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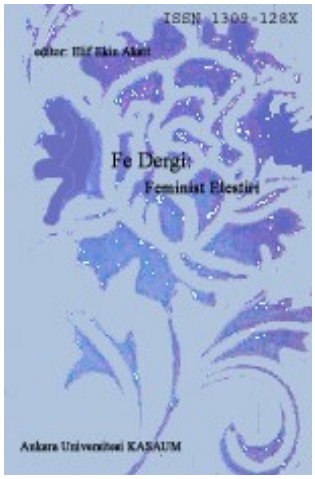

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Finding the Modern Women Workers in Global Era: Hiring and Training Practices in the Corporate Retail Sector in Turkey

Esra Sarıoğlu*

This article investigates the formation of a new segment of female service workers in Turkey in global era by paying particular attention to the skill requirements of the corporate retail sector. Drawing on fifteen months' field research in Istanbul, through both ethnography and in-depth interviews, I show that the corporate retail employers recruit and prepare the female workforce in ways that appeal to the cultural tastes of their target consumers. Specifically, in order to ensure their appeal to those customers with secular orientations and Westernized lifestyles, retail employers hire workers on the basis of their prior dispositions and physical appearance, creating a 'modern' female workforce. This article, drawing on gender and labor studies' interpretations of Bourdieu, extends the literature on gender, globalization and labor.

Keywords: Aesthetic labor, Turkish modernity, women, service work, habitus

Küresel Çağda Modern Kadın İşçileri Bulmak: Türkiye'de Kurumsal Perakende Sektöründe İstihdam ve Eğitim Pratikleri

According Bu makale, Türkiye'de küreselleşmeyle birlikte hizmet sektöründe oluşan yeni bir kadın işgücünü incelemektedir. Bunu özellikle kurumsal perakende sektörünün kadın işçide aradığı beceri şartlarına odaklanarak yapmaktadır. Etnografik çalışmayı ve derinlemesine mülakatları içeren onbeş aylık bir saha çalışmasına dayanan bu araştırmada, kurumsal perakende sektöründeki işverenlerin kadın işçileri ise alırken ve eğitirken hedefledikleri müşteri kitlesinin kültürel zevk ve beklentilerini dikkate aldıklarını gösteriyorum. Seküler eğilimli ve Batılı bir yaşam tarzı süren hedef müşterilerini cezbetmek için 'modern' bir işgücü yaratmayı hedefleyen işverenler, işe alacakları kadınların halihazırda belli yeteneklere ve belli bir dış görünüşe sahip olmasını istiyorlar. Toplumsal cinsiyet ve emek çalışmalarının Bourdieu yorumları üzerine bina edilen bu makalede toplumsal cinsiyet, küreselleşme ve emek literatürünü Türkiye'de hizmet sektöründe ortaya çıkan yeni kadın işgücüne odaklanarak birleştiriyor ve genişletiyorum.

Anahtar sözcükler: Estetik emek, Türk modernleşmesi, kadın, hizmet emeği, habitus

Introduction

When I started working as a cashier at MajorMarket, I found the fast-paced work environment and job tasks required for the position very stressful. Corporate retail workers are given very little training, so the first days especially are frightening. While new workers are still trying to figure out the operations of the cash register, they are not fast enough in taking payment and counting back change or processing credit or debit cards. Customers easily get impatient, placing more pressure on the workers. For example, at the beginning, I, like the rest of the new employees, had not fully memorized the codes for fresh fruits and vegetables, so had to look up each item on a chart before entering the code corresponding to the product. During one of my first days as a cashier, a queue of customers backed up at my checkout, angrily asking me why I was working there if I didn't know how to do the job properly. As I was nervous about making mistakes, like counting money incorrectly, it took me a bit longer to deal with each customer. One customer in line had a t-shirt with a missing price tag but when I paged the customer service desk, no one answered because they were busy dealing with other customers. This meant I had to spend 15 minutes among racks trying to find the right price for the shirt, and when I got back to the register, the customer scolded me for being late. At the end of the day, I was left feeling dazed and confused.

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This is how a new retail worker generally feels during her first two weeks at a store, although after two weeks or so, she becomes better adapted at dealing with irate customers, fast-paced working conditions, multi-tasking, and duties extending well beyond the check-out line. During the first two weeks of my stint at MajorMarket, it seemed to me that nothing I had learnt at school was relevant to the skills required for cashiering. Neither math, nor the Turkish literature classes I took at high school helped me process credit cards quickly. I observed that all the new workers at MajorMarket, high-school graduates and college students alike, acquired retail specific skills while working in the store. On-the-job training rather than educational credentials seemed vital to me. Nevertheless, the corporate retail sector in Turkey regards a high school diploma as the prerequisite for sales and cashier positions. While primary school graduates can get hired as cashiers and sales assistants in local supermarkets, this is not the case in corporate retail stores.

My experiences raised doubts about the link between workers' educational attainments and skill requirements in corporate retailers in Turkey. Given the employment of primary school graduates as sales floor workers and cashiers at local supermarket chains, and that the technical skill requirements, such as running the register and processing credit cards, do not significantly vary across the retail sector, I wondered: Why was a high school diploma required in the corporate retail sector? That is, the corporate retail sector workforce's predominantly high school graduate profile in the Turkish context needs further explanation. In addition, I observed that female workers in corporate retail stores have similar demographic characteristics with respect to age, birthplace, and family backgrounds. Why did they tend be young, urban and secular, high-school graduate women?

This article examines the recruitment and training practices in the Turkish retail sector to establish how a new segment of women workers has been constructed in global era. My study shows that corporate retailers in Turkey have created a distinct body of female sales floor workers as they seek to secure a place at the top of the retailing hierarchy. In order to enhance their business success, corporate retailers create a workforce that reflects their brand image by hiring employees with certain interpersonal skills. For corporate employers, these skills, encompassing a particular demeanor, way of speaking and appearance, are more important selection criteria than technical and retail specific skills. Taking educational credentials as a proxy for interpersonal skills, corporate retailers filter out those applicants considered inappropriate for interactive service work even before the interview stage, and try to draw upon a particular segment of the labor market: young, urban, high school graduate women with working-class or lower-middle-class family backgrounds.

This article also shows that the brand strategies of corporate retailers have contributed to the formation of a modern female workforce in Turkey in the context of globalization. The corporate retailers that target specific market segments between the mass discounters and the luxury market wish to project a corporate image of modernity. This image is, to a great extent, shaped by the hegemonic historical and cultural discourse of Turkish modernity. Within the gendered discourse of Turkish modernity, a certain demeanor, way of speaking and appearance are constructed as modern, while others are deemed either traditional or anti-modern. Corporate retailers, utilizing the hegemonic discourse of Turkish modernity, thus hire women on the basis of cultural constructs of modernity, which allows them to promote their brand image through their workforce.

Conceptual Remarks on Interactive Service Work in Global Era

One important stream of gender, labor, and globalization research is concerned with the impact of globalization on the characteristics of workforce in developing countries. Focusing on a variety of dynamics associated with globalization, scholars investigate how these dynamics shape the gendered and racialized characteristics of workforce. Of particular importance here is the relation between the corporatization of service industries in global era and the changing skill requirements in the service sector.[1] Scholars argue that, with the rise of heavily capitalized service establishments and low-wage work, employers emphasize interpersonal skills, so workers are increasingly hired on the basis of their ethnic, cultural and gender identities, as indicators of these skills. That is, the definitions of who is qualified and what it means to be qualified for a job have become associated with stereotypes about race and gender.[2] In order to theorize the different aspects of 'soft skills' or interpersonal skills[3], sociologists of work have formulated two major concepts: emotional labor and aesthetic labor.[4]

Drawing on the experiences of flight attendants in the U.S.A., Arlie Hochschild developed the concept of emotional labor, which refers to the process in which workers are expected to display certain emotions in accordance with organizationally defined guidelines and rules. In her groundbreaking book *The Managed Heart*, Hochschild suggests that interactive service jobs increasingly rely on emotional labor because successfully

performing them, at least from the perspective of customers and employers, depends heavily on workers' abilities to enact particular emotional states.[5] Consequently, service employers have sought to exercise a degree of control over this process, thereby transforming feeling management into emotional labor as a skill requirement.

The concept of aesthetic labor refers to the personality, manner and appearance requirements for employment in service sector occupations. Employers select workers with the required aesthetic capacity and characteristics. As Warhurst, Thompson and Nickson explain, "with many front-line service workers now expected to embody the company image or required service, it is the commodification of workers' corporeality, not just their feelings that is becoming the analytical focus".[6] Unlike the notion of emotional labor, which refers to workers' displaying required emotions as a part of their jobs, aesthetic labor is a process by which workers express their acquired dispositions. Such aesthetic labor requirements are most explicit during recruitment and selection stages. In an analysis of the retail and hospitality sectors, Warhurst, Thompson and Nickson show that employers want to hire the right employees at the point of entry rather than having to train them after hiring. In other words, employers look for workers who already possess a particular habitus.[7]

Research on aesthetic labor is based largely on the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his notion of habitus. Habitus refers to manners that are acquired in the early stages of socialization and that are difficult to change later in life. Bourdieu argues that there exists a patterned relationship between individuals' class position and their ways of feeling, thinking and interacting in everyday life. Once internalized, these manners become almost like second nature and common sense.[8] Treating habitus as a feature of jobs requiring interactive work, scholars have demonstrated that, in upscale retail stores[9], luxury hotels[10], night clubs[11] and the airline industry[12], employers screen applicants' habitus, 'making sure that the workers possess particular styles of standing, speaking, and walking. In other words, "looking good" and "sounding right" are interactive service workers' primary job requirements'.[13]

While drawing on the importance of aesthetic labor for corporate image, the literature on aesthetic labor does not sufficiently recognize the role of national discourses and the cultural context in creating the corporate image and the desired workforce. In this study, I highlight the interplay between corporate strategies, local discourses, and aesthetic labor by showing the way the hegemonic historical and cultural construct of Turkish modernity influenced MajorMarket's corporate image, embodied through its female workforce. Corporate retailers like MajorMarket, target a particular segment between the mass discounters and the luxury markets. This segment consists of affluent, urban, educated customers with secular and Western lifestyles, who have, historically, embodied the modern lifestyle in Turkey. Developing a corporate image based on modernity, and presenting this corporate image through its workforce, allows MajorMarket to reflect the salient characteristics of its target customers in terms of their expectations, values and lifestyles. Besides, by hiring people who already have the dispositions and interpersonal skills that reflect MajorMarket's corporate image, corporate executives are able to cut back on the costs associated with training the workforce.

Research Context

As the urban zones have increasingly been integrated into global networks and markets over the last two decades, the urban landscape in Turkey has significantly changed. Central to this change is a proliferation of new consumption sites. In large cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Konya the urban landscape is now dotted with shopping malls, branded outlets, hypermarkets, supermarkets, and giant discount chains, where the upper and middle classes go to spend their new-found wealth. The pace of change is fast. The first shopping mall in Istanbul was opened in 1989, but in just two decades the number of shopping malls in the city reached to 278. The number of the hypermarkets and supermarkets increased from 2,979 to 11,588 between 2000 and 2011.[14]

The new sites of consumption are now the main source of jobs for working class women in urban centers. Employed in low-wage service jobs which entail considerable interaction with customers and clients (i.e. interactive service jobs), these female workers offer many of the face-to-face customer services. With the proliferation of new consumption sites, service workforce is increasingly becoming feminized in Turkey. For instance, employment in the retail sector represents more than one-third of female service employment in Turkey, apart from being one of the fastest growing sub-sectors alongside wholesale, restaurants and hotels.[15] Service occupations within the heavily capitalized and corporate retail sector are characterized by low but regular incomes, job security and benefits, and long hours. These make service occupations at corporate retail

stores reasonable employment choices for urban women with high-school degrees. Employers, in the corporate retailing sector, on the other hand, hire women who already possess certain manners and accent that are grounded in a particular cultural identity. No longer committed to training workers, corporate retail employers are concerned with hiring workers who already possess the 'modern' look and habitus. Only a certain type of woman, stripped of Islamic seclusion norms, extrovert, able to keep a conversation flowing, courteous and open-minded, was suited to staff a corporate retail store servicing the secularly oriented upper-middle classes in Istanbul. What is salient for employers is not the high school diploma *per se*, but rather the demeanor a high school graduate is presumed to have and be able to display in the workplace.

Methodology

This article is based upon fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in Istanbul, Turkey carried out between 2009 and 2011. The research I conducted in Istanbul included two interconnected methodologies: in-depth interviews and participant observation. I conducted 60 in-depth interviews with the research participants. These participants consisted of thirty-five female retail workers, four human resources employees of individual retail companies, a Turkish retail council representative, and a union leader. Initial approaches to the participants were made through the researcher's personal contacts and were followed up with a snowball sampling strategy. The interviews with human resource employees and women retail workers included questions about hiring and recruitment practices, skill requirements, workers' own experiences during the hiring process, and the demographic profile of female workers. These interviews generated a range of insights into the connection between hiring practices and the formation of a distinct female workforce in Turkey's corporate retail sector.

Participant observation was another source of field data. Between May 2011 and August 2011, I worked as a cashier at large supermarket that I call MajorMarket. It was a joint venture owned by European and Turkish holding companies, and located in an upscale urban neighborhood on the European side of the city. It targets customers between the mass discounters and the luxury markets. For two and a half months, I was engaged in interactive routines that female retail workers experience on the sales floor. By conducting participant observation, I collected firsthand data on the recruitment and training processes in the corporate retail sector. The training I received when I was hired at MajorMarket also helped me tease out how assumptions about women's identities are built into the job requirements. I used pseudonyms for the participants described in these retail stores and for the supermarket I analyzed in this study.

The Hegemonic Discourse of Modernity

The early Republican elite played a critical role in the making of the hegemonic discourse of modernity in Turkey in that their efforts to modernize society during the 1920s and 1930s facilitated the discourse's historical formation. Women's gender identities and images, which stood at the center of the Republican modernization project, were also a critical component.[16] With the founding of Turkish Republic in 1923, the founding elite began to use the conditions of women as an indicator of the modernity of the society. In the new discursive space provided by national modernization, the political elite condemned particular features of Ottoman patriarchy, such as polygyny and the seclusion of women, and championed women's civil and political rights.[17]

As a part of the modernization project and to promote a democratic and modern image, the state initiated a series of legal reforms related to women's participation in public and political life that granted women civil and political rights during this period.[18] In the initial decades of the Republic, the modernity of the new regime was signaled especially through the refashioning and display of new gender identities.[19] Of particular importance here was the display of the image of the 'modern Republican woman' via regulating the appearance and clothing of women in the public sphere. For the Republican elite, the emancipation of women from religious constraints and traditional ties was a necessary precondition for modernization. Thus, women's removal of the veil or headscarf was constructed as signifying women's liberation from religious constraints. That is, the image of a modern, Westernized, liberated woman in the public sphere was "attained by the erasure of the mark of Islam -the veil- from the body".[20]

The ideal modern Republican woman was educated, active professionally, dressed in Western style and participating in public life. The modern woman was also desexualized.[21] Having abandoned the veil, the modern woman played down her own sexuality in order to ward off accusations of corruption and immorality. As they hid their sexualized femininity, for example by wearing boxy suits and long skirts, women attained a new

visibility outside the private realm. Unlike the entirely Westernized woman, who was constructed as decadent, modern women in Turkey preserved their virtue by being desexualized.

Between 1923 and 1980, as the secularist authorities came to occupy a hegemonic status in the public sphere, the cultural construction of modern as Western, secular and urban became hegemonic too.[22] Islam, on the other hand, was constructed as the opposite pole to modernity.[23] The modern woman, thus, did not wear a headscarf, since "no other symbol than the veil constructs with such force, the 'otherness' of Islam to the West".[24]

Finding 'the Modern' Female Worker at MajorMarket

The hegemonic cultural discourse of Turkish modernity permeates the business strategies of MajorMarket. Corporate retailers, like MajorMarket, targeting the urban, secular, educated, middle and upper-middle classes with Western lifestyles have developed brand images informed by the core values and norms of this discourse. As the basis for a corporate image of modernity, it defines particular dispositions (speech, body language, and dress) as modern. When adopted into company rhetoric, these dispositions set the guidelines for skill requirements, which accounts for why a particular group of women, who have been discursively constructed as modern, make ideal workers on the sales floor, or why another group of women, discursively constructed as traditional, are not eligible for working in corporate retail stores. MajorMarket uses two strategies to screen applicants' habitus: educational requirements and face-to-face interviews.

Hiring Modernity

Given the historical incompatibility in Turkey of secularist notions of modernity with veiling, the image of a headscarf wearing female worker is not compatible with the modern image that MajorMarket wants to project. Indeed, there is a strong but quiet agreement among those corporate retailers that target the urban, secular, middle and upper-middle classes in Turkey that women wearing headscarves are not eligible to work on the sales floor. This rule has been strictly enforced by joint venture retailers owned by TNCs and Turkish holding companies, such as IKEA, Migros, and CarrefourSA. In contrast, both national retailers such as BIM, and local supermarkets owned by Islamically oriented individuals and targeting the lower-middle classes as well as the pious middle classes, employ headscarf wearing women for cashier and sales positions.

All human resources employees that I interviewed stated that there was no written rule about wearing headscarves, but admitted that retail companies do not hire women with headscarves for cashier and sales positions. According to my informants, corporate employers place a particular emphasis on appearance standards, seeking out workers who already know the company brand's cultural meanings and matched the lifestyle associated with the brand image. From the corporate retailers' point of view, women wearing headscarves do not portray the desired modern image for corporate retailers targeting urban affluent customers who have adopted secular lifestyles.

Hiring Sexual Modesty

One of the key notions of the hegemonic modernity discourse in Turkey concerns female sexual modesty. Only when women's sexuality was made invisible did women participate in public life as modern members of society in Turkey, meaning that modern women, in this discourse, have been deprived of their sexuality. This cultural construction of female sexual modesty has become incorporated directly into the job requirements in the corporate retail sector in Turkey in that women who look to be of 'questionable morality' are not seen as portraying the right image for corporate retail employers. For instance, one personnel director interviewed for this study recalled rejecting one applicant after the job interview, because she thought she was too coquettish. As she told me in all seriousness, "I did not hire her because these kinds of women want to work here only to flirt with customers". Sexual modesty is also reflected in dress codes. For example, the dress code is strictly enforced at MajorMarket, with workers being required to wear standardized uniforms, company issued polo shirts and loose-fitting pants for women and men alike, which downplays the workers' sexual identities in favor of a more masculine look. By standardizing their appearance, corporate retailers are able to promote a unified as well as modern look supporting the corporate image.

Hiring Sociability

In order to create a modern workforce, it has become crucial for corporate employers to recruit not only the workers who have the proper look, but also the proper habitus. Store workers provide a face-to-face or

interactive service, in which the product consists, to varying degrees, of interaction between workers and customers. Thus, hiring workers with the proper dispositions enhances employers' capacity to provide the desired service encounter. The human resource (HR) manager of a major corporate retail company explained:

> We have a lot of people coming into the stores. For instance, seven thousand people visit our stores during weekdays and this number reaches up to twenty thousand at weekends. Only 35 percent of these people are shopping. But our workers should handle all of these people in a friendly and professional way. We want our workers to be presentable, open-minded and sociable. We cannot work with shy people. Our customers are coming from very different cultural backgrounds. You know, some people are touchy, some talk a lot. Besides, we are located in Istanbul, which is a cosmopolitan city. Tourists and people from different religions are also shopping here. No matter what kind of customers our workers deal with, they should treat customers in a genial and courteous way.

Management believes that high school graduate urban women are more likely to possess these skills, such as sociability and open-mindedness, so are considered well suited for work in retail stores. One former human resource employee made the following comment to explain why they prefer hiring high-school graduates:

> High school graduate girls are different from less educated girls. When a girl has a high school diploma, it means that she is not like a girl living in a varos [a neighborhood made up of squatter settlements]. She is different, because she is already urbanized and has achieved a level of education. She does not work purely out of necessity. Of course, she needs money, but she also wants to stand on her own feet. Besides, girls with high-school education are better at communicating with people. They know how to talk to customers and maintain a friendly demeanor.

Her comment reflected the way familiar tropes of modernity have become entrenched in the hiring process, in particular the widely held presumption among corporate retailers that women without high-school education, especially women living in varos areas, do not meet the job requirements because of their habitus. These women are assumed to have been socialized within traditional, often migrant households, where patriarchal hierarchies dictate obedient behavior on the part of daughters and wives. Thus, according to management, these women are not accustomed to interacting with socially and culturally heterogeneous populations, implying that they lack the appropriate dispositions vital for successful customer-server interactions. By contrast, a woman with a high school diploma, because her familial and educational socialization has followed a different trajectory, is believed to possess the right manners, such as open-mindedness and being at ease when interacting with customers.

In retail settings, interactions between men and women constitute an integral part of service encounters. In Turkey, public interaction between men and women is widely accepted in urban life, and the social mixing of genders has been constructed as modern in the hegemonic discourse of Turkish modernity. On the other hand, there are still some cultural norms related to female seclusion that restrict interactions with the opposite gender to a certain extent. The idea that a woman without certain educational qualifications is more likely to be bound by norms of female seclusion reflects well-entrenched assumptions about modernity that juxtapose seclusion with illiteracy. When these constructions enter into the assumptions of retail employers, educational requirements are used to eliminate from the job pool anyone who is believed to be constrained by female seclusion norms. Ela, a 33 years old MajorMarket worker, explained why high school graduates were better suited to the work environment in corporate retail stores:

> Generally, people who are tolerant and open-minded about interactions with the opposite sex get hired. And high school graduates are more suitable for working here because at school, girls and boys sit next to each other in the classroom. If a girl is a high school graduate, she thinks it normal that girls and boys are close friends, because interacting with boys is a part of her upbringing and education. She probably has had a couple of romantic relationships too. But if a girl has only a primary school diploma, it means that, later in her life, she lives in seclusion. She would find it strange that girls and boys are close friends, working all day and sometimes at night together. She would not get used to the environment here and would feel out of place. Just as the guys [her coworkers] here feel uneasy when they talk with a gay person, the girl with a primary school diploma would feel uneasy interacting with men, customers and coworkers alike.

To detect the desired skills and attributes, employers utilize face-to-face interviews, with the interview being the final and often most crucial stage in the recruitment process. At this stage, human resource staff report using different strategies to examine applicants' habitus. In particular, from the first moment a job applicant steps into the interview room, the human resource employee screens her for appearance and deportment. "Even the way they talk is a clue for us to evaluate their skills", a human resource employee said. For this reason, interviews may take the form of an informal conversation. A group of workers in this study noted that the format of their interviews resembled to an informal chat. One unmarried retail worker told me that her interview lasted around a little bit more than five minutes for a cashier position at MajorMarket, while another stated how for a clerk position, "it wasn't like a job interview, I just talked about how I usually spend the weekends".

Hiring liberty

Sales floor jobs are characterized by long hours of work and changing shift schedules, and require close interactions between customers and coworkers as well as among workers themselves. According to management, women who are burdened by childcare duties or women living under strict patriarchal control are not able to handle responsibility or have the flexibility to work long hours, including night work (for physical inventory checks) demanded by sales floor jobs. In order to assess whether female applicants meet these requirements, MajorMarket's human resource department has designed structured interviews. Specific questions about an applicant's family situation are asked to identify potential problems with shift work. Women with small children are examined about childcare arrangements. Although having a child is by no means a cause for rejection, a woman without specific plans for child care is less likely to be hired. Married female applicants are also probed about whether their husbands approve of women working on the sales floor, which requires not only long hours of work but also close interactions with the opposite sex. Given that working-class men might experience a real or imagined loss of patriarchal control in cases when their wives work, a major managerial concern is to make sure that female applicants have their husband's support. For similar reasons, unmarried women are asked questions about parental rules, including questions about whether the parents would give consent for their daughter to work on evening schedules.

(Under)Training Modern Service Workers

Hiring the modern worker is crucial for retail employers. However, once they have placed the modern workers into the jobs, retail employers are no longer interested in investing in or transforming the work force, aside from presenting brief instructions on store operations. In short, employers direct their efforts to hiring the modern workers rather than training them. Consequently, many companies rely on their own store workers to train new coworkers, without any extra pay or accreditation.

The staff training I received at MajorMarket offers a typical instance of the minimal training given in the corporate retail sector. None of the new hires at MajorMarket received formal training in specific retail skills or product knowledge during the pre-work training stage. Rather, we were given brief training sessions that lasted two days. On the first day in the class that all new hires attended, the instructor gave us a two-hour lecture about the company's history and its corporate culture. Then, the cashiers and sales assistants were given a brief training about the procedures used in the store.

The training program also featured sessions on the standards of behavior that guide customer-worker interactions. During this session, the trainer gave us short instructions regarding how to greet customers, thank them, smile and make eye contact. We (new hires) were required to exhibit positive emotions so that customers would perceive us as polite, cheerful and helpful. The employers' instructions about emotional display were grounded in cultural beliefs and gender norms about emotional expression in Turkey. For example in discussing the display of positive emotions, the trainer warned us against sending mixed signals to customers:

> When you make eye contact with the customer, make sure that it is neither too short nor too long. If it is too short, the customer will think that you do not respect him. If it is too long, the customer might assume that you are flirting with him. And if you are handling a couple, do not forget to make eye contact with both of them. We are living in Turkey; you should be careful about family norms.

> Deference was explicitly coded as part of our job. The trainer explained a number of times that catering to customers was the workers' raison d'être. One day, she enacted an imaginary service encounter. She held up a blank sheet of white paper and said,

> Let's say you are talking to a customer and he says that this paper is black. How are you going to respond to him? You are not going to tell him that the paper is white. You are going to say, "Yes sir, it is black". And then what if he tells you that he fooled you and the paper is actually purple? You are going to agree with him again. Never talk back to customers. Never argue against them. And do not take their comments or complaints personally. If you agonize over irate customers, your hair is going to turn gray very fast.

The training sessions made it clear that meeting employer expectations required MajorMarket workers to provide some form of emotional labor, which Hochschild defines as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" that is sold for a wage.[25] More specifically, we were expected to greet customers with a smile and welcoming manner, regardless of our own feelings or mood. Yet, even though interactive service work at corporate retail stores entails emotional labor, we were not given any training on the specific techniques of emotion management. Research on emotional labor in other service settings, such as hotels[26], fast food outlets[27] and retail stores[28] shows that employers make use of extensive training and techniques to ensure that workers enact particular emotional states. For example, Hochschild shows how the airline industry in the U.S.A. trains flight attendants to adopt new forms of manner and expression. Particularly important is the ability to reframe that flight attendants acquire during training sessions.[29] By reframing the situation, the flight attendant is able to continue displaying the positive emotions required by the airline industry. After I started working at MajorMarket I found out that the company had offered training on emotion management in the previous years. In these sessions, trainers introduced different customer types, such as a talkative customer and an angry customer, that workers would be likely to encounter on the sales floor, and offered emotional management techniques on how to handle each type of customer so that workers could achieve the desired service encounter. However, in recent years, company has stopped investing in such training programs, so workers, after a brief training, are put straight to work.

Conclusion

Despite the growing scholarly attention to service work across countries, we still know very little about the particularities of service workers in the context of globalization. Gender, labor and globalization scholars' insight that gender identities in global economic relations are not uniform, and that gendered meanings are always culturally and historically constructed suggests the need for further studies to explore how local ideologies as well as the cultural context in specific countries might give the female service workforce a particular character and alter the gendered constructions of these jobs. In this article, I add to this undertaking through two contributions. First, focusing on the retail companies' efforts to develop a culture of consumption to attract middle and upper classes, I show that this strategy gives female interactive service workers the additional task of projecting the values associated with this culture on modernity. Second, by examining the hiring and training practices at corporate retail sector, I show how the hegemonic discourse of modernity in Turkey shapes skill requirements in retail sector, which in turn refashions the character of service workforce, creating the modern female workers of the global era.

[1]For instance see Anna Pollert, "Women's Employment and Service Sector Transformation in Central Eastern Europe: Case Studies in Retail in the Czech Republic." *Work, Employment and Society* 9, no. 4 (1995): 629–655; Amy Hanser, "The Gendered Rice Bowl: the Sexual Politics of Service Work in Urban China." *Gender & Society* 19, no.5 (2005): 581–600; Christine L.Williams and Catherine Connell, "Looking Good and Sounding Right: Aesthetic Labor and Social Inequality in the Retail Industry." *Work and Occupations* 37, no. 3 (2010): 349-77.

[2]Joan Acker, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations." *Gender & Society* 4, no. 2 (1990):154.

[3]Soft skill' is a term utilized by economic sociologists to refer to the personality, attitude and behavior requirements for employment in service sector occupations. See for example, Philip Moss and Chris Tilly, "Soft Skills and Race: An Investigation of Black Men's Employment Problems." *Work and Occupations* 23, (1996): 257-259.

[4]For a detailed analysis see Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983); Chris Warhurst and Dennis Nickson, "Employee Experience of Aesthetic Labor in Retail and Hospitality." *Work, Employment and Society* 21, no.1 (2007): 103-120; Williams and Connell, "Looking Good, Sounding Right,".

[5]Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*,7.

[6]Chris Warhurst, Paul Thompson and Dennis Nickson, "Labor Process Theory: Putting the Materialism Back into the Meaning of Service Work," *Service Work: Critical Perspectives* ed. Marek Korczynski and Cameron Lynne Macdonald (New York: Routledge Press: York, 2009), 104.

[7]Warhurst. and Nickson, "Employee Experience of Aesthetic Labor in Retail and Hospitality," 112.

[8]Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 18.

[9]For example see Lynne Pettinger, "Brand Culture and Branded Workers: Service Work and Aesthetic Labour in Fashion Retail." *Consumption, Markets and Culture* 7, no. 2 (2004): 165-184; Lynne Pettinger, "Gendered Work Meets Gendered Goods: Selling and Service in Clothing Retail." *Gender, Work and Organization* 12, (2005): 460-478.

[10]For example see Chris Warhurst, Dennis Nickson, Anne Witz and Anne Marie Cullen, "Aesthetic Labour in Interactive Service Work: Some Case Study Evidence from the 'New' Glasgow." *The Service Industries Journal* 20, no.3 (2000): 1-18.

[11]For example see Tara Brabazon and Stephen Mallinder, "Into the Night-Time Economy: Work, Leisure, Urbanity and the Creative Industries." *Nebula* 4, no. 3 (2007):161-178.

[12]For example see Leslee Spiess and Peter Waring, "Aesthetic Labour, Cost Minimisation and the Labour Process in the Asia Pacific Airline Industry." *Employee Relations* 27 no. 2 (2005): 193-207.

[13]Williams and Connell, "Looking Good, Sounding Right," 358.

[14]"Zincir ve Süpermarket Sayısı 11 bini Aştı," TESK accessed February 2, 2012. http://www.tesk.org.tr/tr/calisma/sicil/ist.html.

[15]Research data provided by Ayşe Buğra, 2010; Gülay Toksöz, "The State of Female Labor in the Impasse of the Neoliberal Market and Patriarchal Family," *Gender and Society in Turkey: The Impact of Neoliberal Policies, Political Islam and EU Accession* ed. Saniye Dedeoğlu and Adem Yavuz Elveren (London and New York: IB Tauris Academic Studies, 2012), 59.

[16]For example see Deniz Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case." *Feminist Studies* 13, no. 2 (1987): 317-338; Deniz Kandiyoti, "Gendering the Modern: On Missing Dimensions in the Study of Turkish Modernity," *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* ed. Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 113-132; Nilüfer Göle*, The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling* (Ann, Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1996); Yeşim Arat, "The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey*," Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* ed. Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 95-112; Ayşe Durakbaşa, *Halide Edib: Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002); Jenny White, "State Feminism, Modernization, and the Turkish Republican Woman." *National Women's Studies Association Journal* 15, no.3 (2003): 145-59; Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti: Erkekler Devlet, Kadınlar Aile Kurar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012).

[17]For example see Göle, *The Forbidden Modern*; Kandiyoti, "Gendering the Modern,".

[18]For example see Göle, *The Forbidden Modern*; Kandiyoti, "Gendering the Modern,"; Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998);Yeşim Arat, *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy: Islamist Women in Turkish Politics* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2005).

[19]For example see Göle, *The Forbidden Modern*; Kandiyoti, "Gendering the Modern,"; Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies*; Durakbaşa, *Halide Edib*.

[20]Alev Çınar, "Subversion and Subjugation in the Public Sphere: Secularism and the Islamic Headscarf." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33, no. 4 (2008): 901.

[21]For example see Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated?"

[22]For instance see Jenny White, *Money Makes us Relatives: Women's Labor in Urban Turkey* (London: Routledge Press, 2004), Second Edition; Alev Çınar, *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Places, and Time*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Çınar, "Subversion and Subjugation in the Public Sphere,".

[23]A group of scholars such as studying the link between current societal changes and Islam argue that, with the rise of a new Muslim bourgeoisie over the last three decades, a new discourse of modernity has emerged in Turkey. Couched in the idiom of alternative modernity or multiple modernities, this new discourse underscores the modernity of the new Islamic woman, who is educated, wearing fashionable styles of headscarves and working professionally. The emergence of the new Islamic woman as a modern member of the society, scholars argue, signals the emergence of hybrid modernity. Notwithstanding these current developments, the hegemonic discourse of Turkish modernity, based on secularist and Western values continues to function effectively, and is still treated as common sense in Turkey. See, for instance, Nilüfer Göle, "Snapshots of Islamic Modernities." *Daedalus* 129, no.1 (2000): 91-115; White, *Money Makes us Relatives.*

[24]Göle, *The Forbidden Modern*, 5.

[25]Hochschild, *The Managed Heart,* 7.

[26]For a detailed analysis see Rachel Sherman, *Class Acts: Service and Inequality in Luxury Hotels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Eileen Otis, "Beyond the Industrial Paradigm: Market-Embedded Labor and the Gender Organization of Global Service Work in China." *American Sociological Review* 73, (2008): 5-36.

[27]For instance see Robin Leidner, *Fast Food, Fast Talk: Service Work and Routinization of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[28]For instance see Hanser, "The Gendered Rice Bowl,"

[29]Hochschild, *The Managed Heart, 80.*

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