



Representation of Women in Sports Management and Sports Employment in Turkey

“Türkiye’de Spor Yönetiminde ve Spor İstihdamında Kadının Temsiliyeti”

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ABSTRACT

Aim: While gender equality has made progress globally, major obstacles remain, particularly in developing countries. The aim of this study is to explore the extent to which women are included in decision-making processes in sports-related organizations and to examine their employment rates in sports as sports managers, board member, coaches and referees.

Material and Method: The study, which focuses on the representation of women in various roles in the business world, is based on Turkish sports statistics. The Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Turkish National Olympic Committee, the Turkish National Paralympic Committee and the 2022 data on women's representation on the boards of directors of some Federations, the number of coaches, provincial representatives, referees and observers were examined in this study. In addition, the number of women working officially in some Federations and the positions they hold were also included in our research. In line with the relevant literature, information on women's employment and women's representation in sports from Turkey and the world is also included in this study.

Results: According to the findings obtained in the study, the level of women's participation in decision-making mechanisms in Turkey remained below the critical limit of 30%. While it was observed that no women were included in the boards of directors in the Athletics Federation, it was understood that there was 14% female representation in basketball, 19% in volleyball, 12% in handball and 7% in football. It was observed that the female representation in the boards of directors and sub-boards of the Turkish National Olympic Committee was 26%; and this rate was 21% in the Turkish National Paralympic Committee. Another result obtained from this study was that there were no women in the upper and middle management positions of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. In summary, according to the findings obtained from this study, it was concluded that the number of women working in sports-related jobs (federation employees, coaches, referees, etc.) in Turkey is much lower than men.

Conclusions: According to the findings of the study, there are still significant gender gaps in the Turkish sports sector, especially when it comes to senior positions. Targeted measures need to be taken to eliminate this imbalance and provide equal opportunities for women in sports. The sports industry can contribute more to social and economic growth if there are more women in leadership roles and active participation. Promoting gender equality in sports is essential for the sector to reach its full potential and for the progress of society as a whole.

Keywords: Gender, Leadership, Management. Sports.

ÖZET

Amaç: Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği küresel çapta ilerleme kaydetmiş olsa da, özellikle gelişmekte olan ülkelerde büyük engeller varlığını sürdürmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, kadınların spor ile ilgili kuruluşlarda karar verme süreçlerine ne kadar dahil edildiğini ortaya koymak ve spor yöneticisi, yönetim kurulu üyesi, antrenör ve hakem olarak sporda istihdam oranlarını incelemektir.

Materyal ve Metod: Kadınların iş dünyasındaki çeşitli rollerde temsiline odaklanan çalışma, Türk spor istatistiklerine dayanmaktadır. Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, Türkiye Milli Olimpiyat Komitesi, Türkiye Milli Paralimpik Komitesi ve bazı Federasyonlarda yönetim kurullarında kadın temsiliyeti, antrenör, il temsilcisi, hakem ve gözlemci sayılarındaki 2022 yılı verileri bu çalışmada incelenmiştir. Buna ek olarak bazı Federasyonlarda resmi olarak çalışan kadınların sayısı ve çalıştığı pozisyona da araştırmamızda yer verilmiştir. İlgili literatür doğrultusunda Türkiye’den ve dünyadan kadın istihdamı ve kadınların spor da temsiliyetine dair bilgiler de ayrıca bu çalışmada yer almaktadır.

Bulgular: Araştırmada elde edilen bulgulara göre kadınların Türkiye’de karar alma mekanizmalarına katılım düzeyi kritik sınır olarak belirlenen %30’un altında kalmıştır. Atletizm Federasyonunda yönetim kurullarında hiç kadına yer verilmediği görülürken, basketbolda %14, Voleybolda %19, hentbolda %12, futbolda %7 oranında yönetim kurullarında kadın temsiliyeti olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Türkiye Milli Olimpiyat Komitesi’nde yönetim kurulu ve alt kurullarda kadın temsiliyetinin %26; Türkiye Milli Paralimpik Komitesi’nde ise bu oranın %21 olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı’nın üst ve orta yönetim kadrolarında kadına yer verilmediği ayrıca bu çalışmadan elde edilen bir diğer sonuçtur. Özetle bu çalışmadan elde edilen bulgulara göre Türkiye’de spor ile ilgili işlerde (federasyon çalışanı, antrenör, hakem,...vb.) kadın çalışan sayısının erkeklerden çok düşük olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

Sonuç: Çalışmanın bulgularına göre, Türk spor sektöründe, özellikle üst düzey pozisyonlar söz konusu olduğunda, cinsiyetler arasında hâlâ kayda değer farklılıklar bulunmaktadır. Bu dengesizliği ortadan kaldırmak ve sporda kadınlara eşit şanslar sağlamak için hedefe yönelik önlemler alınması gerekmektedir. Liderlik rollerinde ve aktif katılımı daha fazla kadın olması halinde spor endüstrisi sosyal ve ekonomik büyümeye daha fazla katkıda bulunabilir. Sporda toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğinin teşvik edilmesi, sektörün tam potansiyeline ulaşması ve toplumun genel olarak ilerlemesi için elzemdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Liderlik, Spor, Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Yönetim.

INTRODUCTION

Women participate in social and economic life on the one hand, while males do the same on the other, as women make up around half of the world's population. In contrast to men, women participate in social and economic life at a very low rate. Even if women's status is comparatively better in industrialised nations, indeed, women are still lagging behind men in practically every country in the globe (Kocacık & Gökkaya, 2005).

The market that provides customers with sports, fitness, leisure, and recreation, as well as associated goods, services, people, locations, and concepts, is known as the sports industry. People who work in the sports sector have become more diverse as a result of the industry's variety. With its social, economic, and political facets, sport is now acknowledged as a vocation. It is played either full-time or as a group, and it has a high employment rate. Because it involves a variety of activities and collaborates with high-employment organisations like media outlets, the sports industry's labour supply is growing every day. It is acknowledged that one of the most crucial markers of an industry's growth is this rise in employment rates.

The employment rate rises, particularly during large international athletic events like the Olympics, European Championships, and World Championships. Given its added value in job creation, it is now feasible to conclude that the sports sector benefits the whole economy. In the context of national development, it is critical to disclose the overall composition and state of labour markets. Labour market analysis is crucial for analysing a nation's macroeconomic structure since it is closely related to employment and unemployment, two important measures of economic health. As a result of the exams, challenging policies for the positive development of labour markets must be developed to assure social, economic, and welfare development (Ersöz, 2021; Ersoz & Ince-Yenilmez, 2021).

Similar to other countries, discriminatory attitudes towards women are regarded as a significant problem in Turkish and global organisations today, and research is being done to stop sexist attitudes, which pose a significant barrier for women. According to Kara and Yıldiran (2011), sexist roles that society assigns to women lead to gender-based discrimination, such as excluding them from certain jobs that are seen to be masculine and limiting their access to work environments. It might be argued that when men and women equally take advantage of the opportunities offered by sports organisations, gender equality will be attained. Analysing the research on the topic, however, reveals that women in Turkey face discrimination in sporting settings. Women are not evenly represented in the sports industry when we examine the number of women in sports management mechanisms to assess the female labour force (Koca, 2011).

Sports are governed by the government in Turkey through many organisations, including sports federations and the General Directorate of Youth and Sports (GSGM), which is part of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Even though women's engagement in sports in Turkey is still behind that of men, there has been a noticeable improvement in recent years. It has been noted that attitudes towards women's involvement in sports and physical activity have begun to shift. In the previously male-dominated realm of athletics, women have not only gained visibility but have started to compete against men. In Turkey, women may now be seen participating in a variety of sports that were formerly exclusive to men or that we were not accustomed to seeing. The understanding of this issue is growing daily as more research on gender and sports is conducted (Koca, 2006; 2021).

Women's Participation in the Olympic Games as Athletes, Coaches, and Leaders

The number of female athletes competing in the Olympics has grown since the London Olympics in 2012. According to data gathered from the International Olympic Committee's website, 41% of women competed in the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang. It was intended to represent women with 48.8%, the greatest female participation rate in history, at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, which were originally scheduled to take place in Tokyo but were postponed because of the Covid-19 outbreak. The fact that 49.7 percent of women competed in the 2018 Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires gave us hope for the future (IOC, 2024). There are fewer female coaches than male coaches when the number of female coaches accredited to coach in the Olympic Games is examined. The percentage of women in the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) administrative structure rose from 21.4% in 2017 to 30.8% in 2018, according to an analysis of the organization's membership.

The percentage of women on IOC commissions rose to 45.5% in 2019, marking a record-breaking growth of 124% since 2013. Without a doubt, this increase is greatly influenced by the IOC's initiatives and fines to end gender discrimination. In 2019, there were 36 more female members in 26 IOC commissions than there were in 2017. As of January 1, 2019, women make up 34.3% of IOC members, while men make up 30.8% (IOC, 2024).

Thirteen women served as NOC presidents and thirty-three women served as Secretary Generals of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) in 2018. The Turkish National Olympic Committee's (TMOK) secretary general is a woman. The proportion of women on the IOC's executive boards increased from 27 percent in 2015 to about 30 percent. Less than 20% of the 62-member IOC's executive boards are made up of women, and 10 nations still do not have any executive board members.

When the situation in International Federations is examined, it is discovered that in 2018, 18 women held the position of general secretary and 4 women presided over the International Federations. Of the International Federations, 13 had no women on their executive boards in 2015, while 23 had over 20% of women (IOC, 2024).

Turkey's Female Athletes, Coaches, and Leaders Representation

Gender-based discrimination may include things like treating women worse than males simply because of their gender, preventing them from entering the workforce under roles designated for women or excluding them from certain positions. Studies are conducted to prevent the sexist approach that produces an unfair environment for women and impacts their career, life, and psychological status because it is a recognised problem in today's businesses (Kara & Yıldıran, 2011).

According to Koca (2006), the rate of women doing sports in Turkey is increasing every year, but there is not much change in the rate of female athletes since there is a similar rate of quitting sports. According to Amman (2006), economic, social and cultural differences affect women's participation in sports. Fasting and Prister (1999) investigated the factors affecting women's participation in sports in Turkey and as a result of this research, they stated that factors such as social status and place of residence, family relations, the importance of school success, the perception of sport as a male-specific activity, the weight of working conditions, the importance of family, the fact that women do not see sport as an entertainment, body and beauty perception and veiling negatively affect women's participation in sport. In addition, the assumption that religious beliefs have a negative impact on sports participation is confirmed by the fact that women's participation in sports and representation in sports institutions is almost non-existent (Hanson & Kraus, 1999; Callison & Lowen, 2022).

An analysis of the number of licensed athletes in Turkey reveals that, despite the country's densely populated youth, the number of athletes is not equal for male and female athletes. But, like in practically every industry in the globe and our nation, the proportion of women competing and granting athlete licenses is low (Sabo et al., 1989; Stevenson & Wolfers, 2012; Ersöz & Arun, 2020).

Table 1. Turkey's Athlete Population by Year and as a Percentage of the Total Population.

Number of Licensed Athletes by Years and Gender			The Ratio of Licensed Athletes to the Population		Population of Turkey by Years		
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
2022	2.238.587	4.394.331	5%	11%	43.331.446	60.457.107	103.788.553

Table 1 displays the number of athlete licenses issued in 2007, 2010, 2014, and 2018, together with the proportion of the population in each of those years. While the percentage of women with athlete licenses was 1% in 2007 and 4% in 2018, the corresponding percentage for males was 3% in 2007 and 8% in 2018. According to the census, the number of women and men is nearly equal, although the number of licenses that males hold has remained higher over time (Ersöz & Arun, 2020).

According to the gender disparity in sports branch selection, there are more female athletes in dance sports (59.64%), gymnastics (62.39%), volleyball (61.39%), and folk dances (59.37%) than male athletes. This is predicated on 2017 data. The sports with the lowest proportion of female athletes include triathlon (1,439), rowing (1,474), motorbike (1,582), physically disabled sports (1,060), and visually impaired sports (1,214) (Ersöz & Alagöz, 2019; Kirişci, 2021).

In our country, coaching is one of the professions that is thought to be solely for men. According to data on coach numbers by sport and gender, 82% of coaches in Turkey are men and 18% are women. According to the distribution of female coaches in these sports, the most popular sports are swimming (12.8%), basketball (11%), volleyball (10.2%), and step aerobics (9.8%). Step-aerobics (79.5%), softball (66.7%), fencing (58.7%), and figure skating (55.2%) are among the sports with a higher proportion of female coaches than male coaches (Koca, 2011).

To pursue jobs in sports, young people take courses in physical education teaching, sports administration, coaching education, and recreation at institutions such as the Faculty of Sports Sciences and the School of Physical Education and Sports. Likewise, when we look at the gender-specific characteristics of the students enrolled, we see that there are more male students in these departments. The reason for this problem is that women are less likely than men to seek jobs in sports, and when students are admitted to sports-related departments based on tests, women's quotas are usually kept lower than men's. Table 2 shows the breakdown of genders among Turkish students participating in sports-related programs in 2018.

Table 2. Gender Differences of Students Studying in Sports-Related Departments in Turkey (Ersöz and Alagöz, 2019)

Departments Related to Sport	Female	%	Male	%
Physical Education and Sports Teaching	1.393	40	2.107	60
Coaching Education	1.342	37	2.271	63
Sport Management	973	39	1.522	61
Recreation	424	41	617	59

Yaprak and Amman (2009) conducted a study on students in sports sciences departments and found that men thought "female coaches have to be masculine to find a job" at a higher level than women. The idea that sports are exclusive to men is still widely held in Turkey, based on this assumption. A study conducted by Şallı et al. (2016) involved 80 volleyball players and coaches, with 51% of them being female and 48% being male. It was discovered that when 84% of respondents considered professions like coach, lawyer, and doctor, they pictured men. According to another study looking at the demographics of basketball referees, in 2006, there were 90 female referees and 371 male officials (Ekmekçi & Ekmekçi, 2010).

Women and men gain equal access to chances in sports organisations, which is the cornerstone of gender equality in athletic settings. The situation of women in sports management has been the subject of very little research in Turkey. In a study looking at how GSGM employees felt about female managers, Arslan et al. (2009) discovered that the male employees of GSGM did not encourage women's career advancement and did not have a favourable attitude towards female managers. "Insufficient support for women" and "women having family responsibilities" were the explanations for why women do not participate in the sport's decision-making process. Ayca (2004) attributed the low number of women in managerial roles in Turkey to both personal and environmental issues, stating that women are given very limited place in these positions. According to her, among the environmental factors are the challenges women face in gaining access to social and communication networks in male-dominated organisations, the significance of the support they can receive from their families to advance to management positions, and the effectiveness of self-confidence, achievement motivation, determination, and career orientation as individual factors.

Equal representation of men and women in sports decision-making processes is one piece of information that can show whether or not men and women gain the same advantages from participation in sports. In this regard, exposing the women who are capable of taking on leadership roles and participating in decision-making processes might help to clarify the sexist practices in the sports industry (Koca, 2021; Eratlı et al., 2024). The Ministry of Youth and Sports' General Directorate of Youth and Sports (GSGM) and Sports Federations are two of Turkey's sports decision-making bodies. Under the general direction of the General Directorate of Youth and Sports, sports in our nation are administered centrally by the Provincial Directorates in the provinces. Furthermore, there are federations in sixty-three different sports. The Turkish National Olympic Committee (TMOK) is another group that has a role in how sports are run in Turkey. It is a self-governing, non-profit organisation run exclusively by volunteers for the good of society. This study revealed the number of women in Turkey's sports organisations, and Koca (2021) conducted the most thorough analysis disclosing the representation of women in the aforementioned sports organisations with numerical data. When examining the gender distribution of the staff at GSGM's Ankara headquarters and the provincial organisations spread across 81 Turkish provinces, we find that 87.8% of personnel are men and 12.2% are women. Female employees make up 31.6% of the central organisation and 9.0% of the provincial organisations. A significantly greater proportion of workers are men (Koca, 2021).

In GSGM management levels, there are currently no females in senior management roles (general manager and deputy general manager) as of 2011. Out of the 18 branch managers in GSGM's core organisation, just one is female. In 81 provinces outside of the central organisation, all GSGM provincial organisations have male provincial directors. When all are taken into account, women only make up 1% of the GSGM management posts (Koca, 2021; Erathl et al., 2024). Women hold high management positions in sports federations, accounting for 3.3% of federation presidents and 4% of federation vice presidents. Women make up 11.7% of people who perform the duties of the general secretary, a mid-level management post, while men make up 88.3%. Women make up 5.4% of the board's overall membership. Because of this, women hold 5.5% of the top and intermediate-level management roles in sports federations.

There are 52 workers at TMOK, a nonprofit organisation that influences how sports are run in Turkey; 92.3% of them are men, and 7.7% are women. Every senior manager at TMOK is male, and women occupy 11.8% of mid-level managerial roles at TMOK. Because of this, when we examine the gender distribution of the total number of employees across all three businesses, we find that women make up 14% of the workforce while men make up 86%. In all three businesses, there are eight (3.7%) women in senior management roles and forty-eight (5.5%) in middle management roles. Men occupy 94.9% of all management posts in the three firms, whereas women occupy 5.1% of them (Koca, 2021).

In addition to adding statistical data about women working in sports clubs, which have a high potential for spectators in our nation, the goal of this research is to highlight the current supply in the field of sports sciences and to update studies that show the female labour force in positions such as students, physical education teachers, coaches, referees, athletes, and managers in the field of sports sciences. Data about women's employment provides policymakers with insight. Thus, it's critical to highlight the current state of affairs while developing policies that encourage women to pursue careers in sports. Determining which sports sciences departments are planned to be opened in the future, particularly in higher education, will also be aided by the statistical analysis and archiving of the current number of employees in the public sector who manage sports as well as the current supply potential of graduates in the field.

This study aims to ascertain the number of women in the decision-making process on the boards of Sports Federations, the Turkish National Olympic Committee, and the Turkish National Paralympic Committee in Turkey. It also aims to disclose the number of women employed as top, middle, and lower-level managers in the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the percentage of women and men in sports-related institutions and professions, and the representation of women in management. Finally, it will assess gender differences in the labour supply in sports sciences departments. Within the scope of the research, the following research problems are tried to be understood:

1. How many women have decision-making roles in organisations relating to sports (such as GSGM, TMOK, and Sports Federations)?
2. What roles do female employees hold within sports federations?

3. How many coaches and referees are there in Turkey, and how does gender distribute them?

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Research Methodology

This study is based on qualitative research approaches to reveal the number of women working in sports-related institutions in Turkey and the positions they work in. Qualitative research offers researchers the opportunity to examine a phenomenon, event, people, institution, or document in depth and holistically (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Document analysis, which is one of the qualitative research methods, allows the analysis of information and content in written (books, magazines, letters) and visual media (photographs, videos, websites) related to the problem situation addressed within the scope of the purpose of the research (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Accordingly, the websites of the relevant institutions and the written information requested from the institution were analysed. The number of women participating in decision-making mechanisms and officially working in the sports sector in state institutions in Turkey and their positions were revealed.

Research Group

The study included purposive sampling techniques with the criterion sampling approach. Situations deemed to contain rich information can be thoroughly examined through the use of purposeful sampling (Erkan & Uslu, 2019). Criteria deemed significant for selection are identified in this sampling. According to Tavşancıl and Aslan (2001), the sample chosen based on these criteria is thought to be representative of the research population in all respects. Sports Federations, the Turkish National Olympic Committee (TMOK), the Turkish National Paralympic Committee (TMPK) and the General Directorate of Youth and Sports (GSGM) were all included in the study's scope under its topic.

Data Information

Information on the number of women and men employed by institutions as staff, referees, coaches, physical education teachers, and other positions will be gathered by scanning their websites and corresponding with the General Directorate of Youth and Sports (GSGM), National Olympic Committee of Turkey (TMOK), Turkish National Paralympic Committee (TMPK) and Sports Federations, which have employment power in sports in the public sector. Research data were collected between November 2022 and May 2023.

RESULTS

The study's conclusions are reported in this section. The findings section provides information on the gender distribution of the executive boards of the National Olympic Committee of Turkey, the Basketball, Volleyball, Football, Handball, and Athletics Federations, the National Olympic Committee of Turkey's executive and other boards, the National Paralympic Committee of Turkey's boards, the Football Federation's referees, the Ministry of Youth and Sports (GSB) staff, and those with coaching certificates affiliated with

the GSB. Furthermore, the findings section also lists the number of women employed by certain Federations as well as the roles they have.

Table 3. *The Gender Distribution of the Turkish Basketball Federation (Basketball Federation, <https://www.tbf.org.tr/>, Access on: 15.03.2023)*

Turkish Basketball Federation	Male	Female
President	1	0
Deputy Chairman	1	0
Vice President	3	0
Member	8	2
Substitute Member	12	2
Total	25	4

The Basketball Federation's board of directors consisted of four women (14%) and twenty-five males (86%). It has been observed that women in the board of directors take part in the board of directors as members and substitute members. It was observed that 3 out of 81 provincial basketball representatives in Turkey (4%) were women.

Table 4. *The Gender Distribution of the Turkish Football Federation (Football Federation, <https://www.tff.org/default.aspx?pageID=328>, Access on: 15.03.2023)*

Turkish Football Federation	Male	Female
President	1	0
Deputy Chairman	5	1
Executive Committee Member	2	0
Financial Affairs Officer	1	0
National Teams Officer	1	0
Strategic and Corporate Communications Officer	0	1
Football Tourism Development Officer	1	0
1st League Clubs Officer	1	0
2nd and 3rd League Clubs Responsible	1	0
Alternate Members	12	0
Total	25	2

Analysis of the Football Federation revealed that the management team consisted of two women (7%) and twenty-five males (93%). The Football Federation has two female employees: the Strategic and Corporate Communication Officer and the Vice President.

Table 5. *The Gender Distribution of the Turkish Volleyball Federation (Volleyball Federation, <https://tvf.org.tr/>, Access on: 15.03.2023)*

Turkish Volleyball Federation	Male	Female
President	1	0
Deputy Chairman	1	0
Vice President in charge of Leagues	1	0
Vice President	1	0
Board Member Responsible for National Teams	0	1
Board Member Responsible for Health Affairs	0	1
Board Member Responsible for Press	1	0
Board Member Responsible for Organisation and Marketing Board	1	0
Executive and Board Member	1	0
Board Member	6	1
Total	13	3

There are not many women in the administrative team of the Volleyball Federation, although there are many female athletes. Three women (19%) and thirteen men (81%) made up the Volleyball Federation's administration team. Women on the Board of Directors serve as Board Member Responsible for National Teams, Board Member Responsible for Health Affairs and Board Member.

Table 6. *The Gender Distribution of the Turkish Athletics Federation (Athletics Federation, <https://www.taf.org.tr/>, Access on: 15.03.2023)*

Turkish Athletics Federation	Male	Female
President	1	0
Deputy Chairman	2	0
Vice President	2	0
Board Member	10	0
Total	15	0

The board of directors of the Turkish Athletics Federation consists entirely of male individuals; there are no women serving on the board of directors of this federation.

Table 7. *The Gender Distribution of the Turkish Handball Federation (Handball Federation, <https://www.thf.org.tr/>, Access on: 15.03.2023)*

Turkish Handball Federation	Male	Female
President	1	0
Deputy Chairman	2	1
Vice President	2	0
Member	8	1
THF General Coordinator	1	0
Total	14	2

88% of the board of directors of the Turkish Handball Federation are men and 12% are women, and women in the board of directors serve as Vice President and Board Member.

Table 8. *Number of Female Employees in Ministry of Youth and Sports-Affiliated Federations*

Federations	Number of Women Worker
Shooting and Hunting Federation	11
Badminton Federation	6
Physically Disabled Sports Federation	13
Bocce Bowling and Darts Federation	3
Boxing Federation	5
E-Sports Federation	1
Fencing Federation	5
Federation of Traditional Sports Branches	6
Federation of Developing Sports Branches	2
Sports for All Federation	6
Judo Federation	13
Canoe Federation	5
Skateboard Federation	1
Rowing Federation	4
Orienteering Federation	2
Special Athletes Sports Federation	6
Rugby Federation	7
Chess Federation	10
Taekwondo Federation	18
Tennis Federation	12

Triathlon Federation	6
Kick Boxing Federation	1
University Sports Federation	11
Sailing Federation	10
Basketball Federation	2
Volleyball Federation	2
Gymnastics Federation	3

Within the scope of the research we conducted within the scope of the project, we wrote to the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Federations and requested statistical information on female employees. Some Federations responded to our letter and provided the above information. The information provided did not provide detailed information on the duties of female employees. In line with this information, it can be said that the highest number of female employees is in Taekwondo Federation, followed by Judo, Physical Disabilities and Tennis Federation.

Table 9. Distribution of positions held by women working in federations

Federations	Deputy President	Administrator	Coach	Cleaning Personnel	General Secretary	Accounting Personnel	Office Personnel	Management Assistant	Psychologist	Physiotherapist	Expert	Translator	Masseuse	Foreign Relations Officer	IT Officer	Team Manager	Total
Shooting and Hunting Federation		1	5				5										11
Badminton Federation				1	1	1	2	1									6
Federation of Physically Disabled Persons				1	1	2	1	6	1	1							13
Bocce Bowling Federation		1	1		1	1	1				1						6
Fencing Federation				1		1	1	2									5
Federation of Traditional Sports Branches						1	1	2	1								5
Federation of Developing Sports Branches							1				1						2
Sports for All Federation					1	1	3				1						6
Judo Federation			1		1	2	3			1	1	1	2	1			13
Canoe Federation			1	1				1			1	1					5
Skateboard Federation							1										1
Rowing Federation															2	2	4
Orienteering Federation							1									1	2
Chess Federation	1			2		2	2	1			1					1	10
Taekwondo Federation			4	2	1		1	8						2			18
Tennis Federation							2	9			1						12
Triathlon Federation						1	1	2							1	1	6
Kick Boxing Federation					1												1
University Sports Federation		3			1		5								2		11
Sailing Federation				1		1	2										4

Boxing Federation	1	1	2	4													
E-sports Federation	1			1													
Federation of Special Athletes	1	1	1	1	5												
Rugby Federation	1		1	1	2	5											
Total	1	1	12	11	14	16	35	37	2	2	7	2	2	3	5	5	156

There are a total of 58 sports federations in Turkey. In this research, 24 Sports Federations responded to our official letter. It has been determined that 24 Sports Federations employ a total of 156 female staff, women mainly work as clerical staff and administrative assistants, and women generally work as accounting, general secretary, cleaning staff and coaches in these federations.

Table 10. The Gender Distribution of Referees and Observers Employed by the Turkish Football Federation (Football Federation, <https://www.tff.org/Default.aspx?pageID=161> , Access on: 25.04.2023)

Referee Type	Female	Male
Super League Referees	0	25
Video Assistant Referees	0	7
Super League Assistant Referees	0	50
Class A Referees	0	22
Class A Assistant Referees	0	44
Class B Referees	0	70
Class B Assistant Referees	0	128
Class C Referees	0	99
Class C Assistant Referees	0	185
Regional Referees	20	283
Regional Assistant Referees	65	489
Super League Observers	0	21
Class A Observers	0	19
Class B Observers	0	65
Class C Observers	0	91
Regional Observers	0	337
Total	85	1935

Since the gender distribution of the number of referees in amateur sports branches affiliated to the Ministry of Youth and Sports was not given, only the gender distribution of the referees in football branch could be revealed within the scope of the research. According to an analysis of the number of referees and observers, the Football Federation employs 1935 men (96%) and 85 women (4%). It is evident that men serve as referees in every classification, women serve as regional and regional assistant referees, and the football branch has no female observers—all men.

Table 11. The distribution of Ministry of Youth and Sports employees by gender (General Directorate of Sports Services, <https://shgm.gsb.gov.tr/>, Access on: 25.04.2023)

Ministry of Youth and Sport	Male	Female
Minister	1	0
Deputy Minister	4	0
General Manager	7	0
Deputy Head of Department	2	0
Deputy General Manager	1	0
Deputy Chairman	1	0
Head of Department	1	0
Special Staff Manager	1	0
Press and Public Relations Counsellor	1	0

Head of Internal Audit Unit	1	0
Directorate of Guidance and Inspection	1	0
Spor Toto Organisation	1	0
Total	22	0

The Ministry of Youth and Sports does not have any female senior managers. When top, middle and lower-level managers in the Ministry of Youth and Sports are analysed, it was noted that the role of Provincial Director of Youth and Sports does not have a female provincial director. Additionally, it was noted that the role of Provincial Director of Youth and Sports does not have a female provincial director.

Table 12. *The gender distribution of Turkish National Olympic Committee employees (Turkish National Olympic Committee, <https://olimpiyat.org.tr/>, Access on 25.04.2023)*

Board of Directors	Female	Male
President	0	1
Deputy Chairman	0	2
Vice President	0	1
Treasurer Member	0	1
Member	4	6
Natural Member	1	1
Secretary-General	1	0
Total	6	12

In the National Olympic Committee of Turkey, 67% of the board members are male and 33% are female. It was observed that female employees serve as members, natural members and general secretaries in this organisation.

Table 13. *The Gender Distribution of the Commissions of the Turkish National Olympic Committee (Turkish National Olympic Committee, <https://olimpiyat.org.tr/>, Access on: 25.04.2023)*

		Female	Male
Supervisory Commission	President	0	1
	Member	0	2
	Total	0	3
Registry Commission	President	0	1
	Vice President	0	1
	Rapporteur	0	1
	Member	1	1
	Total	1	4
Council	Member	2	5
	Total	2	5
High Advisory and Disciplinary Board	President	0	1
	Vice President	1	1
	Secretary	0	1
	Member	1	4
	Total	2	7

The proportion of women in TMOK's decision-making processes has decreased to 26%, and when we take into account the other boards, we find that there are exactly 11 women and 31 males on the board of directors. Boards including the Registry, Council, Board of Directors, Audit Board, Supreme Advisory, and Disciplinary Board are all part of TMOK. There is one woman on the Registry Board, one on the Council Board, four of the six women on the Board of Directors, one as the Secretary-General, and one as the Chairperson-Natural Member of the

Athlete Commission. The Supervisory Board does not have any female members. Two women are vice-presidents and members of the Supreme Advisory and Disciplinary Board. The executive board of this TMOK organisation is the only one with female members. Women are members and secretaries on the other boards, but they are under-represented in TMOK as top-level managers like president or vice-president.

Table 14. *The Gender Distribution of Turkish National Paralympic Committee employees (Turkish National Olympic Committee, <https://www.tmpk.org.tr/>, Access on: 25.04.2023)*

Board of Directors	Female	Male
President		1
Vice President		1
Secretary-General		1
Treasurer Member	1	
Member		2
President of the Athlete Council	1	
Substitute member	1	3
Audit Board	1	2
Record and Disciplinary Board	0	3
Sub-Boards	19	69
Total	23 (%21)	84 (%79)

In the Turkish National Paralympic Committee, 79 percent of the members of the executive, supervisory, registration and disciplinary boards and sub-committees are male and 21 per cent are female. It was observed that there were 2 women and 7 men in the board of directors of the TMPK and women served as the treasurer and the President of the Athlete Council in this board. It was observed that there were 2 men and 1 woman in the supervisory board of TMPK, and all of the registration and disciplinary boards were composed of men. When the sub-committees of the TMPK were analysed, it was observed that the Health and Classification Board consists entirely of men, the Education Board consists of 4 women and 7 men, the Sports Board consists of 5 women and 8 men, the Legal Board consists of 3 women and 7 men, the Communication Board consists of 1 woman and 25 men, the Sponsorship and Promotion Board consists of 3 women and 3 men, and the Recreation and Rehabilitation Board consists of 5 women and 6 men.

Table 15. *Distribution of Coaches in Turkey According to Their Levels and Gender (Ministry of Youth and Sport, <https://shgm.gsb.gov.tr/Sayfalar/175/105/Istatistikler>, Access on: 25.04.2023)*

Stages	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Stage 1	146248	65	75817	35	222065	100
Stage 2	34106	67	16663	33	50769	100
Stage 3	13729	70	5863	30	19592	100
Stage 4	2033	89	253	11	2286	100
Stage 5	986	92	84	8	1070	100
Total	197102	100	98680	100	295782	100

In Turkey, coaches work in 5 levels according to their education and experience. According to the levels, the level of the leagues in which the coaches will work increases. When we look at the employment of female coaches in Turkey, it is seen that the number of female coaches decreases as the levels increase. While the number of female coaches is 35% at the 1st level, it is 33% at the 2nd level, 30% at the 3rd level, 11% at the 4th level and 8% at the 5th level.

Table 15. *Distribution of Coaches in Turkey According to Branches, Levels and Gender (Ministry of Youth and Sports, <https://shgm.gsb.gov.tr/Sayfalar/175/105/Istatistikler>, Access on: 25.04.2023)*

Federation	Stages					Total	%
	1	2	3	4	5		
Turkish Shooting Federation	1038	338	102	43	5	1526	
Male	854	253	71	28	5	1211	79
Women	184	85	31	15	0	315	21
Turkish Athletics Federation	5146	2398	1397	73	45	9059	
Male	3372	1556	879	52	40	5899	65
Women	1774	842	518	21	5	3160	34
Badminton Federation of Turkey	14845	2108	397	18	25	17393	
Male	9396	1394	261	13	20	11084	64
Women	5449	714	136	5	5	6309	36
Turkish Basketball Federation	7331	2476	2706	792	450	13755	
Male	5664	2016	2191	728	421	11020	80
Women	1667	460	515	64	29	2735	20
Billiard Federation of Turkey	406	168	24	0	0	598	
Male	379	161	23	0	0	563	94
Women	27	7	1	0	0	35	6
Turkish Equestrian Federation	366	132	26	5	0	529	
Male	222	89	17	1	0	329	62
Women	144	43	9	4	0	200	38
Turkish Cycling Federation	668	295	96	5	0	1064	
Male	540	243	78	5	0	866	81
Women	128	52	18	0	0	198	19
Turkey Bocce, Bowling and Darts Federation	8632	822	118	21	6	9599	
Male	5673	530	79	21	5	6308	66
Women	2959	292	39	0	1	3291	34
Turkish Boxing Federation	1384	867	237	63	24	2575	
Male	1145	752	221	60	23	2201	86
Women	239	115	16	3	1	374	14
Turkish Bridge Federation	182	26	0	0	0	208	
Male	166	23	0	0	0	189	91
Women	16	3	0	0	0	19	9
Turkish Ice Hockey Federation	205	73	34	10	0	322	
Male	151	58	30	9	0	248	77
Women	54	15	4	1	0	74	23
Turkish Ice Skating Federation	500	98	9	3	0	610	
Male	210	50	6	2	0	268	44
Women	290	48	3	1	0	342	56
Turkish Gymnastics Federation	17972	5949	1130	29	20	25100	
Male	3127	1492	459	21	12	5111	20
Women	14845	4457	671	8	8	19989	80
Turkish Curling Federation	1148	161	23	0	0	1332	
Male	684	104	15	0	0	803	60
Women	464	57	8	0	0	529	40
Turkish Mountaineering Federation	769	227	67	9	10	1082	
Male	613	189	64	8	10	884	82
Women	156	38	3	1	0	198	18
Turkish Dance Sports Federation	1596	351	33	0	0	1980	
Male	828	196	18	0	0	1042	53
Women	768	155	15	0	0	938	47
Turkish Fencing Federation	742	270	48	7	1	1068	
Male	488	189	38	4	1	720	67
Women	254	81	10	3	0	348	33
Turkish E-Sports Federation	168	0	0	0	0	168	

Male	144	0	0	0	0	144	86
Women	24	0	0	0	0	24	14
Turkish Traditional Equestrian Sports Federation	319	17	0	0	0	336	
Male	266	12	0	0	0	278	83
Women	53	5	0	0	0	58	17
Turkish Traditional Wrestling Federation	217	11	0	0	0	228	
Male	217	11	0	0	0	228	100
Women	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turkish Traditional Sports Branches Federation	19	4	1	0	0	24	
Male	18	4	1	0	0	23	96
Women	1	0	0	0	0	1	4
Traditional Turkish Archery Federation	1047	290	0	0	0	1337	
Male	661	198	0	0	0	859	64
Women	386	92	0	0	0	478	36
Turkish Federation of Developing Sports Branches	841	38	1	0	0	880	
Male	548	25	1	0	0	574	65
Women	293	13	0	0	0	306	35
Turkish Golf Federation	252	53	24	0	0	329	
Male	194	50	22	0	0	266	81
Women	58	3	2	0	0	63	19
Turkish Visually Impaired Sports Federation	839	120	33	3	3	998	
Male	622	89	20	2	2	735	74
Women	217	31	13	1	1	263	26
Turkish Wrestling Federation	1496	1607	1070	101	65	4339	
Male	1370	1526	981	95	64	4036	93
Women	126	81	89	6	1	303	7
Turkish Folk Dances Federation	3826	10633	129	0	0	14588	
Male	1490	6001	75	0	0	7566	52
Women	2336	4632	54	0	0	7022	48
Turkish Weightlifting Federation	465	242	106	18	43	874	
Male	360	194	90	17	37	698	80
Women	105	48	16	1	6	176	20
Turkish Air Sports Federation	226	42	19	0	0	287	
Male	208	39	17	0	0	264	92
Women	18	3	2	0	0	23	8
Turkish Handball Federation	3416	1001	1146	72	9	5644	
Male	2249	659	739	61	9	3717	66
Women	1167	342	407	11	0	1927	34
Turkish Sports Federation for Everyone	13359	1644	0	0	0	15003	
Male	4693	798	0	0	0	5491	37
Women	8666	846	0	0	0	9512	63
Turkish Hockey Federation	924	200	40	11	0	1175	
Male	621	147	28	11	0	807	67
Women	303	53	12	0	0	368	33
Turkish Hearing Impaired Sports Federation	571	12	0	0	0	583	
Male	458	12	0	0	0	470	81
Women	113	0	0	0	0	113	19
Turkish Judo Federation	673	642	354	74	52	1795	
Male	470	444	263	65	46	1288	72
Women	203	198	91	9	6	507	28
Turkish Canoe Federation	878	149	37	11	0	1075	
Male	685	122	31	10	0	848	79
Women	193	27	6	1	0	227	21
Turkish Karate Federation	1535	874	429	128	69	3035	
Male	1003	678	341	107	66	2195	72
Women	532	196	88	21	3	840	28
Turkish Ski Federation	1598	361	548	11	3	2521	
Male	1203	295	451	11	3	1963	78

Women	395	66	97	0	0	558	22
Turkish Skateboard Federation	60	2	0	0	0	62	
Male	53	2	0	0	0	55	89
Women	7	0	0	0	0	7	11
Turkish Kick Boxing Federation	3262	1625	359	116	58	5420	
Male	2643	1355	323	105	52	4478	83
Women	619	270	36	11	6	942	17
Turkish Rowing Federation	214	78	92	19	6	409	
Male	174	62	71	18	6	331	81
Women	40	16	21	1	0	78	19
Turkish Table Tennis Federation	6954	1109	277	30	3	8373	
Male	5617	807	205	25	3	6657	80
Women	1337	302	72	5	0	1716	20
Turkish Modern Pentathlon Federation	275	68	11	3	0	357	
Male	180	45	10	3	0	238	67
Women	95	23	1	0	0	119	33
Turkish Muay Thai Federation	1395	771	116	26	61	2369	
Male	1133	650	102	22	56	1963	83
Women	262	121	14	4	5	406	17
Turkish Archery Federation	1546	590	161	10	10	2317	
Male	1071	393	117	6	8	1595	69
Women	475	197	44	4	2	722	31
Turkish Orienteering Federation	1704	251	55	0	0	2010	
Male	1123	157	41	0	0	1321	66
Women	581	94	14	0	0	689	34
Turkish Special Athletes Sports Federation	2355	375	56	12	0	2798	
Male	1371	195	31	10	0	1607	57
Women	984	180	25	2	0	1191	43
Turkish Rugby Federation	1233	219	27	0	0	1479	
Male	868	152	21	0	0	1041	70
Women	365	67	6	0	0	438	30
Turkish Chess Federation	81763	1546	126	46	2	83483	
Male	58154	1155	114	43	1	59467	71
Women	23609	391	12	3	1	24016	29
Turkish Underwater Sports Federation	454	159	20	2	0	635	
Male	378	135	17	2	0	532	84
Women	76	24	3	0	0	103	16
Turkish Water Polo Federation	523	126	41	1	0	691	
MALE	368	104	37	1	0	510	74
WOMAN	155	22	4	0	0	181	26
Turkish Taekwondo Federation	2040	1859	901	242	109	5151	
Male	1410	1367	684	205	96	3762	73
Women	630	492	217	37	13	1389	27
Turkish Tennis Federation	10109	2400	2202	59	2	14772	
Male	6929	1693	1434	56	2	10114	69
Women	3180	707	768	3	0	4658	31
Turkish Triathlon Federation	468	136	14	1	0	619	
Male	334	108	9	1	0	452	73
Women	134	28	5	0	0	167	27
Turkish Volleyball Federation	9855	2758	2764	376	57	15810	
Male	5725	1771	1613	331	57	9497	60
Women	4130	987	1151	45	0	6313	40
Turkish Bodybuilding and Fitness Federation	19035	6109	1808	76	78	27106	
Male	14028	4853	1291	72	75	20319	75
Women	5007	1256	517	4	3	6787	25
Turkish Wushu Kung-Fu Federation	2603	1409	260	72	40	4384	
Male	1989	1152	236	66	38	3481	79
Women	614	257	24	6	2	903	21
Turkish Sailing Federation	290	182	57	0	0	529	

Male	220	164	48	0	0	432	82
Women	70	18	9	0	0	97	18
Turkish Swimming Federation	9954	4013	3385	77	2	17431	
Male	6158	2618	2077	60	2	10915	63
Women	3796	1395	1308	17	0	6516	37
Total	253363	60606	23159	2677	1264	341069	

When we look at the distribution of coaches based on branches in Turkey, it is seen that the branches where the number of women is higher than the number of men are gymnastics and sports for all. It was also determined that the sub-branches with more female coaches in the Sports for All Federation are the wellness and yoga branches. In all other branches, the number of female coaches is less than male coaches. The branches where the number of female coaches is very low compared to men are wrestling, billiards, traditional sports, bridge and air sports.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to reveal the number and positions of women employees in sports organisations and sports-related professions in Turkey. Within the scope of the research, Basketball, Volleyball, Football, Handball and Athletics Federations, federations that responded to our official letter, the Turkish National Olympic Committee, the Turkish National Paralympic Committee and the Ministry of Youth and Sports were examined.

When the number of women on the boards of directors of the Basketball, Volleyball, Football, Handball and Athletics Federations was analysed, it was not observed that women were not included in positions such as President and Vice-President, which are higher executive positions. Only Football, Chess and Rugby Federations have a woman in the position of Vice President. While the number of women in the board of directors of the Turkish National Olympic Committee has increased, the situation of not including women in senior management positions has not changed. It is observed that the positions such as president and vice president are still occupied by men at TMOK. It was observed that there is only one woman in TMOK as vice president in the Supreme Advisory and Disciplinary Board.

Pfister and Hartmann-Tews (2003) analysed 16 countries selected based on socio-economic, political and cultural factors and found that the representation of women in top management positions in sport is low and tends to decrease rather than increase over the years. Adriaanse (2016) examined the executive boards of 1600 national sports organisations from 45 countries between 2010 and 2012, and in line with the data obtained from this study, they stated that globally between 5% and 50.5% of the boards of national sports organisations are women and that the global average of female representation on boards is 19.7%. In this study, it was also stated that gender equality in sports leadership was achieved only in Cook Island, while in only four of the 45 countries in the study, more than 30 per cent of the boards of directors consisted of women, and in 22 countries women were represented more than 20 per cent. The critical threshold for a good representation of women is 30 per cent representation. In the study conducted by Adriaanse (2016), very few countries have reached the threshold of 30 per cent female representation on boards (Adriaanse, 2016; 2018). In addition, in this study, it was reported that 19.7 per cent of directors, 10.8 per cent of chairpersons and 16.3 per cent of board executives were women (Adriaanse, 2016; Evans & Pfister, 2021).

Similar to these findings, Tranter et al. (2016) found that women's representation in International Olympic Committees decreased from 17.6 per cent to 16.6 per cent between 2014 and 2016, while this rate remained stable at around 18 per cent in other international sports federations in their study of 29 countries (Tranter et al., 2016). In 1996, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) recommended that National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and International Federations (IFs) should have at least 10 per cent of women in decision-making positions by 2000 and 20 per cent by 2005. As progress was made, this target was revised to at least 30 per cent by 2020. IFs and NOCs were encouraged to take supportive measures to help them meet and exceed this target. To date, several NOCs and IFs have achieved gender balance. The IOC has also initiated leadership forums and training programmes for women in International Federations, National Federations and National Olympic Committees to help women in middle and senior management positions to be elected to leadership positions.

When the number of referees and observers working in the football branch is analysed, it is seen that 4% of the total number of referees are women referees, while no women are working as observers in football. In the report on the number of female referees according to sports branches in South Africa, it was found that there are 22% of female referees in boxing, 13% in football, 46% in athletics, 20% in basketball, and 20% in judo. When the data obtained from this study are analysed, it is seen that the number of female coaches decreases as the levels of coaches increase. While the number of female coaches was 35% at the 1st level, it was 33% at the 2nd level, 30% at the 3rd level, 11% at the 4th level and 8% at the 5th level. When we look at the gender distribution of coaches based on branches in Turkey, it is seen that the branches where the number of women is higher than the number of men are gymnastics, and sports for all (wellness and yoga), while the branches where the number of women is lower are wrestling, billiards, traditional sports, bridge and air sports. Within the scope of the research we conducted within the scope of the project, it has been observed that the highest number of female employees is in the Taekwondo Federation, followed by Judo, Physical Disabilities and Tennis Federation. In 24 Sports Federations in Turkey, a total of 156 female employees were found to be employed, and it was determined that women mainly worked as clerical staff and administrative assistants and generally worked as accountant

Women's under-representation in social and economic spheres is a major worldwide problem that affects a variety of sectors, including sports. Even though women comprise half of the global population, they continue to participate in these fields at a disproportionately low rate, particularly in poorer countries. Although their standing has improved, women still fall behind males in nearly every industry, even in more developed nations. The sports business offers a distinctive perspective on the gender gap because of its high visibility and expanding job prospects. Although there have been significant advancements in the sports industry regarding female involvement, leadership, and recognition, gender-based inequities are still prevalent both internationally and in certain national settings, like Turkey.

The sports sector is essential to contemporary economies because it offers significant job opportunities in addition to entertainment. Women still play a relatively small role in this industry, especially when it comes to leadership and decision-making. Although more women are playing sports and engaging in sports-related activities, research indicates that they are still

notably under-represented in management and coaching roles in Turkey and around the world. For instance, whereas female athletes are now more prevalent at the Olympic Games, female coaches and leaders are still under-represented. This is indicative of more widespread structural disparities in sports leadership roles.

Turkey's position is similar to those around the world in that women are doing sports at higher percentages than they were previously, but they still face significant obstacles. Even though there are now more female athletes than ever before, there are still relatively few women in coaching and administration positions. The social, cultural, and economic elements that contribute to this gender gap have been identified by studies. The assumption that sports are a male-dominated domain, cultural standards, and religious convictions have all been major obstacles to women's full participation in sports. Women's difficulties in developing their careers in sports are further highlighted by the gender gap in leadership roles within these organisations.

There is also a glaring gender disparity among Turkey's sports federations and organisations, including the Turkish National Olympic Committee (TMOK) and the General Directorate of Youth and Sports (GSGM). There are still very few women in positions of decision-making. According to the data, the majority of Turkish sports federations and government-run sports organisations have fewer than 10% female leaders. This under-representation reflects larger societal disparities and is a major barrier to attaining gender equality in sports.

In addition, the gender gap in Turkey's coaching workforce highlights the difficulties faced by women in the sports industry. Even though more women are enrolling in physical education and sports science programs, institutional and cultural impediments continue to impede their advancement into leadership positions. In sports administration positions, where male-dominated networks frequently impede their job advancement, many Turkish women still experience prejudice. The lack of social and familial support for women seeking leadership positions in sports exacerbates this.

Despite these obstacles, advancements are being made. There is optimism for the future because female athletes are becoming more well-known and women in leadership positions in sports are becoming more acknowledged. The proportion of women in coaching and leadership roles has gradually increased as a result of international organisations' initiatives, such as the International Olympic Committee's attempts to advance gender equality (IOC, 2024). Even if it is still low, the number of women serving on Olympic committees and in national sports federations has been gradually increasing in recent years, showing that change is achievable with the right legislation and cultural changes.

Encouraging women to assume leadership positions and advancing gender equality in sports are essential initiatives to solve these discrepancies. As demonstrated by Turkey's federations, the gathering and examination of gender-based statistics in sports organisations can yield important information for legislators working to reduce the gender gap. Women can overcome the obstacles that have traditionally prevented them from attaining equal

representation in sports by creating inclusive workplaces and encouraging their professional growth.

To sum up, even if the sports sector has made considerable progress towards gender equality, much more has to be done. Women are under-represented in leadership positions, especially in nations like Turkey, which emphasises the continuous need for social change and institutional reforms. Through tackling cultural, economic, and structural obstacles and advocating for laws that support women's involvement in all facets of sports, the sector may transform into a more welcoming environment where men and women have equal chances to thrive.

It has been noted that policies and strategies to promote gender equality in sport organisations tend to adopt one of two directions; either trying to empower individual women or challenging sexist structures within sport governance (Hovden et al., 2018). One of the measures taken to increase women's representation in sport governance is to introduce quotas. While quotas are also unlikely to address problematic organisational cultures, such strategies have been identified by some researchers as one of the most effective ways to promote gender equality (Hovden et al., 2018; Sisjord et al., 2017). Quotas are often seen as a 'fast track' option, perhaps popularised due to the limited impact of 'incremental' policy changes over the past few decades (Hovden, 2015). The Brighton Declaration and the goal of 20 per cent representation of women on International Olympic Committee boards (with at least three women on each board) is an example of such action (Smith & Wrynn, 2013). Similarly, in the United States, Title IX enshrined equal opportunities in law (Lopiano, 2014) and, although inequality still persists, it has had a significant impact on participation rates and representation in educational institutions (Yiamouyiannis & Osborne, 2012). Moreover, quotas can influence gender relations in terms of both production (who does what and who has the opportunity to be a board member) and power (who has the most important roles) (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2013).

It is seen that the studies focus on numerical data in sport leadership and unfortunately, the reason for the underrepresentation of women in decision-making mechanisms is not sufficiently investigated. It would be appropriate for future studies to focus on the reasons for the low representation of women in sport management.

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