

Employment and Women on the 21st century in Europe: From Household economy to SME economy

(Small and Medium enterprises) – MUPYME

O1. Complex research according to the ethnomethodological pattern by applying professionography to the target group of housewives

The four interviews were carried out in April 2016. Each one of them was roughly 2 hours long. The interviews were based on the structural model provided by FEUP. The interviewers have implemented observation methods.

The interviewers were: Carmen Hernán Trenado, Head of the Popular University in Talarrubias, Mercedes Sánchez Mora and Azucena Metidieri Muñoz, Officers for Equality in The Equality and Gender-based Violence Department (Oficina de Igualdad y de Violencia de Género) at the Siberia Municipal Association.

We selected the four housewives according to their ages, number of members in the family, their experiences at home, etc. All four of them live in Talarrubias (Badajoz).

FINDINGS

1. The four women were asked about different activities performed within the household (around 60 tasks), related to the following set of activities:
 - a. Household cleaning and maintenance.
 - b. Household protection and care.
 - c. Management of income and expenses.
 - d. Supplies.
 - e. Purchases and relationship with the distributors.
 - f. Environmental impact.
 - g. Education and Training.
 - h. Decision-making and conflict settlement.

2. Very few participants experience a fair distribution of housework at home: they are the ones doing most of the work, which leaves them little time for themselves.
3. In most cases, their partners and children help with some of the tasks within the household; however, they are the ones in charge of the cleaning, home maintenance and taking care of the family unit, while their husbands are usually the ones performing tasks regarding bank matters, insurance, car maintenance, etc.
4. They are the ones managing the spending in food, clothes and footwear. They usually are very efficient in carrying out this task.
5. The four participants reported that it was their mothers that passed down all their knowledge about the household to them. They also explained that they have been in charge of household economy ever since they got married or moved in with their partners.
6. The participants have an active social life. They are members of associations for women and parents. They also attend training courses at the Popular University or other private courses they have to invest on in order to continue their training. They also engage in different sport activities.
7. Almost all of them believe that average intelligence, problem solving skills, commitment, creativity and communication are all highly important qualities that any housewife should have.
8. Regarding those things that would make their work easier, most of them stated that they have access to the most innovative household devices to carry out their work; the only improvement would be employing a person to do those tasks. They consider that the only way to improve the performance of household activities is by means of practice.
9. Their working conditions are very satisfactory, since they have access to modern household appliances to make their job easier. However, sometimes they feel stressed because of the amount of work they need to do. Their working hours are usually around 8 or 10 per day. Feeling isolated and lonely is the aspect that has the greatest impact on a psychological level. They always need to be cautious, make decisions quickly, manage

different things simultaneously, etc. All of them reported that household activities are both physically and psychologically exhausting.

10. The activities carried out by housewives are usually more related to government than to management. Regarding the distribution of tasks, women are the ones in charge of most of the work, and their husbands and children just help a bit with the housework.
11. The participants told us that they have to make decisions on a daily basis, and some of them must be taken really quickly. Most of them are related to their tasks and the rest of the family. However, providing that it is possible, most of them prefer to make those decisions together with their husbands.
12. Women linked the tasks they perform at home with those associated with a small Enterprise. Many skills and values learnt within the household are similar to those found in a business context. The following are some of them:
 - Equipment and facilities maintenance.
 - Safety, leadership and motivation.
 - Accounting, income and spending.
 - Stock control, inventories and logistics.
 - Purchase management and listing of providers.
 - Environmental impact.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Training courses designed for women should be structured to promote awareness of the skills they have acquired at home and its potential implementation in a SME context.
2. The organization of courses with both businesswomen and housewives should be promoted in order to allow them to share their knowledge.