector, it is 11.8% for male

employees, and 15.8% for female employees. Educational variances before higher education do not create a significant differentiation or increase in wages; however, it appears that higher education causes an evident increase in wages emerging in the sector.

Table 4: The effect of level of education on income (%)

Education status	General	Male	Female
Middle school	102.13	101.01	105.37
High school	103.90	103.38	106.33
Higher education	116.29	115.59	123.15

4.2. Discussion and Conclusion

Findings obtained when labour wage models estimated for the Turkish tourism sector are analysed according to gender show that the investments females make in education attract higher earnings than those of male employees. Some research findings support this. For instance, in a study by Dayıoğlu and Kasnakoğlu [40], which covers all sectors in Turkey, the annual earnings based on education level for females were found to be 12.4% while they were found to be 9.98% for males. In another study by Sarı [41] within the scope of the Turkish economy in general, the earnings based on education level were found to be 10% for males and 12% for females in different models. The study by Yamak and Topbaş [13] posited that regardless of a sectorial differentiation, the earnings of education on wages in estimated wage equations are 13.3% in males and 24.3% in females. In studies conducted in other countries, different results can be obtained in favour of either men or women. In a study in Norway that covers the tourism sector, the earnings of education were found to be higher for females. In the same study, it was found that having a child causes a decrease in females' wages while causing an increase in males' wages [12]. Similarly, married men earn 12% more than single men while married women earn 7% more than single women. Barros and Santos [11] found the gender variable statistically significant in their study. That is, the contribution of experience and education factors may differ according to gender groups. In another study covering Spain's tourism sector, the earnings of education were found to be higher in favour of males [10].

When the earnings of education in the tourism sector are compared to other sectors of the economy, results differ per country as low or high. In a study by Barros and Santos [11], which covers Portugal, the return of education ranged between 7.4% and 10.4% for all sectors while the same ratio in the tourism sector was higher (between 12% and 25%). A study conducted in Spain on the return of education for the tourism sector was found to be 3.3 %, while it was found to be 6.5 % for other sectors [10]. In the present study, the return of education in the tourism sector remains at a very low level, at 1.1 %. Another important issue that should be considered here is that the return of education in tourism seems very low when compared to other sectors while it is also very low when compared to the studies in other countries. This can be interpreted as that education in this sector is not considered as important as it is in other sectors, and thus does not generate the desired returns.

While experience also has a positive effect on wages as expected, this effect is around 1.9% both in the general total and between males and females, and this is extremely low compared to the findings of other studies conducted countrywide. Regardless of sectors, in studies on the case in Turkey as a whole, Dayıoğlu and Kasnakoğlu [40], Sarı [41] and Yamak and Topbaş [13] found the contribution of experience to the wages to be around 5%, 9% and 10 % respectively in their studies, in which they each formed different models.

The results of analyses show that Mincerian wage models are valid in econometrical terms in the Turkish tourism sector. However, findings from studies conducted both in other countries and the findings of the studies undertaken regardless of the sectors in Turkey are considered, and it is clearly seen that education and experience, which are the two important wage components, do not have the required weight in earnings in the Turkish tourism sector. As mentioned in the study, labour turnover is high in the sector, and as a result of this, the length of experience of the employees working in the sector is limited . That there are no significant differences among employees in terms of years of working can explain the fact that experience does not have the necessary weight on wages. However, it is a huge problem that the importance of education in the sector is low.

Starting from these findings, it is seen that Mincerian wage equations form valid results within the theoretical scope claimed, but compared to the findings of studies covering the economy in general, both education and experience in the tourism sector have a low level of contribution to wages.

Results obtained in the study point out the need to take precautions by reducing labor turnover ratios in the Turkish tourism sector, improving education quality and informing employers about education. The study covers the whole of Turkey, regardless of regional distinction. That there are no questions about employees' children in the survey questions and the fact that we did not ask whether the businesses are certified by the Ministry of Tourism hindered a more detailed analysis. If it were the case that the Turkish Statistical Institution was to cover such questions in future HLA surveys, such studies may be conducted regionally and locally, and the effect of having a child on wages may be considered, giving more clarity and depth to the issue.

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