

The Involvement of Adults in Formal Education and Lifelong Learning Activities According to OECD Data: An Evaluation In the Light of OECD Education at a Glance 2017^{*}

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the participation of adults in OECD countries in formal education and lifelong learning activities according to OECD Education at a Glance 2017 data. In the study, descriptive screening model was used as it was intended to enlighten and evaluate a situation. Document review was used to collect the data of the study. The data was obtained from C6 indicators of OECD Education at a Glance 2017 report. This indicator provided information on how many adults participated in educational activities in OECD countries and presented detailed analysis of the barriers to the participation of adults in these activities. These documents were primarily divided into two as "the participation levels of adults in formal education and lifelong learning activities" and "participation barriers". Then, the documents were examined and evaluated taking into account the research problems. According to the results of the research, the participation levels of the adults in the study in an educational activity to meet their educational needs varied. The barriers to participating in the educational activities of the adults in the survey were divided into four categories as; child care or family responsibilities, too busy at work, too expensive, and other. In the light of the findings obtained from the research, it is suggested that the causes and solution offers for low adult participation in lifelong learning activities in Turkey can be deeply analyzed with qualitative research and efforts can be made to encourage the adults to participate in these activities.

Keywords: OECD, adult involvement, lifelong learning

Introduction

Adult education can play an important role in helping adults to develop and maintain their basic information processing skills and to acquire other knowledge and skills during their lifetime. Beyond formal education, adult education is essential to provide organized learning opportunities for adults, especially for those in need of adapting to changes in their careers, and to make the access to them easier (OECD, 2013).

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) divides the objectives of adult education into two distinct groups as national objectives and local objectives. National objectives are based on the aim of acquiring new knowledge and skills for the individuals depending on the economic, cultural, political, scientific and technological changes within a society. Local objectives are based on the aim which will enable the societies to solve their local problems and facilitate their lives within the places they live (Türkoğlu & Uça, 2011, p. 51).

Today, adults need formal and informal education in order to be able to meet their needs such as work life, job satisfaction and personal development and for self-actualization (Gökkaya, 2014, p. 72). In the World Adult Education Conference organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Montreal, Canada in 1960, adult education was accepted as "lifelong learning" and after that, the concept of lifelong learning began to be more widely used. Lifelong learning, in its most general and specific form, can be defined as a process that begins at birth and lasts until death (Duman, 2000, p. 69).

Lifelong learning can contribute to non-economic goals such as personal achievement, health, civic engagement and sociality. Social coherence requires that the individuals have the basic knowledge and skills necessary to be aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens and to benefit from the virtues of social life. Hence, the big differences in the

participation of adults among OECD countries at similar economic development levels in adult education activities indicate that there are significant differences in the learning cultures, learning opportunities in the workplace, and adult education systems (Borkowsky, 2013).

The concept of lifelong learning became a current issue among EU member countries in the 1980s. Within the context of lifelong learning, the importance given to adult education was significantly reflected to applications with the Leonardo da Vinci action program in the field of vocational training and the Socrates action program implemented in 1995. With these steps, adult education has become one of the main topics of European political negotiations (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2012).

In Turkey, adult education took place in eight different five-year development plans from 1963 to 2005. In addition, the first emphasis on adult education was made in the National Education Council Meeting held in 1939. In the National Education Council Meeting held in 1949, it was decided to establish Public Education Centers and thus, the importance of adult education was understood in those years. Although adult education was considered as significant for many years and took place in the National Education Council Meetings and in the Development Plans, it could be seen that it was not successful enough and participation levels were low according to OECD and Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) reports.

The reasons for adult education or lifelong learning can be specified as scientific and technological developments, the necessities of economic and social development, the length of the average human lifespan, the shortening of working hours, the rapid developments in knowledge and technology and the necessity for continuous acquisition of new knowledge and skills for this, professional mobility, and the increase in the effects of communication and mass media and the desire of the compatibility in international affairs. More than anything else, adult education is essential because of the contemporary society structure and the changes in human nature. Adult education or lifelong learning provides the individuals to improve themselves, to overcome the rapid social, economic, cultural, technological and professional changes they will face, and to actively participate in the political, social and cultural development processes (Duman, 2000, p. 38-39).

As a result of the research of Kaya (2015), which aimed to make a general evaluation of public adult education and lifelong learning practices in Public Education Centers in Turkey, it was concluded that the disadvantageous situation continued especially in terms of gender equality, the literacy rate of women was still not at the desired level, adult education practices were repeated in a kind of vicious cycle, the increased number of courses and trainees were perceived as a success, the practices performed in the centers were conducted in a pedagogical context with the administrators and staff who had formal education experience, many things from the material used to the content of the programs carried the traces of formal education, there was somehow not need for adult education specialists, and there was an anticipation that adults could learn just like children. In the light of these findings, it was estimated that the present situation would continue just like that unless an effective action plan was put into practice to resolve the existing problems and develop prospective policies. Within this context, by comparing the formal education and lifelong education activities between OECD countries and Turkey, the aim of this study was to examine the participation of adults in OECD countries in formal education and lifelong learning activities according to OECD Education at a Glance 2017 data and to raise awareness. In order to achieve this aim, the following questions were asked:

1. According to OECD Education at a Glance 2017 data, what is the participation of adults in OECD countries in formal education and lifelong learning activities?

2. According to OECD Education at a Glance 2017 data, what is the participation of adults in Turkey in formal education and lifelong learning activities?
3. According to OECD Education at a Glance 2017 data, what are the barriers to participation of adults in OECD countries in formal education and lifelong learning activities?
4. According to OECD Education at a Glance 2017 data, what are the barriers to participation of adults in Turkey in formal education and lifelong learning activities?

Method

Research Design

This study, which aimed to evaluate the participation of adults in OECD countries in formal education and lifelong learning activities according to OECD Education at a Glance 2017 data and to raise awareness, was structured in descriptive screening model because screening models are used in the studies that aim to analyze the data in order to determine the specific properties of the components examined and are appropriate models for the researches that aim to describe the situations in the past or present as they exist. In other words, the purpose of screening model researches is to describe and explain the situation examined in detail. Therefore, these kinds of researches are carried out to enlighten and evaluate a given situation (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2012; Creswell, 2009; Karasar, 2009).

Data Collection

In order to collect the data of the study, document review was used. The data was obtained from the C6 indicators of OECD Education at a Glance 2017 report. C6 indicators of the mentioned report provide information on how many adults participate in educational activities in the OECD countries and provide detailed analysis of what barriers there are to the participation of adults who do not attend these activities. Within this context, the categories used in the analysis of the data within the scope of the study were given in Chart 1, and two charts and two tables given in the C6 indicators of OECD Education at a Glance 2017 report were included in the analysis. While Chart 2 and Table 1 provide information on the participation of adults in educational activities, Chart 2 and Table 3 provide information on the obstacles to participation of adults in these activities.

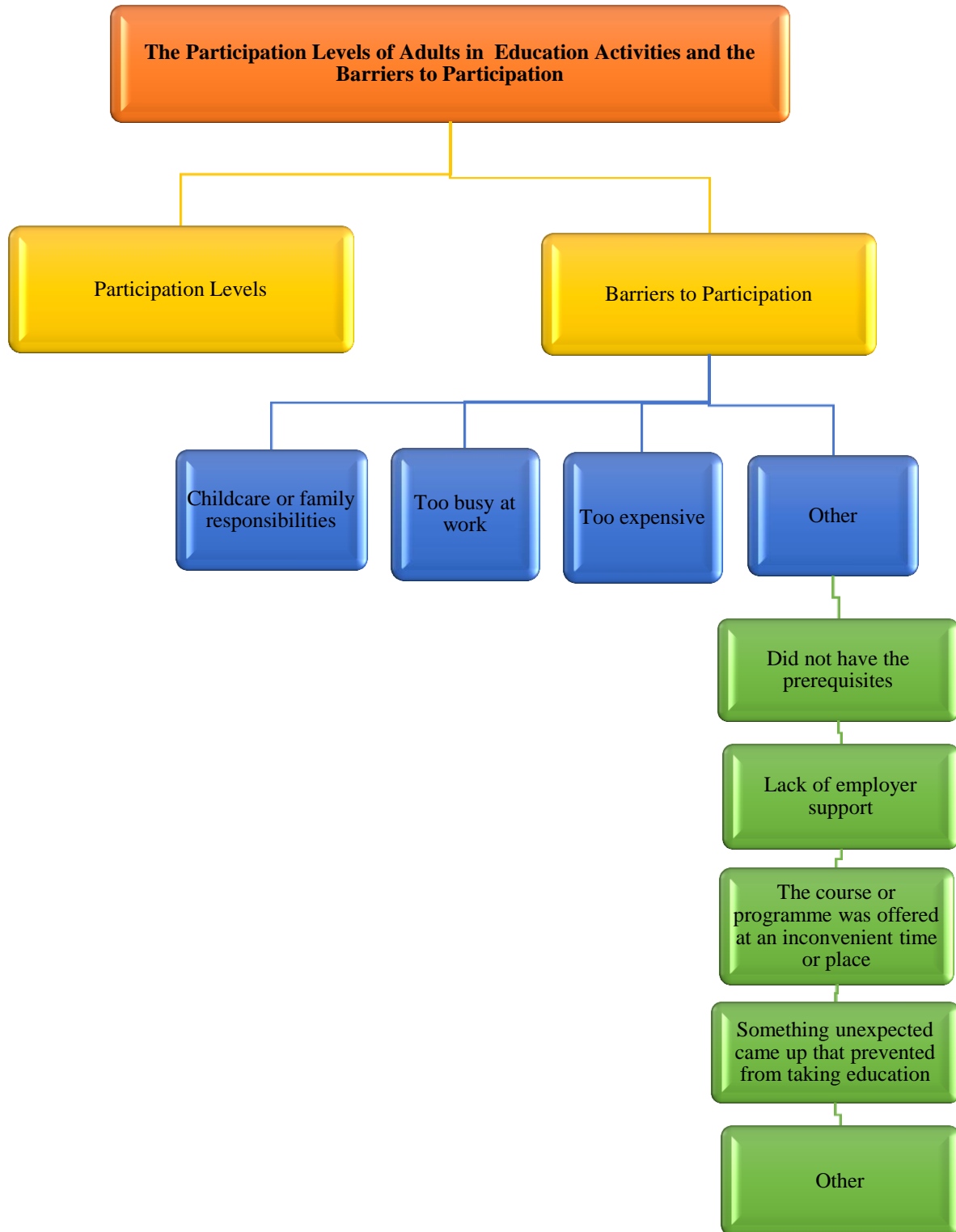
Data Analysis

Prior to the examination of the OECD indicators, literature related to the topic was reviewed and the theoretical framework of the research was established. Within this framework, C6 indicator tables and figures of OECD Education at a Glance 2017 report were examined and it was determined that the categories in these documents could be used and sufficient to answer the research questions. These documents were primarily divided into two data sets as "Participation levels of adults in formal education and lifelong learning activities" and "Barriers to participation". After that, by taking into account the research problems, the documents were examined and evaluated in terms of *i. the participation levels of the adults in OECD countries in educational activities and the participation levels of the adults in Turkey* and *ii. the barriers to participation of the adults in OECD countries in educational activities and the barriers to participation of the adults in Turkey*.

In the analysis of the data obtained from the mentioned indicators, charts and tables were used in accordance with descriptive analysis and the data was classified according to the relevant categories. The rankings and percentage values of the countries in the figures and

tables were evaluated on the basis of OECD averages and the findings obtained were supported by interpretations. In Table 1 below, there are the categories used in the analysis of data.

Chart 1. The categories used in the analysis of the data



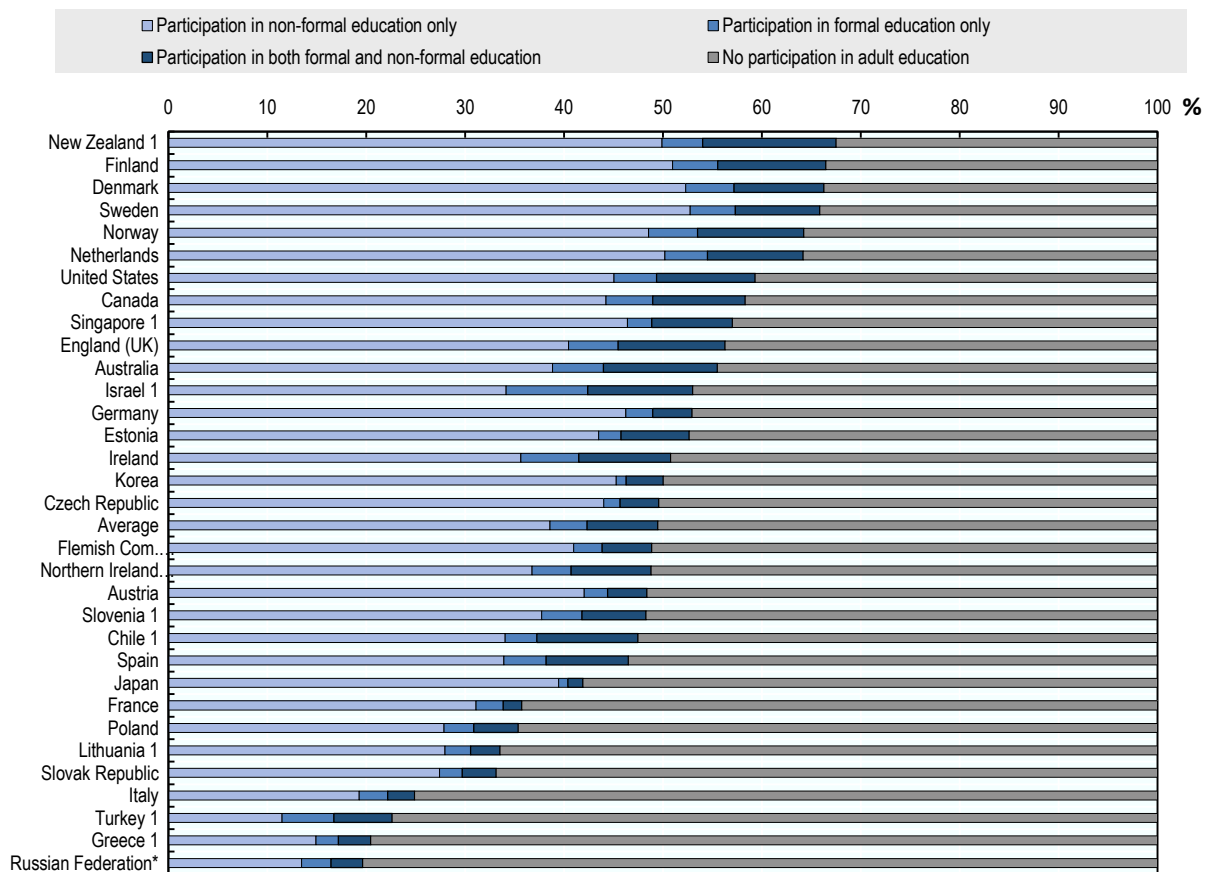
Findings and Discussion

The findings obtained as a result of data analysis were resolved under two categories as “Participation levels of adults in formal education and lifelong learning activities” and “Barriers to participation of adults in formal education and lifelong learning activities”. The category of “Participation levels of adults in formal education and lifelong learning activities” was discussed under “the Findings Regarding the First and Second Sub-problem”, and the category of “Barriers to participation of adults in formal education and lifelong learning activities” was discussed under “the Findings Regarding the Third and Forth Sub-problem”.

The Findings and Discussion Regarding the First and Second Sub-problem

According to OECD Education at a Glance 2017 data, the findings regarding the participation levels of the adults in OECD countries in formal education and lifelong learning activities and the findings regarding the participation levels of the adults in Turkey in formal education and lifelong learning activities were given in Chart 2.

Chart 2. The participation of adults in formal education and/or lifelong learning activities (non-formal education) (2012 or 2015 data)



¹. Reference year is 2015; for all other countries and economies the reference year is 2012.

Source: OECD Education at a Glance (2017), Figure C6.1.

According to OECD data, it was revealed that the participation levels of the adults (the individuals between 25-64 years of age) in the participant countries in an educational activity so as to meet their educational needs differed. As could be understood from Figure 1 above,

when the participation levels of the adults in an educational activity (participation in lifelong learning activities only, participation in formal education only, participation in both formal education and lifelong learning activities) were analyzed, it was found that the highest participation level was in New Zealand (68%) and it was followed by Finland (66%), Denmark (66%), Sweden (66%) and Norway (64%), respectively. Together with the fact that OECD average was 50% regarding the participation in an educational activity, the lowest participation level was in Russia (19%), which was followed by Greece (20%), Turkey (23%) and Italy (25%), respectively.

When evaluated in general, it was evident that in the countries where the participation of adults in formal education was high, the participation in lifelong learning activities tended to be high (e.g. Finland, Sweden, Norway), too. In addition, although Turkey had a very similar level of participation with the leading countries in terms of the participation in formal education and was above OECD average, which made it an exception in this case, it fell further behind and was one of the last in terms of the participation in lifelong learning activities. The reason for the high level of participation in formal education in Turkey may stem from the fact that the individuals over 25 years old continue their higher education. Hence, according to the statistics of the Council of Higher Education in Turkey, while the number of students studying at universities in 2016-2017 academic year were over 7 million, about three and a half million students were those who were between 25-64 years of age. In other words, 48% of the students studying at higher education institutions in Turkey were the individuals aged between 25 and 64. However, it should also be emphasized that 71% of this 48% (approximately two and a half million adults) continue their higher education via distant education or Open University (Yükseköğretim Kurulu, 2017). Moreover, according to the data of TURKSTAT, the participation ratio of the individuals aged 25-34 in formal education in 2016-2017 academic year were calculated as about 12% among the population having education (2017).

The percentage and standard error values regarding the participation levels of the adults in OECD countries in formal education and lifelong learning activities and the participation levels of the adults in Turkey in formal education and lifelong learning activities were given in Table 2.

According to Table 2, it could be seen when the participation levels of OECD countries in lifelong learning activities (participation in lifelong learning activities only and participation in both formal education and lifelong learning activities) were examined that, New Zealand was in the first place (64%), which was followed by Sweden (62%), Finland (62%) and Denmark (61%), respectively. Considering the fact that OECD average was 46%, this difference could be said to be significant. It was also revealed that the countries with the lowest participation of lifelong learning activities was Russia (16%), which was followed by Turkey (18%), Greece (18%) and Italy (22%), respectively. In these countries, which were extremely below OECD average, the participation of adults in a lifelong learning activity seemed to be quite low. The fact the participation of adults in a lifelong learning activity in Turkey was quite low and statistically one of the last might stem from the fact that lifelong learning activities in Turkey are inaccessible, that not enough information was provided or the adults are unwilling to participate in any kind of lifelong learning activities. Within this context, the indicator titled "How many adults participate in education and learning?" of OECD Education at a Glance 2017 data provided relevant data on the barriers to participation of adults in formal education and lifelong learning activities as well as the data presented until now within the study. Accordingly, Chart 2 and Table 2 presented below provided statistical

information about what the barriers to the participation of adults in formal education and lifelong learning activities were.

Table 1: The participation in formal and/or non-formal education (2012 or 2015 data)

	Participation in formal education only		Participation in non-formal education only		Participation in both formal and non-formal education		No participation		Total
	%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
OECD Countries									
Australia	5	(0,4)	39	(0,8)	12	(0,5)	44	(0,7)	100
Austria	2	(0,2)	42	(0,7)	4	(0,3)	52	(0,7)	100
Canada	5	(0,3)	44	(0,6)	9	(0,4)	42	(0,6)	100
Chile	3	(0,4)	34	(1,2)	10	(1,2)	53	(1,9)	100
Czech Republic	2	(0,3)	44	(1,2)	4	(0,4)	50	(1,2)	100
Denmark	5	(0,3)	52	(0,6)	9	(0,4)	34	(0,6)	100
Estonia	2	(0,2)	44	(0,7)	7	(0,3)	47	(0,7)	100
Finland	5	(0,3)	51	(0,7)	11	(0,4)	34	(0,7)	100
France	3	(0,2)	31	(0,6)	2	(0,2)	64	(0,6)	100
Germany	3	(0,3)	46	(1,1)	4	(0,3)	47	(1,0)	100
Greece	2	(0,3)	15	(0,7)	3	(0,3)	80	(0,8)	100
Ireland	6	(0,4)	36	(0,8)	9	(0,4)	49	(0,7)	100
Israel	8	(0,4)	34	(0,8)	11	(0,5)	47	(0,8)	100
Italy	3	(0,3)	19	(0,8)	3	(0,3)	75	(1,0)	100
Japan	1	(0,2)	39	(0,8)	2	(0,2)	58	(0,8)	100
Korea	1	(0,1)	45	(0,8)	4	(0,3)	50	(0,8)	100
Netherlands	4	(0,4)	50	(0,7)	10	(0,5)	36	(0,6)	100
New Zealand	4	(0,3)	50	(0,9)	14	(0,6)	32	(0,8)	100
Norway	5	(0,3)	49	(0,7)	11	(0,5)	36	(0,7)	100
Poland	3	(0,3)	28	(0,7)	4	(0,3)	65	(0,8)	100
Slovak Republic	2	(0,2)	27	(0,8)	3	(0,3)	67	(0,8)	100
Slovenia	4	(0,3)	38	(0,8)	6	(0,4)	52	(0,8)	100
Spain	4	(0,3)	34	(0,7)	8	(0,4)	53	(0,7)	100
Sweden	5	(0,4)	53	(0,8)	9	(0,4)	34	(0,8)	100
Turkey	5	(0,4)	12	(0,5)	6	(0,5)	77	(0,8)	100
United States	4	(0,4)	45	(1,1)	10	(0,5)	41	(1,1)	100
Economies									
Flemish Com. (Belgium)	3	(0,2)	41	(0,8)	5	(0,4)	51	(0,8)	100
England (UK)	5	(0,4)	40	(0,8)	11	(0,5)	44	(0,9)	100
Northern Ireland (UK)	4	(0,4)	37	(1,0)	8	(0,6)	51	(0,9)	100
Average	4	(0,1)	39	(0,2)	7	(0,1)	50	(0,2)	100
Partners									
Lithuania	3	(0,3)	28	(0,9)	3	(0,4)	66	(0,8)	100
Russian Federation*	3	(0,3)	13	(1,0)	3	(0,5)	80	(1,6)	100
Singapore	2	(0,3)	46	(0,8)	8	(0,4)	43	(0,7)	100

¹. Reference year is 2015; for all other countries and economies the reference year is 2012.

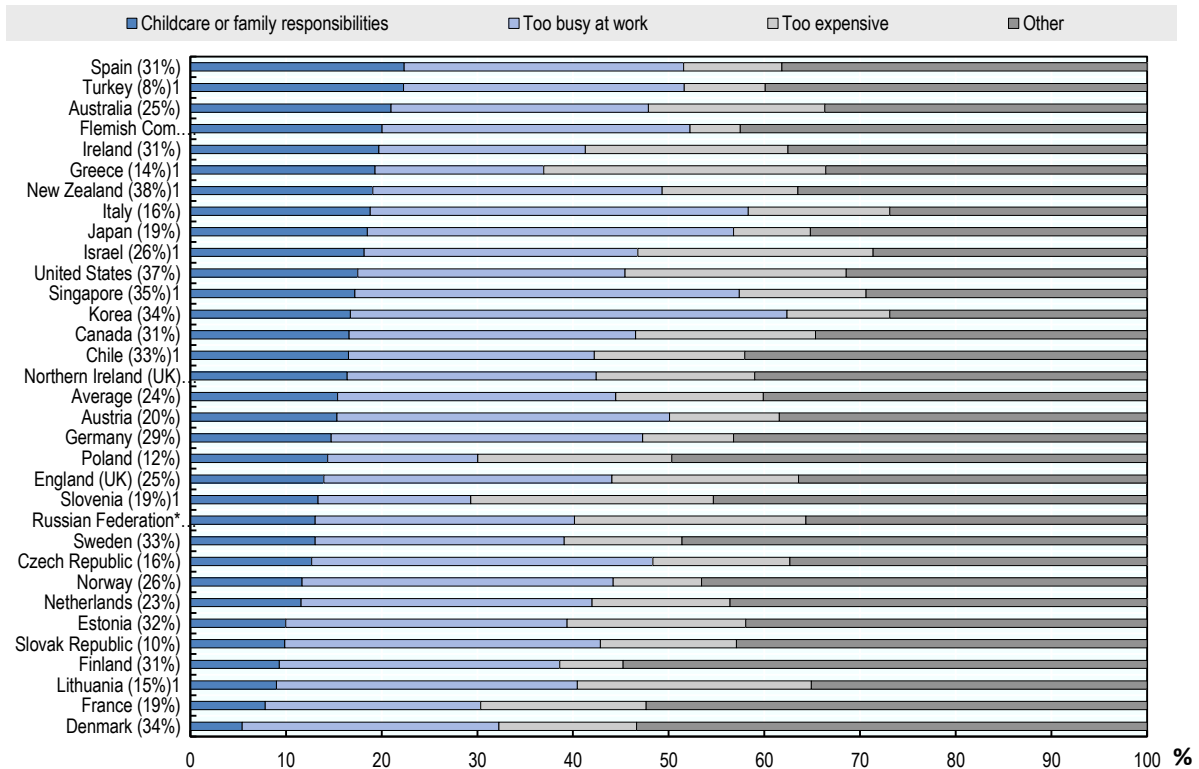
S. E.: Standard Error.

Source: OECD Education at a Glance (2017), Table C6.1a.

The Findings and Discussion Regarding the Third and Forth Sub-problem

According to OECD Education at a Glance 2017 data, the findings regarding the barriers to participation of adults in OECD countries in formal education and lifelong learning activities and the barriers to participation of adults in Turkey in formal education and lifelong learning activities were given in Chart 3.

Chart 3. Barriers to participation in formal and/or non-formal education (2012 or 2015 data)



¹. Reference year is 2015; for all other countries and economies the reference year is 2012.

Note: "Other" includes five reasons cited for not starting the activity: did not have the prerequisites; lack of employer's support; the course or programme was offered at an inconvenient time or place; something unexpected came up that prevented me from taking education or training; other.

Source: OECD Education at a Glance (2017), Figure C6.2.

At this stage of the research, the adults were asked why they did not want to participate in an educational activity. In the light of the responses of adults in OECD countries that attended the research, it was found that the category of "The barriers to participation of adults in formal education and lifelong learning activities" had four sub-categories as childcare or family responsibilities, too busy at work, too expensive, and other. As can be understood from Figure 2, on average, 29% of adults in the OECD countries stated that the most common reason for them was the fact that they were very busy at work. In addition, 15% of adults expressed that they did not participate in an educational activity because of childcare or family responsibilities. In other words, 44% of the adults in the survey could be said to have stated that work or family burden was the biggest obstacle for them to allocate time for educational activities. Besides, when OECD average was examined, it could be seen that 15% of the adults who participated in the study considered that they did not participate in an educational activity due to the fact that the education was very expensive. When an assessment was made considering the fact that the reasons of childcare or family responsibility, too busy at work and education being too expensive were the most frequent

causes, with a total average of 59%, it could be seen that the highest ratio was in Italy (74%), South Korea (74%) and Israel (72%), and the lowest ratio was in Finland (45%), Denmark (46%) and France (48%). Even though Turkey (59%) reached the OECD average considering the total average of the three reasons mentioned, it shared the first place with Spain with an average of 22% in the barriers to participation in an educational activity because of childcare or family responsibilities. It can be said that this data which was significantly above the OECD average (15%) reflected the traces of Turkish family structure. According to the data of 2016, while the enrollment rate in Turkey was 98.81% at primary school level, 99.05% at secondary school level, and 85.31% at high school level, which were the compulsory education stages, the enrollment rate in pre-school education, that is the children between 3-5 years of age was 39.54% (Ministry of National Education, 2016). That is to say, only 4 out of 10 children aged 3-5 received pre-school education, and 6 had to be cared at home. For this reason, it could be thought that adults who had small children at home and who did not benefit from pre-school education might not be able to attend an educational activity. Setting off from this finding, it would not be wrong to say that family responsibilities and having small children at home was one of the biggest barriers for adults to be able to participate in an educational activity.

The detailed data about the barriers to participation of adults in OECD countries in an educational activity and the extension of "other" category were given in Table 2. When Table 3 was examined, together with childcare or family responsibilities, too busy at work and education being too expensive, "other reasons" for the barriers to participation of adults in OECD countries in an educational activity were "not having the prerequisites", "lack of employer's support", "the fact that the course or programme was offered at an inconvenient time or place", and "the fact that something unexpected came up that prevented them from taking education or training", and the reasons other than these reasons were presented under the heading of "other" because they were repeated much less. It was revealed that, on average, 12% of the adults in OECD countries who participated in the survey expressed that they did not participate in an educational activity because of the fact that the course or programme was offered at an inconvenient time or place, 7% stated that they lacked employer's support, 4% stated that something unexpected came up that prevented them from taking education or training, and 3% expressed that did not participate in an educational activity due to lack of prerequisites for education. When "other" reasons were taken into consideration, it could be seen that the countries such as Denmark, France and Lithuania were in the first place while Italy, South Korea and Israel were in the last place. In Turkey, the adults who participated in the survey expressed the reason why they did not participate in an educational activity as the fact that the course or programme was offered at an inconvenient time or place (16%), which was the highest, and as this ratio was above OECD average (12%), it could be said to be significant. The fact that this factor was the highest repeated factor by adults in Turkey could be said to coincide with the reasons of "too busy at work" (29%) and childcare or family responsibilities (15%). The adults in Turkey might be having difficulty matching up with their time and the time and place of the education due to work and family burden. For this reason, they might prefer working or taking care of their family and children rather than participating in educational activities.

Table 2. Barriers to participation in formal and/or non-formal education (2012 or 2015 data).

		Childcare or family responsibilities		Too expensive		Too busy at work		Did not have the prerequisites		Lack of employer's support		The course or programme was offered at an inconvenient time or place		Something unexpected came up that prevented me from taking education or training		Other	
		%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%	S.E.
(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)		
OECD Countries																	
Australia		21	(1,3)	18	(1,5)	27	(1,2)	2	(0,3)	6	(0,9)	11	(1,0)	3	(0,5)	12	(0,9)
Austria		15	(1,2)	11	(1,3)	35	(1,6)	1	(0,5)	2	(0,5)	14	(1,3)	7	(0,9)	13	(1,3)
Canada		17	(1,0)	19	(0,9)	30	(0,9)	2	(0,3)	6	(0,5)	12	(0,7)	3	(0,4)	12	(0,6)
Chile	1	17	(1,2)	16	(1,5)	26	(1,9)	7	(1,1)	8	(1,2)	13	(1,0)	6	(0,9)	9	(1,0)
Czech Republic		13	(2,0)	14	(1,7)	36	(3,5)	3	(0,9)	10	(2,1)	7	(1,4)	6	(1,1)	12	(2,2)
Denmark		5	(0,6)	14	(0,9)	27	(1,2)	2	(0,4)	15	(1,0)	9	(0,8)	5	(0,5)	22	(1,0)
Estonia		10	(0,6)	19	(0,9)	29	(0,9)	4	(0,5)	7	(0,7)	15	(0,8)	3	(0,4)	13	(0,8)
Finland		9	(0,8)	7	(0,7)	29	(1,4)	3	(0,5)	10	(0,8)	21	(1,1)	3	(0,4)	18	(1,2)
France		8	(0,7)	17	(1,1)	23	(1,3)	3	(0,5)	18	(1,0)	4	(0,5)	4	(0,4)	24	(1,1)
Germany		15	(1,2)	9	(0,9)	33	(1,5)	1	(0,3)	10	(1,0)	14	(1,0)	3	(0,5)	15	(1,2)
Greece	1	19	(1,8)	29	(2,2)	18	(2,1)	4	(1,0)	3	(0,9)	11	(1,5)	5	(1,1)	11	(1,5)
Ireland		20	(1,1)	21	(1,1)	22	(1,1)	3	(0,4)	5	(0,7)	10	(0,8)	4	(0,5)	17	(1,2)
Israel	1	18	(1,2)	25	(1,4)	29	(1,4)	2	(0,5)	5	(0,8)	11	(1,1)	1	(0,4)	10	(0,9)
Italy		19	(1,8)	15	(1,6)	40	(2,3)	3	(1,0)	3	(0,8)	5	(1,0)	4	(0,8)	12	(1,4)
Japan		19	(1,4)	8	(1,0)	38	(1,9)	4	(0,7)	1	(0,3)	22	(1,5)	1	(0,4)	7	(0,9)
Korea		17	(0,8)	11	(0,9)	46	(1,3)	2	(0,4)	1	(0,2)	16	(0,9)	2	(0,4)	6	(0,5)
Netherlands		12	(1,0)	14	(1,3)	30	(1,7)	1	(0,4)	9	(0,9)	8	(0,9)	7	(0,9)	18	(1,4)
New Zealand	1	19	(1,1)	14	(1,1)	30	(1,1)	2	(0,3)	7	(0,8)	11	(0,8)	4	(0,5)	13	(0,8)
Norway		12	(1,0)	9	(0,9)	33	(1,3)	3	(0,6)	12	(0,9)	9	(1,0)	6	(0,7)	17	(1,1)
Poland		14	(2,1)	20	(2,2)	16	(1,7)	5	(1,1)	9	(1,5)	13	(1,5)	7	(1,2)	16	(2,3)
Slovak Republic		10	(1,7)	14	(1,9)	33	(2,6)	2	(0,9)	14	(2,4)	8	(1,4)	4	(1,0)	14	(2,0)
Slovenia	1	13	(1,2)	25	(1,8)	16	(1,3)	9	(1,0)	8	(0,9)	14	(1,4)	5	(0,7)	9	(1,1)
Spain		22	(1,0)	10	(0,9)	29	(1,3)	5	(0,5)	3	(0,4)	8	(0,8)	2	(0,4)	20	(1,0)
Sweden		13	(0,9)	12	(1,0)	26	(1,3)	4	(0,6)	8	(0,7)	11	(0,9)	4	(0,6)	21	(1,4)
Turkey	1	22	(2,7)	8	(1,7)	29	(2,7)	4	(1,2)	5	(1,7)	16	(2,2)	2	(0,5)	13	(2,4)
United States		17	(1,1)	23	(1,3)	28	(1,5)	2	(0,3)	4	(0,5)	11	(0,9)	6	(0,8)	9	(0,9)
Economies																	
Flemish Com. (Belgium)		20	(1,4)	5	(0,8)	32	(1,8)	2	(0,5)	6	(1,0)	18	(1,5)	4	(0,7)	14	(1,4)
England (UK)		14	(0,9)	20	(1,4)	30	(1,6)	1	(0,4)	8	(1,0)	9	(0,9)	4	(0,7)	14	(1,1)
Northern Ireland (UK)		16	(1,5)	17	(1,8)	26	(2,2)	2	(0,7)	7	(1,1)	14	(1,7)	3	(0,8)	15	(1,7)
Average		15	(0,2)	15	(0,3)	29	(0,3)	3	(0,1)	7	(0,2)	12	(0,2)	4	(0,1)	14	(0,2)
Partners																	
Lithuania	1	9	(1,4)	24	(1,6)	31	(2,1)	2	(1,0)	8	(1,0)	13	(1,8)	4	(0,7)	8	(1,4)
Russian Federation*		13	(2,8)	24	(2,8)	27	(2,6)	2	(0,7)	5	(1,2)	15	(2,8)	7	(2,4)	7	(2,1)
Singapore	1	17	(1,1)	13	(0,9)	40	(1,4)	2	(0,4)	7	(0,7)	10	(0,8)	4	(0,5)	7	(0,6)

¹. Reference year is 2015; for all other countries and economies the reference year is 2012.

S. E.: Standard Error.

Source: OECD Education at a Glance (2017), Table C6.1b

Conclusion and Suggestions

This research was carried out in order to examine the participation of adults in OECD countries in educational activities according to OECD Education at a Glance 2017 data and to raise awareness in this subject. According to the findings obtained from the research, the participation levels of adults in OECD countries in an educational activity to meet their education needs varied. When the participation levels of adults in an educational activity was examined, it was noticed that the highest participation rate was in New Zealand, which was followed by Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, respectively. Together with the fact that OECD average was fifty per cent regarding the participation in an educational activity, the lowest participation level was in Russia, which was followed by Greece, Turkey and Italy, respectively.

Another finding obtained from the study was the fact that in the countries where the participation of adults in formal education was high, the participation in lifelong learning activities tended to be high, too. Besides, though Turkey, which is an exception in this case, had similar participation rate in formal education with the countries in the first places and was above the OECD average, it fell further behind and was one of the last in terms of the participation in lifelong learning activities.

When the participation levels of OECD countries in lifelong learning activities were examined, it was seen that New Zealand was in the first place, which was followed by Sweden, Finland and Denmark, respectively. Considering the fact that OECD average was forty-six per cent, this difference could be said to be significant. It was also revealed that the countries with the lowest participation of lifelong learning activities was Russia, which was followed by Turkey, Greece and Italy, respectively. In these countries, which were extremely below OECD average, the participation of adults in a lifelong learning activity seemed to be quite low.

The adults in OECD countries who participated in the survey were asked why they did not want to participate in an educational activity and the responses they gave was collected under the category of "The barriers to participation of adults in formal education and lifelong learning activities" and this category was divided into four sub-categories as childcare or family responsibilities, too busy at work, too expensive, and other. When considered that the reasons of childcare or family responsibility, too busy at work and education being too expensive were the most frequent causes repeated by the participants, it could be seen that the highest ratio of mentioning these three reasons together was in Italy, South Korea and Israel, and the lowest ratio was in Finland, Denmark and France. Even though Turkey reached the OECD average within this context, it was in the first place with Spain in the barriers to participation in an educational activity because of childcare or family responsibilities. The category of "other reasons" was divided into five categories as not having the prerequisites, lack of employer's support, the fact that the course or programme was offered at an inconvenient time or place, and the fact that something unexpected came up that prevented them from taking education or training, and "other". When these sub-categories were taken into consideration, it could be seen that the countries such as Denmark, France and Lithuania were in the first place while Italy, South Korea and Israel were in the last place. In Turkey, the adults who participated in the survey expressed the reason why they did not participate in an educational activity as the fact that the educational activity was offered at an inconvenient time or place and as this ratio was above OECD average, it could be said to be significant.

The suggestions made in the light of the research findings are as follows:

- The reason for the low level of adult participation in lifelong learning activities in Turkey and the solution offers can be investigated in-depth with qualitative research design.
- Studies can be carried out in Turkey to encourage the participation of adults in lifelong learning activities.
- Considering the fact that the enrollment rate is very low in pre-school education and that the adults cannot participate in an educational activity due to family responsibilities and having small children at home, studies can be carried out to encourage pre-school education and to increase the enrollment rate in pre-school education.
- Taking into consideration the fact that the educational activity was offered at an inconvenient time or place and being too busy at work are the most significant barriers to participation of adults in Turkey in lifelong learning activities, these activities can be planned better considering the adults who are working.

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