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Gender Segregation in Tourism: A Comprehensive Literature Survey and Policy Recommendations for the Post-COVID Era

Türkcan, Burcu¹

Abstract

Gender segregation in the tourism industry is a critical issue from the lens of the sustainable development goals in the contemporary world. Although it's not an emerging phenomenon, COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation. In this context, this study has two main purposes. First, it intends to examine the gender segregation in the tourism labor force with a comprehensive literature survey. And second, it aims to develop policy implications for the post-COVID era. By means of these purposes, it's intended to fill the gap in the literature in the axis of post-COVID foresights and policy options. In this respect, after a detailed introduction, the first section is devoted to different dimensions of gender segregation in the tourism industry. Following this background, the second section is attributed to a comprehensive literature review. Then, the third section is assigned to policy implications for the post-COVID era. Lastly, the conclusion gives a synthesis for the gender segregation in tourism labor force and its near future.

Keywords: Gender segregation, tourism labor force, literature survey, COVID-19

Introduction

Women empowerment is an important indicator of sustainable development. Achieving gender equality by empowering all women and girls is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)². In this respect, women's equal participation in decision making is crucial but UN observed that only 25.6% of national parliaments, 36.3% of local governments and 28.2% of managerial positions are represented by women as of 2021. Moreover, COVID-19 pandemic has adding to the burden of unpaid domestic and childcare work, and it has crowding women out of the labor force (UN, 2021: 36-37). Consequently, recent pandemic has made more critical the issue of gender segregation in labor force.

Women empowerment is important for the whole economy, but some sectors are more fragile especially in times of crises. The tourism industry has been one of such industries in the historical manner. Wars, natural disasters and economic crises have always directly affected this industry and women have always been in the focus of sectoral unemployment. Moreover, COVID-19 pandemic has been a brand-new global disaster for the tourism industry. National lockdowns and border bans caused sharp decline in international movement. Because of high volumes of COVID cases and quarantine implementations have caused people to stay at their homes and not to visit touristic places. Moreover, some tourism activities and places have become dangerous for public health and hence sectoral lockdowns have also been implemented in many countries during 2020. As a result of all these developments, global economy has dragged into a new global economic crisis. OECD declared that global economy experienced 4.2% contraction in global real GDP at the end of 2020. And this contraction has mainly arisen from the declines in trade and tourism activities (OECD, 2020:13). Number of international tourists fell by approximately 75% during 2020 and this rate caused 10 times higher decline in

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² For detailed information please visit: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

tourism revenues than as in 2009. This indicator proved that COVID-19 pandemic pushed the industry into a worse situation than in global financial crisis. UNWTO underlined that this decline in tourist arrivals set back the industry to 30 years ago (UNWTO, 2020: 1-3). This sharp decline in the tourism industry also caused a sharp decline in sectoral employment. WTTC estimates that approximately 200 million jobs have been lost in the tourism industry during 2020 (WTTC, 2020a). What is more critical is that unemployment rates have been experienced higher in women than in men. Female labor force has been affected more in pandemic and this situation seems critical from the lens of women empowerment sustainability. In this context, this study has two main purposes. Firstly, it intends to examine the gender segregation in tourism labor force with the help of the existing literature. And secondly, it aims to enhance policy implications for the post-COVID era. Comprehensive literature survey exhibits that gender discrimination in the tourism industry has been discussed since the emergence of SDGs but there are only few studies following COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, it's intended to fill the gap in the literature in the axis of post-COVID foresights and policy options, by this study. In this manner, after a detailed introduction, the first section is devoted to different dimensions of gender segregation in tourism industry. Following this conceptual and theoretical background, the second section is attributed to a comprehensive literature survey. Then, the third section is assigned to policy implications for the post-COVID era. Lastly, the conclusion gives an insight for the gender segregation in tourism labor force and its near future.

Different dimensions of gender segregation in tourism labor force

Gender segregation has been a fundamental socio-economic problem for all societies. In historical manner, women have always faced with gender discrimination at both home and work. Until the world wars, women have been perceived as the ones who cook for their families, take care children and make housework. However, as men have gone to wars to defend their homelands, women have begun to take their places to sustain the production. Married women were even more than single women in paid jobs (Marcellus, 2006). These developments have proved that women could take active roles in job markets –even if they have families with children. This reality has resulted in the rise of women's rights and 20th century has witnessed the adoption of these rights in many countries accordingly. However, 21st century has witnessing another notion about gender segregation. Giving right to vote and stand for election, increasing educational and occupational opportunities for women have not been enough for gender equality. Patriarchy is still prevalent in current world and this threaten the enhancement and sustainability of gender equality. Labor markets and public administrations are still dominated by men, and women are still perceived as ones who are primarily responsible for childcare and housework (Lerner, 1986: 16). In this manner, UN has adopted Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG-5) to provide the gender equality. SDG-5 has been attributed to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Increasing women's equal participation in decision making, decreasing the rate of violence against women, decreasing the rate of child marriages, and enhancing job opportunities for women are the main working areas of UN at global scale for this SDG. However, UN (2021) underlined that COVID-19 pandemic has affected badly gender equality targets. Childcare and housework responsibilities of working women increased and hence working hours of women decreased more than men. Moreover, female unemployment rates have increased more than male unemployment rates in several countries (Collins et al., 2020; Hipp & Bunning, 2020).

In this respect, it seems important to understand the roots of gender segregation by examining its different dimensions. Gender segregation as a fact, is separated to vertical gender

segregation and horizontal gender segregation. Horizontal segregation is about the measurement of discrimination between different sexes. It can be said that it's directly related with the perception and freedom of different genders. Measuring the horizontal segregation is not an easy phenomenon. It's generally perceived through equal job opportunities for the equally educated candidates from different sexes. Glass ceiling and wage and pay gaps are main examples of such segregation. However, vertical segregation is about the measurement of occupational inequality. This type of segregation is observed through pay and social stratification (Jarman et al., 2012: 1003-1008). Female labor force participation rate, female unemployment rate, wage inequality index, gender inequality index are some indicators to measure vertical segregation in labor markets. Index of Dissimilarity and Marginal Matching are also widely known but discussable indicators for gender segregation (Blackburn & Jarman, 2006: 293 – 294). In this respect, examining the labor markets from the lens of labor force participations, wage gaps and glass ceiling realizations are three basic ways to understand the development and volume of gender segregation in both economy and society.

The nexus between tourism and gender segregation is an important and unfortunately underestimated phenomenon. As it's underlined before, the tourism industry is a critical sector for the whole economy. Tourism-led Growth Hypothesis has been adopted in the context of Export-led Growth Hypothesis in the economics literature. In this approach, tourism contributes to the economic growth process by creating jobs and income. Its potential to earn foreign currency is especially critical for balance of payments accounts of countries (Brida et al, 2008). Consequently, many countries today, invest in the tourism industry to be able to promote their growth processes. Just before the pandemic, the tourism industry created more than 300 million jobs and approximately 9 trillion US dollars GDP at the worldwide in 2019 (WTTC, 2020a). The tourism industry is also important for the female labor force. UNWTO (2021) underlines that 54% of tourism labor force has been constituted by women, just before the pandemic. However, UNWTO also underlines that pandemic has affected women much more than men in this industry. Feedbacks about gender discrimination in tourism labor force come from different sources but most of the countries do not release comparable data about this fact. Only few countries publish data on gender discrimination in labor force by their Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA). TSA has firstly been introduced by UNWTO, OECD, Eurostat and UN Statistical Bureau as a joint project in 2009. The main purpose was to construct a global standard statistical data publication. However, today only too few countries publish TSAs and even most of them do not release gender data in tourism labor force. Australia is the unique country publishing recent and regular gender based TSA data. It's observed from the data set that the rate of women who lost their jobs in tourism was 15.4% while men's rate was only 10.2% in the first three quarters of 2020 in Australia. Moreover, full time job losses of women (16.4%) were observed higher than part time job losses (14.4%). Although post-pandemic data sets do not show the gender based situation in detail yet, studies on this fact comes from international institutions. MBS Intelligence, PWC & WIHTL published a report on the impacts of COVID-19 on gender, race and ethnicity in the tourism industry in 2020. Report includes expert views and case studies about the impact of pandemic on tourism female labor force. It underlines that female tourism labor force has been affected more than male tourism labor force during pandemic. Also it emphasizes that this negative impact seems to be long-lasting for the female labor force.

Gender segregation in tourism labor force is not a new phenomenon but it seems underestimated in the literature. The issue has been started to be discussed in 1990s in the literature and there are still not too much studies about this critical discussion area. Actually,

it's known that tourism labor force is mainly constituted by women due to the fact that it is based on heavily unqualified services and low wage rates. Some macro regions like Asia-Pacific Region is heavily based on female tourism labor force and most of women is known to work in informal jobs. Furthermore, it's estimated that women in informal jobs have lost approximately 60% of their incomes just in the first month of the pandemic (UN WOMEN, 2020). The job losses have also been terrifying in this region. ILO (2020) underlines that 81 million jobs have been lost in 2020 and 32 million of them has belonged to women in the Asia-Pacific Region. The decrease in female employment has been observed as 4.6% that is higher than the decrease rate in male employment with the rate of 4%. All these developments exhibit the severity of horizontal segregation in the global tourism industry.

Apart from the labor force participation and unemployment rate, wage and pay gaps and glass ceiling are other dimensions of gender segregation in tourism labor force. Some studies in the literature have proved that wage gaps occur even in managerial positions in the tourism industry. As an example, Skalpe (2007) conducted a research on Norwegian female tourism managers and results exhibited that women got lower promotions and compensations even in the highest positions. As another study, Guimaraes & Silva (2016) conducted a research on the Brazilian tourism industry and they investigated that women got lower wages for the same level of jobs at all positions. MBS Intelligence, PWC & WIHTL (2020) also underlined the same problem for the global tourism industry. Some recent studies have emerged to exhibit the persisting and worsening wage gaps after the introduction of pandemic. Collins et al. (2020) is an example for the recent studies examining the gender based wage and pay gaps in the tourism industry.

A comprehensive literature survey

Gender segregation in the tourism industry is not an emerging discussion area but its critical importance has increased by the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of reliable data has always been the major problem of this study area. Hence empirical studies mainly rely on surveys, interviews or economy-wide labor force and wage statistics. This data problem is also valid for the post-COVID studies. All sector seniors, policy makers and academicians discern the fact of gender segregation in the tourism industry after the release of pandemic, but testifying this fact is still a huge problem. Some well-attended surveys have been conducted in different countries (such as Collins et al., 2020), but they are still far away from exhibiting macro-level impacts.

Table 1 summarizes the studies about the gender segregation in tourism labor force. In this study, the comprehensive literature survey is divided as pre-pandemic studies and post-pandemic studies. This division is adopted in order to be able to observe the impact of COVID-19 on the related literature and on the route of recent studies. Moreover, literature survey has been conducted for the time period of 1990 – 2021. This time period has been determined due to the fact that sustainable development approach has been adopted in the beginning of 1990s. Since gender equality is one of the components of sustainable development, this time period seems appropriate to be analysed. Some keywords have been determined for the literature survey. These words are wage gap in tourism, pay gap in tourism, gender segregation in tourism, gender discrimination in tourism, female labor force in tourism and glass ceiling in tourism. This literature survey is based on a comprehensive survey of tourism literature on Scopus and Google Scholar. The search has been limited by journal articles, books and book chapters.

In Table 1, studies have been separated to three main branches as wage/pay gaps in the tourism industry, glass ceiling in tourism labor force and unemployment/employment issues. Unemployment/employment issues include gender segregation through female labor force participation, female unemployment and female entrepreneurship. Although there are some studies about female entrepreneurship and its impacts on sustainable development, only the studies focusing on gender segregation in tourism entrepreneurship have been taken into account in this study. Table 1 also classifies the studies as to types of gender segregation. This provides an insight for the related literature.

When the related literature is examined it's observed that most of the articles have been published in tourism-specific journals. The journals that have published the highest number of gender-related issues in tourism can be listed as follows: International Journal of Hospitality Management (9 articles), Tourism Management (7 articles), Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism (6 articles), Tourism Economics (4 articles), Annals of Tourism Research (4 articles) and International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management (4 articles). Only few studies seem to be published in gender-based journals. This evidence proves that sociological researchers and publishers are either not aware of gender issues in tourism labor force or not paying much attention on this issue, yet.

Furthermore, another important evidence from the literature survey is that most of the post-pandemic studies do not examine COVID-19 impacts. They have been conducted before the pandemic and published just after that. Consequently, they can also be evaluated as pre-pandemic studies. Cotilla & Campos-Soria (2021) is a study conducted with 2014 data set. Tian & Guo (2021) has analysed data for the years of 2010, 2013 and 2015. Smith et al. (2021) has conducted documents survey for 2019. Albayrak (2021) has conducted a conceptual analysis and targeted to make inferences for gender issues in the tourism industry. Freund & Hernandez-Maskivker (2021) has applied interviews with Spanish female tourism managers in 2019. Zhang & Zhang (2021) has conducted an empirical analysis for emerging economies with some statistical data for the years of 2010 and 2018. Papadopoulou (2021) has conducted conceptual and literature based critical analyses and it's not linked to pandemic. Pena-Sanchez (2020) has conducted the analysis for the time period of 2009 – 2018. Casado-Diaz et al. (2020) has conducted an analysis with 2010 Spanish data. It's observed from all these studies that the most of the post-pandemic studies are not linked to COVID-19 and its gender-based impacts, yet. Consequently, although, the publication date has been adopted to classify the studies as post-pandemic studies in this study, the aforementioned studies examine pre-pandemic world.

There are only few studies examining the gender segregation in post-pandemic world. Collins et al. (2020) has used US Current Population Survey Data for February – April 2020 period and it has investigated that COVID-19 pandemic has reduced working hours of women much more than of men. Russen et al. (2021) has applied a systematic literature survey for the last ten years and also conducted a theoretical analysis. Smith et al. (2021) has applied a documentary analysis for aviation sector and suggested some primitive policy implications for the post-COVID era. There are also two books published in 2021. Valek & Almuhrzi (2021) and Valeri & Katsoni (2021) are two books related with gender segregation in the tourism industry. However, they predominantly have theoretical and conceptual analyses chapters and Valek & Almuhrzi (2021) mainly examines women as tourism consumers.

Our comprehensive literature survey on gender segregation in the tourism industry includes 83 studies. 67 studies have been published before the pandemic and the rest has been published after the pandemic. Post-pandemic studies seem mainly concentrating on labor force issues just like the pre-pandemic studies. This evidence prove that vertical gender segregation

has been examined more in the related literature. Moreover, as it's underlined before, most of the post-pandemic studies analyses the pre-pandemic world. Consequently, it seems that there are only few studies yet to analyse the impacts of COVID-19 on gender segregation in the tourism industry. There is only one study examining wage gap in USA and it only examines the data for the first three months of 2020. Other post-pandemic studies examining the impacts of COVID-19 conduct their analyses at conceptual, theoretical or bibliometric ways. This result proves that although pandemic has been in our lives since March 2020, reliable data problem still exists and it restrains the studies about gender segregation in the tourism industry.

Table 1: A Comprehensive Literature Survey on Gender Segregation in Tourism Labor Force

Pre-Pandemic Studies			Post-Pandemic Studies		
<i>Horizontal Seg.</i>		<i>Vertical Seg.</i>	<i>Horizontal Seg.</i>		<i>Vertical Seg.</i>
<i>Wage/Pay Gap</i>	<i>Glass Ceiling</i>	<i>(Un)Employment Issues</i>	<i>Wage/Pay Gap</i>	<i>Glass Ceiling</i>	<i>(Un)Employment Issues</i>
Liz & Lindsay (1998) Iverson (2000) Burgess (2003) Skalpe (2007) Thrane (2008) Tugores (2008) Munoz-Bullon (2009) Campos-Soria et al. (2009) Campos-Soria et al. (2010) Garcia-Pozo et al. (2012) Mendes & Vareiro (2013) Campos-Soria et al. (2015) Fleming (2015) Guimaraes & Silva (2016) Obadic (2016) Bakas et al. (2018) Kortt et al. (2018) Sefil & Kent (2018) Segovia-Perez et al. (2019) Oliver & Sard (2020)	Sparrowe & Iverson (1999) Mooner & Ryan (2009) Clevenger & Singh (2013) Bazazo et al. (2017) Carvalho et al. (2018) Remington & Kitterlin-Lynch (2018) Carvalho et al. (2019)	Levy & Patricia (1991) Purcell (1993) Breatnah et al. (1994) Wilkinson & Pratiwi (1995) Chant (1996) Purcell (1996a) Purcell (1996b) Sinclair (1996) Burrell et al. (1997) Jordan (1997) Woods & Cavanaugh (1999) Li & Leung (2001) Ng & Pine (2003) Kattara (2005) Crafts & Thompson (2006) Elmas (2007) Gentry (2007) McGehee et al. (2007) Santos & Varejao (2007) Moore & Wen (2008) Vandegrift (2008) Blayney & Blotnicky (2010) Cave & Kilic (2010) Costa et al. (2011) Ferguson (2011) Pinar et al. (2011) Kara et al. (2012) Marco (2012) Gundula (2013) Masadeh (2013) Carvalho et al. (2014) Adebayo (2015) Hallak et al. (2015) Santero-Sanchez et al. (2015) Sharma (2017) Kossek et al. (2017) Masadeh et al. (2018)	Casado-Diaz et al. (2020) Collins et al. (2020) Pena-Sanchez et al. (2020) Cotilla & Campos-Soria (2021) Tian & Guo (2021)	Russen et al. (2021)	Hutchings et al. (2020) Vargas-Jimenez et al. (2020) Albayrak (2021) Chipumuro et al. (2021) Freund & Hernandez-Maskivker (2021) Papadopoulou (2021) Smith et al. (2021) Valek & Almuhrzi (2021) Valeri & Katsoni (2021) Zhang & Zhang (2021)

		Campos-Soria & Robles-Teigerio (2019) Segovia-Perez et al. (2019) Rinaldi & Salerno (2020)			
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Source: Table has been constructed by author.

Policy implications for the post-COVID era

Female-dominant tourism labor force has always been the target of androcentric actions in tourism labor market. Patriarchal arrangements have always been valid in hiring and paying. Both horizontal and vertical gender segregations have always been existed in the tourism industry. However, COVID-19 has worsened the situation. Although increasing gender equality is one of the 17 SDGs, it's observed that recent pandemic has deteriorated the targets. Women have been crowded out of the labor force, they have experienced higher wage-cuts and their working hours have decreased. Moreover, remote working conditions have increased their in-house responsibilities which causes deeper social stratification for women. International institutions like UN, WTTC and ILO have been studying reasons and results of this increasing gender segregation in tourism labor market. All of their recent reports underline that pandemic has created a brand-new world in that there is no clear near future for female tourism labor force.

Today, the tourism industry is itself in a serious transformation. WTTC (2020b) indicates that the tourism industry has been experiencing a transformation in four basic areas as: evolving demand, health & hygiene protocols, innovation & digitization, and sustainability. Consumer tastes and preferences have changed a lot. Tourists prefer short-haul travelling instead of long-haul travelling; they visit less crowded areas and they prefer mainly outdoor activities from now on. This structural changes in demand shifted the demand of especially international tourists down. This demand-pull impact caused the acceleration of innovative activities and digitization in industry. Touchless technologies, robots and artificial intelligence are used intensely in touristic activities now. Furthermore, another important component of tourism supply has become health & hygiene protocols. Tourism companies and touristic attraction centers have to face some standards to be able to protect tourists' well beings. Social distancing, application of touchless technologies, ventilation and disinfection implementations are all added extra costs for tourism companies. These developments have also created cost-push impacts on supply. Lastly, the fourth dimension of tourism transformation has been adding extra burden to demand and supply conditions. Sustainability indicates that it's important not only facing today's market needs but also providing their sustainability. And this reality comes to mean that sector's transformation is not a temporal issue but it is long-lasting fact. All these dimensions of sectoral transformation also include labor force transformation. As the tourism industry turns its face from a traditional sector to a contemporary sector, labor force also faces with new challenges. Tourism labor force should renew itself for the post-COVID era. Since COVID-impacts will be persisting in markets, new era will be the era of more technology-oriented tourism workers. This transformation serves some opportunities also for women. If female candidates can be trained in lines of new market needs, then they can replace unqualified male labor force that will be excluded from the labor force in the near future. This may increase gender equality in tourism labor market. In this respect, enhancing technological training opportunities for women seems as a right policy option for the post-COVID era.

It's sure that good policy options can be created by conducting well-designed analyses. And well-designed analyses need methodical and reliable data. In this respect, today policy makers need more data in order to be able to examine gender-based impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism industry. Our comprehensive literature survey exhibits that there are only few studies examining gender segregation in tourism in post-pandemic world. And important amount of these studies are either conceptual or theoretical papers. This situation arises from the lack of gender-based tourism data. Consequently, countries should immediately publish TSAs including gender measurements. Without these data sets, all inferences and hence actions will be inadequate. Without gender-based TSAs, no one can know the actual volumes of female labor force, female unemployment and wage/pay gaps in the tourism industry. UNWTO (2021) underlines the importance of data production about gender in tourism. Women remain invisible when they are not included in data sets.

Conclusions

Gender equality is one of the main dimensions of sustainable development. Women empowerment in labor markets is one of the main areas of SDGs. However, global labor markets still exhibit patriarchal and androcentric structures. Vertical and horizontal gender segregations are still valid in most of the economies. What is more is that recent studies have investigated that COVID-19 pandemic has added new burdens to this situation. Female unemployment rates have increased more than men; full time job losses of women have experienced as higher than men; working hours of women have decreased more than men and remote working conditions increased in-house responsibilities of women. In this respect, the critical importance of examining gender segregation in labor markets have increased.

Another dimension of the pandemic has been the tourism industry that has been directly affected by COVID-19. The fall of the tourism industry has caused a sharp decline in global GDP and also it has been dragged into a sectoral crisis. Sectoral unemployment has increased and labor income has significantly decreased. Since it's known that tourism labor force is a female-dominant labor force, the nexus between gender segregation and the tourism industry has begun to be discussed more deeply. International institutions like UNWTO, UN WOMEN and ILO have published reports on this issue. All the reports have underlined that gender segregation in the tourism industry has increased and if efficient actions are not taken immediately, then it will be hard to overcome the long-lasting impacts of increasing gender discrimination in global labor markets. In this context, studies about this issue have become more critical.

In this study, a comprehensive literature survey has been conducted. Studies have been classified as pre-pandemic and post-pandemic studies in order to be able to see the impact of pandemic on the gender-based studies about the tourism industry. Moreover, studies have also been categorized as to vertical and horizontal gender segregation. This classification has also provided an insight about the route of studies from the view of segregation types. Literature survey results show that the impacts of pandemic on gender segregation in the tourism industry can not be observed through recent studies, yet. Number of studies are not too much and also empirical studies are very rare. The lack of data about gender issues in the tourism industry seems to restrain the researchers to conduct empirical analysis. In this context, one of the main policy implications of this study is to construct methodical and reliable data publication at a global scale. TSA accounts should be encouraged to be published by covering gender based data. Another policy implication of this study is to catch the transformation of the tourism

industry. COVID-19 has caused significant transformations in both tourism demand and tourism supply. Post-COVID era will be a different period for this industry. If tourism female labor force can be trained in terms of emerging trends in industry, then the gender segregation in labor force indicators can be narrowed.

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