



Research Article

© 2024 Hava Mucollari, Zaim Korsi & Dashurie Resnja

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The integration of Albanian women in the Balkan and European labor market

PhD (C.) Hava Mucollari

PhD Zaim Korsi

MSc. Dashurie Resnja

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2478/ajbals-2024-0015>

Abstract

The integration of Albania in the EU is one of the greatest aspirations that Albanian citizens have in their future. The effort to adapt the workforce of Albanian citizens to the European market has been positive. This can be seen in the number of Albanian women who have moved and continue to move in the EU countries. The emancipation of women has led to an increase in the level of education and an increase in the professional level. The integration of women as equal power in Albanian families makes it possible for the spirit of gender discrimination to decrease significantly.

The presented study will be based on the inclusion of the Albanian woman in the European market as well as her emancipation in professional development. The review of information includes the analysis of relevant and available data and sources (reports, reports from previous surveys, research, etc.) regarding the needs of the labor market.

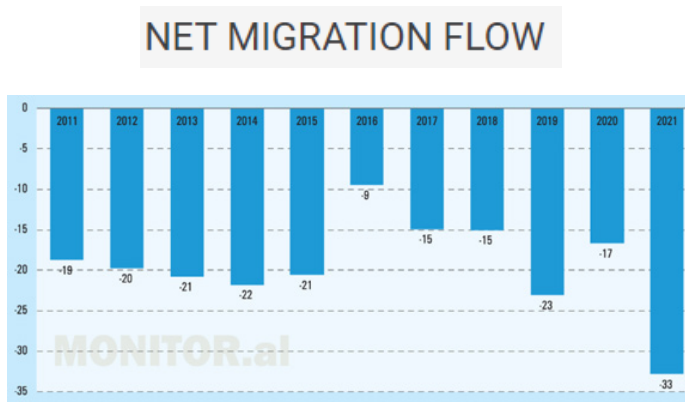
In this paper we will analyze the relationship between gender, education level, age and salary level. Each of these factors in the economy has defined roles, based on the primary indicators and on the distinguishing indicators of everyone's knowledge in this scheme, but with a common goal to serve the stability and growth of the Albanian economy. The registered unemployment rate for 2011 was 13.3% of which women represent 14.3% and men, 12.4%. The highest unemployment rate corresponds to the 15-29 age group and it is estimated that there is at least 50% employment in the informal economy.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the women's labor market in Albania based on the statistical data of INSTAT with a focus also in the EU and the Western Balkan market by using the linear regression method.

Keywords: labor market, employment, unemployment, gender inequality, linear regression, statistical indicator.

1. Introduction

During communism, Albania had a centralized economy completely dependent on state policy. As can be seen in this period, we do not have an unemployment layer, since voluntary work means that the number of unemployed is zero (Bekteshi, 2023). From 2011 to 2021, 214,000 people left the country, according to the measurements coming from INSTAT's¹ net immigration methodology, but in 2022, the phenomenon has become more aggressive, as businesses in the trade sector claim that there is an immediate drop in consumption, while all sectors, including the public one, are in emergency for employees (Kiri, 2023). From 2008 to 2020, about 700,000 Albanian citizens received a residence permit in one of the EU countries, at the same time when thousands live illegally.



The change of the system after 1991 causes this result to change significantly (Kiri, 2023). The birth of private property brought self-employment. The emigration of Albanians to neighboring countries also increased to a considerable number. The number of emigrants who left the country in this period reached over 30,000.

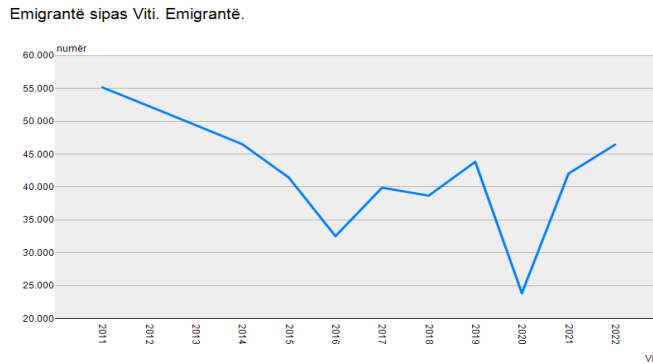


If we were to make a panorama only of the departure of the working-age population from Albania for better conditions for the period 2011-2022, we would refer to the data obtained from INSTAT and present them in a table as follows:

From the below table we can analyze that the number of immigrants has been decreasing for the years 2011-2016, from 55,162 people who left in 2011, to 32,533

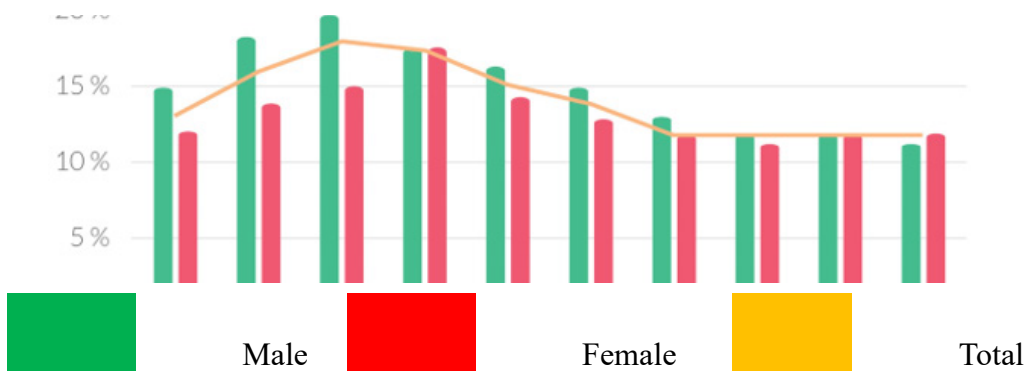
¹ Albanian Institute of Statistics.

people in 2016. The question that arises is what changed in Albania that the number of dissatisfied people, who turned to emigration after 2017, began to increase again and again, until at the end of 2022 it reached 46,460 people who left Albania? The below table presents the situation of those who left the country for the period 2011-2022.



The change of the system led to the birth of two layers of the population as well as the beginning of the creation of discrimination. In this period, women had no leadership position in society. Her only role was to raise the children and run the household. The study points to a number of existing challenges that must be addressed by all stakeholders in society in order to improve individual and societal well-being by policy makers, decision makers and all citizens, women and men of Albania's society. The unemployment rate in Albania, in 2021, is 11.5%. This means that around 163,000 people are unemployed. The below table shows that the unemployment rate is 11.3% for men and 11.8% for women.

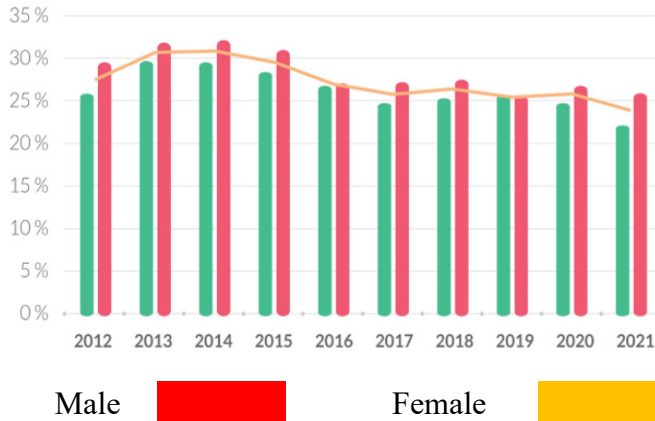
2. Unemployment rate by gender in the



Source: Labor Force survey, INSTAT

The woman begins to become aware of her position in society and increases her

situation and improves her educational and professional situation. The table below presents the results of educated and uneducated women. This result was obtained from INSTAT. There is a significant difference to the results of our survey.



Source: Labor Force survey, INSTAT

An important role in the increase of the number of women in leadership positions has been played by the incentive legislation that the Albanian government has undertaken from 2010 to 2015 for the acceptance of women in management in Albania (Stasa and Dedej, 2023). The graph below shows an increase in the percentage of women in management that reached over 30%.

Albanian women became part of the Parliament for the first time in the first Legislature in the years 1945-1950, represented by 6 women out of a number of 62 deputies. Before the overthrow of the dictatorship, in the years '87-'91, 75 women entered the Parliament. The lowest number of women in the Parliament was in the 91-92 legislature, first democratic elections, with only 9 women deputies. One of the problems that mainly newly graduated women encounter in the labor market is related to the prejudice regarding the ability in relation to men. Some girls during a training for the labor market, at the leadership academy, said that they were put in difficulties by the owners of some companies during job interviews in the administration sector. Historically, Albania's society has generally treated women as members of the second class, and very few can deny that women have been and still are in many ways treated as "slaves" who are taken by the crushes and in many cases sent to the "modern slavery" called marriage. According to the latest INSTAT data, referring to 2017, the gender gap in wages is 10.5%, which means that in total, women in Albania are paid 10.5% less than men. Compared to 2016, when it was 11.4%, the gender gap has been slightly reduced. The average salary of women in the country is 46,000 ALL and that of men is 51,300 ALL. According to an INSTAT report, women are paid more than the men in only four professions. The highest difference in salary is in the profession - Specialist in the sciences of physics, mathematics and engineering. In this

profession, women are paid about 33% less. While in the position of administrative manager, women are paid 19% more than men. The authorities admit that there are problems in the labor market in relation to gender equality, underlining that women work more hours per week than men. The latest legal changes underline officials of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, focused on women. One of the many problems is related to the position of women in the agricultural sector. Women make up nearly half of the workforce in this sector, but the difficulties they face are greater than men. Women’s work in the villages is unlimited, women serve the family, they serve the agriculture, they serve the livestock. While for men, emigration prevails in the working age group in the countryside (Xhindi, 2022). Albanian authorities analyze that they focus on women in some programs such as the one to promote employment, mediation services, professional training and entrepreneurship. There is a need to increase the number of kindergartens and nurseries in rural areas in order for mothers who will be employed or self-employed to have the opportunity to leave their children at home or not to deal with raising children and housework all the time, but also to engage in the labor market.

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Gjithsej	15+	55.2	60.3	57.3	52.4	53.7	55.7	57.5	58.3	59.4	60.4	59.5	59.8
	15-64	62.3	68.5	64.9	59.6	61.5	64.2	66.2	66.8	68.3	69.6	69.1	69.3
	15-24	33.7	44.8	36.7	27.6	29.0	31.3	31.8	31.8	35.8	36.7	35.8	36.3
	25-54	77.8	81.7	78.4	75.5	76.7	79.7	80.7	81.3	83.0	83.9	83.0	82.1
	55-64	52.6	61.3	60.7	56.6	58.1	60.2	61.4	61.3	63.7	65.2	64.6	66.3
	65+	4.8	10.5	13.0	10.2	9.0	8.6	10.2	12.3	14.5	15.6	15.1	17.2
	20-64	69.7	75.6	71.9	67.6	68.6	71.3	73.3	73.9	74.8	75.9	75.3	75.1
Burra	15+	64.0	67.9	65.5	61.7	63.5	64.3	65.0	66.8	67.6	68.0	66.9	67.2
	15-64	72.3	76.4	73.4	70.2	72.2	73.4	74.1	75.8	76.9	77.6	77.1	77.3
	15-24	40.0	52.2	44.3	36.6	37.2	39.2	36.9	37.8	43.4	43.2	43.0	41.1
	25-54	88.8	88.9	87.7	86.4	87.4	88.6	88.7	90.9	90.7	90.6	89.7	89.4
	55-64	71.7	74.5	74.5	70.2	74.9	76.0	76.3	77.4	78.5	79.4	78.3	80.4
	65+	7.0	14.1	17.4	13.9	12.6	12.2	14.5	16.1	19.0	19.8	18.7	20.7
	20-64	81.2	84.0	81.9	79.1	80.5	81.8	82.5	84.3	84.5	84.4	83.9	84.2
Gra	15+	46.9	52.9	49.2	44.0	44.4	47.2	49.9	49.8	51.4	53.0	52.3	52.6
	15-64	52.9	60.8	56.4	50.1	51.3	55.1	58.3	57.7	59.7	61.6	61.2	61.4
	15-24	27.2	37.0	27.6	19.4	20.5	22.7	25.8	24.5	27.6	30.2	28.5	31.5
	25-54	67.9	74.8	70.2	66.1	66.9	71.6	73.1	72.2	75.6	77.4	76.6	75.1
	55-64	34.2	47.9	45.5	42.9	40.8	43.1	45.8	45.2	49.1	50.8	51.1	52.2
	65+	2.6	7.3	8.9	6.6	5.7	5.3	6.1	8.8	10.4	11.7	11.6	13.9
	20-64	58.9	67.3	62.3	57.1	57.3	61.1	64.2	63.5	65.4	67.6	66.9	66.3
25-29	58.0	73.8	69.0	62.3	60.1	65.8	66.4	61.9	68.3	75.3	74.2	73.1	

Labor force participation rate by gender, age, variable and year

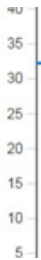
Source INSTAT

For the population aged 15-64, there has been an improvement in women’s labor force participation in the last 5 years, from 50 to 57%. But despite improvements in

legislation, policies and programs to increase women’s access to the labor market, there are still difficulties because women must continue to face traditional gender roles, which laws alone cannot change.

Movements for the emancipation of women have enabled countries to draft a system of laws that guarantee gender equality in all spheres of life, but Albania’s reality is different because women are again unequal. The percentage of women in managerial positions has increased in the last years. This is shown in the below table.

Production and specialized service manager	103,494	120,000
Information technology specialist	90,040	94,052
Legislator, administrative employee	86,541	90,564
Business administration specialist	80,447	85,984
Officer of the armed forces	72,233	88,000
Specialist in the cultural and social field	69,580	80,108
Work in technology professions	63.956	56.821



Although the participation of women in the Assembly has increased in recent years. According to INSTAT data, which reports the indicator of participation in Parliament by gender, since 1920, their highest weight was reported in 1974, with 33.2% of the total.

In Europe, according to Eurostat, Sweden has the highest percentage of women in the Parliament, with about 50%, followed by Finland with 46%, Belgium with 43%, while the lowest are Hungary and Malta with 13% each.

5. Conclusion

This manuscript showed the difficulties of employment for women in Albania. It also showed that it can be scary for women who have not yet been in a leadership position to take on such a high-profile role because of the stigma attached to it. This can turn the younger generation away from trying to break down barriers. In 2019, the percentage of women in senior management roles globally increased to 29%. This remained constant in 2020 and increased to 31% in 2021, the highest number ever recorded. While this may be considered positive news, women just entering the workforce will need to be inspired by other women who are currently breaking into their leadership roles in the workplace (Gjinko, 2024). Once achieved, it can create a direction for all young aspiring women leaders to increase the global percentage and break new records. A meta-analysis comparing male and female leaders found

that female leaders were more transformational. They demonstrated more contingent reward behavior than the two-dimensional actions (active and passive management) presented by male leadership. This style of transformational leadership has been shown to build social and personal identification among members and also build the mission and goals set by leadership and organizations. This shows a clear positive impact on the success of an organization and its employees (Zenku and Stefanovska, 2024). There's no doubt that we've all seen women demonstrate passion, enthusiasm and an ability to take command of a situation when necessary (let's look no further than our mothers or female caregivers in this case). Women are able to make bold and wise decisions as leaders; this helps make the team environment less authoritarian and more collaborative, bringing a sense of family to the team. This increases teamwork across the organization and helps implement a new culture within the business, and is another reason to embed equality and diversity in the workplace. A national survey by the Pew Research Center's Survey of Social and Demographic Trends ranked 2,250 women as better or equal to men in seven of the eight top leadership traits assessed in the survey. Key statistics from this survey show that half of respondents ranked women as more honest than men, with 20% saying men are more honest than women. In terms of intelligence, 38% said they saw women as smarter, with only 14% saying men are smarter. For other occasions, women were ranked as more compassionate, outgoing and creative.

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