

Cross-border Differences on Female Employment: Enlightenment to China

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Abstract

With the development of economy and society and the improvement of women's education level, women gradually get more opportunities for employment. The dominance of male chauvinism thinking mode is gradually transformed to the context of fairness, it has become necessary to discuss transnational female employment from the cross-cultural perspective. However, how to understand the characteristics and leadership style of women's employment, and how to guarantee equal employment opportunities and salary for women? These issues need to be discussed in depth. In view of this, with the cross-cultural multidimensional data of the World Bank and the OECD, this article further discusses the cross-cultural multinational under the perspective of the characteristics of female employment and its enlightenment to China. This paper helps to better understand the current international female employment trend of dynamic evolution, and provides empirical evidence for China to eliminate gender inequality in labor market in the future.

Keywords

Female, sexism, employment equality, entrepreneurship.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, with the Economic and social development and the continuous improvement of women's education level, women are getting more and more employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in China and around the World (World Economic Forum,2018), and the boundaries of gender differences in the labor market are becoming more and more blurred. In spite of this, there are still large differences between women and men in aspects such as job promotion, salary status and decision-making behavior(Cannings,1988;Wang & Cai,2008;Faccioetal.,2016). Eliminating gender discrimination and improving the wage income and employment opportunities of more women are of great significance to promoting gender equality in the labor market. Some studies suggest that women have a higher risk aversion, differentiation strategy preference and prudent business ability (Huang & Kisgen,2013;Khan & Vieito,2013;Faccio et al.,2016) to avoid high debt levels and the use of financial leverage. In addition, the care-oriented leadership style shown by female entrepreneurs and their good performance contribute to the development of economy and society (Kelley, Brush, Greene & Litovsky, 2011).However, the gender identity of "the husband should earn more than the wife, while the male should be responsible for earning money and the female should take care of the family" in western countries and the gender concept of "the male takes care of the family while the female takes care of the family" in Chinese families may both become obstacles to gender employment equality.

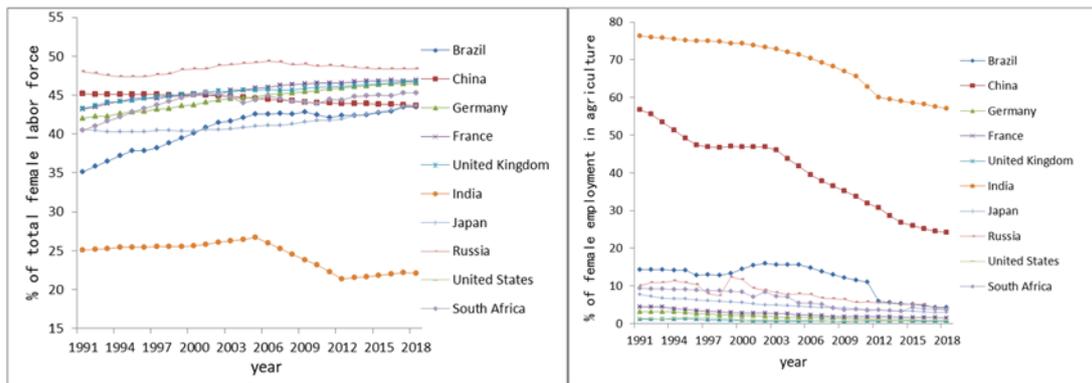
As for gender employment inequality in the labor market, existing studies have found that gender discrimination and prejudice are the important causes of inequality(Altonji & Blank,1999;Lang & Lehmann,2012). This gender discrimination and prejudice result from the

characteristics of women's lower physical strength, risk bearing capacity, human and social capital (Neider,1987;Sexton & Bowman, 1990;Miri & Robert,1997), which is more serious for female workers with low education background, poor occupation and young age (Chi & Li,2008;Zhang et al., 2008).Gender identity may be related to traditional culture, modern education publicity, economic development and so on, so gender identity may show national differences. Therefore, it is of great practical significance for China to explore the characteristics of female employment in the context of regional culture and understand the current dynamic evolution trend of transnational female employment.

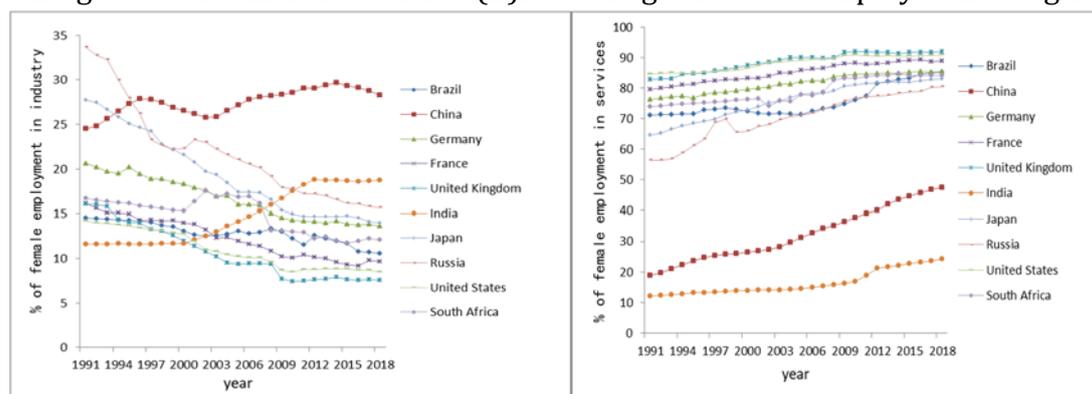
This paper uses labor force employment statistics from five OECD countries (France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States) and the BRICS countries (Brazil, China, Russia, India and South Africa) to investigate the characteristics and evolution trend of women's employment in different regional cultures.

2. Transnational Female Employment Status

From 1991 to 2018, the proportion of women in the total labor force and the proportion of women in the employment in various industries showed the characteristics of gender travel, as shown in Fig. 1. The proportion of women in the workforce has been increasing year by year, with China and India showing a slight decline. At the same time, the proportion of women in the total labor force is gradually approaching 50%, and gender employment equality is becoming more and more obvious. The share of women in agricultural employment has been declining, falling below 10% in most countries. Although the proportion of women in agricultural employment in China and India has been showing a declining trend, the proportion of women in agricultural employment in China and India is still high, at 24.2% and 57.1% in 2018. The share of women in industrial employment in the OECD countries shows a declining trend, but in China and India the share of women in employment fluctuates up. The proportion of women in China's industrial employment peaks at 29.7% in 2014, and then continues to decline, finally reaches 28.3% in 2018. The proportion of women in the service sector employment in the OECD countries and the trend of the BRICS countries are rising, but the proportion of women in OECD countries tend to be 90% in service sector employment and the proportion of China's and India's women in employment in service industry is still in a lower level, at 47.5% and 24.2% in 2018. This reflects that with the development of economy and society and the improvement of women's education level, the proportion of women in the global labor force has been increasing, and the gender inequality tends to moderate. With the demand of vocational work, women's employment gradually shifts from agriculture and industry to service industry, and the employment demand of women in modern service is more and more obvious. But Chinese women employment trends in the industry and the OECD countries there is a big gap, mainly because of China as the world's largest developing country, agriculture and manufacturing still accounts for larger proportion in the national economy, higher demand for women's employment, makes the employment of women in the agricultural and industrial proportion is still large and the proportion of women in the service sector employment is rising slowly.



(A)Percentage of total female labor force (B)Percentage of female employment in agriculture



(C)Percentage of female employment in industry (D)Percentage of female employment in services

Fig. 1 Percentage of total female labor force and female employment in different industries

Source: The original data were collected from the World Bank and OECD and calculated by the authors.

Fig. 2 illustrates the changes of female labor force participation rates in OECD countries and BRICS countries from 1991 to 2018. It can be seen from Fig. 2 that, except China and India, the female labor force participation rate in other countries shows a rising trend of fluctuation. Among them, the female labor force participation rate increased from 51.8% in 1991 to 57.2% in 2018 in the UK, from 48% in 1991 to 55% in 2018 in Germany, and from 73.1% in 1991 to 61.3% in 2018 in China. Although China's female labor force participation rate is declining year by year, China's female labor force participation rate still ranks among the highest in the world for a long time. According to 2018 data, China's female labor force participation rate is 61.3%, much higher than OECD countries. The labor force participation rate is 56% in the United States, 50% in France, 51% in Japan and 49% in South Africa. China's female labor force participation rate is so high, the possible reason is that Chinese women are forced by family life pressure to participate in the labor to increase the family income source.

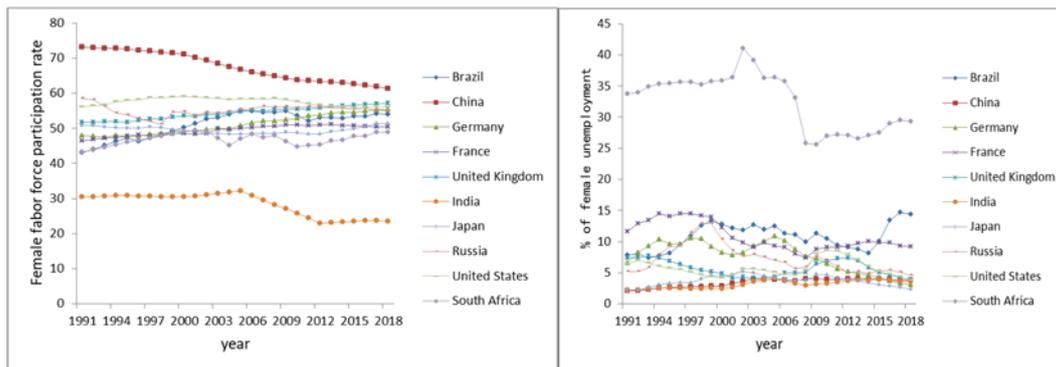


Fig. 2 Female labor force participation rate

Fig. 3 Percentage of female unemployment

Source: The original data were collected from the World Bank and OECD and calculated by the authors.

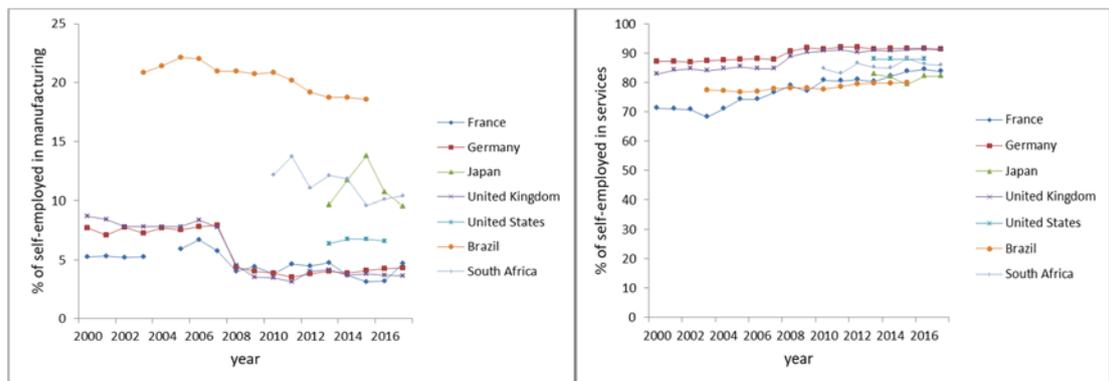
Fig. 3 illustrates the changes of female unemployment rates in the OECD countries and BRICS countries from 1991 to 2018. It can be seen from Fig. 3 that the female unemployment rate in China and India maintains a steady rising trend, while the female unemployment rate in other countries generally shows a small fluctuation. Among them, China's female unemployment rate increased from 2.1% in 1991 to 3.8% in 2018, and India's female unemployment rate increased from 2.2% in 1991 to 3.6% in 2018. The female unemployment rate in Russia rises from 5.1% in 1991 to 13% in 1999, and then continued to decline, reaching 4.6% in 2018. The female unemployment rate in France rose from 11.7% in 1991 to 14.5% in 1997, and then shows a trend of decline. The female unemployment rate in Japan rises from 2.2% in 1991 to 5.2% in 2002, and then shows a trend of decline, finally reaching 2.3% in 2018. According to the data in 2018, the unemployment rate of women in the OECD countries is generally at a low level, including 3.7% in the United States, 3.1% in Germany, 2.3% in Japan, 3.8% in Britain and 9.2% in France. Among the BRICS countries, the unemployment rate of women varies greatly, with 29.2% in South Africa, 14.4% in Brazil, 3.8% in China and 4.6% in Russia. China and India are engaged in international labor-intensive industries, and the development of domestic manufacturing has provided more jobs for women, resulting in a low female unemployment rate.

3. The Characteristics of Transnational Female Entrepreneurship

With the development of economy and social progress, the group of female entrepreneurs has been expanding. At the same time, the international financial crisis keeps happening and spreading around the world. The governments in various countries have taken measures to slow down the economic recession and the loss of job opportunities, and encouraging entrepreneurship has become a policy means of stimulating economic growth and creating jobs in many countries. This part mainly introduces the status, characteristics and leadership style of female entrepreneurs, and the specific conclusions are as follows.

Fig. 4 illustrates the change of female self-employment rates in different industries in the OECD countries and BRICS countries from 2000 to 2017. As Fig. 4 shows, it can be seen that the proportion of female self-employment in the manufacturing industry shows a small decline trend, while the proportion of female self-employment in the service industry increases slowly. In France, the proportion of women employed in manufacturing declined from 5.3% to 4.3% in 2000, in Germany from 7.7% to 4.7%, and in Britain from 8.7% to 3.6%. In Germany, the self-employed proportion of women in the service industry increased from 87.2% in 2000 to 91.4% in 2017, in the United States, from 87.9% in 2013 to 88% in 2017, and in Brazil, from 77.5% in

2003 to 80% in 2017. Although women's rates of self-employment in manufacturing and services tend to be consistent across countries, women in developing countries are more likely to be self-employed in manufacturing than in developed countries and less likely to be self-employed in services than in developed countries. Women in Germany are on average 5.6% self-employed in manufacturing, in Brazil 20.4%, in the UK 87.9% and in Brazil 78.4%.



(A) Self-employed in manufacturing (B) Self-employed in services
Fig. 4 Percentage of female self-employed in manufacturing and services

Source: The original data were collected from the World Bank and OECD and calculated by the authors.

Fig. 5 illustrates the change of female inventors in OECD countries and BRICS countries from 2000 to 2017. As can be seen from Fig. 5, the proportion of female inventors in OECD countries is gradually increasing, while the proportion of female inventors in Russia shows a fluctuating trend. Among them, the proportion of British women inventors rises from 7.6% in 2000 to 9.1% in 2017, in United States from 8.6% in 2000 to 9.9% in 2017, in Russian from 9.5% in 2000 to 18.1% in 2017. This change reflects the women's level of education increases, the contribution to promote the progress of human society is rising. Although the proportion of female inventors is rising, the proportion of female inventors is still low. Women accounted for only 6% in Germany, 9.8% in the United States and 15.5% in Russia.

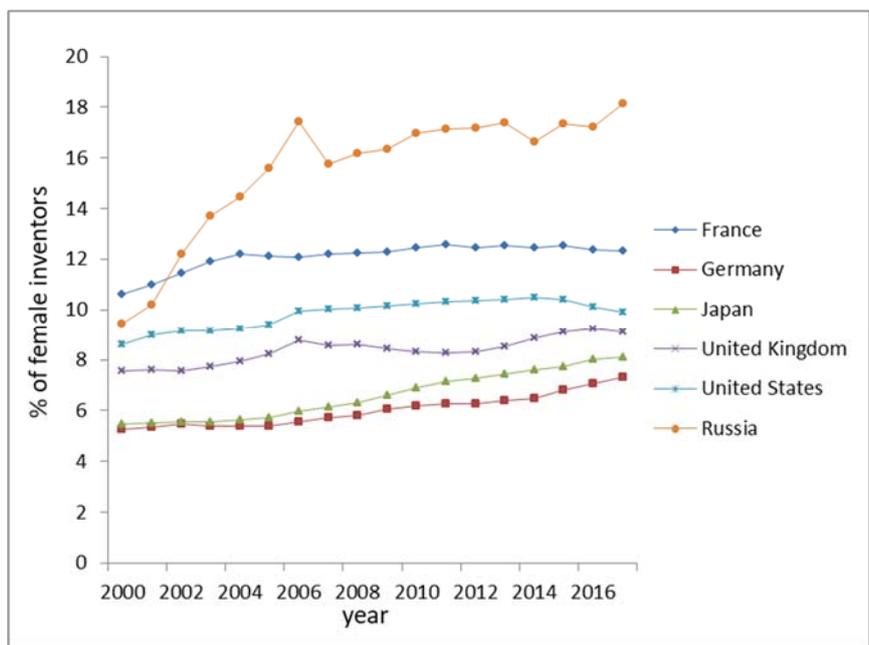


Fig. 5 Percentage of female inventors

Source: The original data were collected from the World Bank and OECD and calculated by the authors.

Table 1 describes how entrepreneurs start a business through training and money. As can be seen from Table 1, from the perspective of entrepreneurship through training, the proportion of female entrepreneurs starting a business through training is lower than that of male entrepreneurs, and the proportion of female entrepreneurs starting a business through accessing training in OECD countries is higher than that in BRICS countries. In France, 40.1% of men are accessing training start a business, while only 28% of women are accessing training to start a business. In Germany, 53.9% of men are accessing training to start a business, while only 38.3% of women are accessing training start a business. In China, 20.6% of men are accessing training to start a business, while only 17% of women are accessing training to start a business. From the perspective of starting a business with money, the proportion of female entrepreneurs starting a business with money is lower than that of male entrepreneurs, and the proportion of female entrepreneurs starting a business with money in OECD countries is slightly higher than that of BRICS countries. Among them, the proportion of entrepreneurs through accessing to money is 34%, the proportion of women entrepreneurs through accessing to money is only 21.6% in Japan; 46.4% men in British through accessing to money, the proportion of women entrepreneurs through accessing to money is only 27.4%, 33% of men in China through accessing to money, women entrepreneurs through access to money is 27.7%. This shows that the proportion of women is lower than that of men in accessing to training and money on starting a business, whether through training or money, and the proportion of women in OECD countries is higher than that in BRICS countries.

Table 1 Percentage of accessing to training and money on how to start a business in 2013

Country	Training		Money	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
France	40.1	28.0	26.7	16.9
Germany	53.9	38.3	48.6	31.8
Japan	31.3	17.1	34.0	21.6
United Kingdom	54.7	50.2	46.4	27.4
United States	66.2	60.3	35.3	37.0
Brazil	25.9	21.0	24.2	16.7
China	20.6	17.0	33.0	27.7
India	18.2	13.3	13.3	9.7
Russia	45.2	34.5	30.3	21.3
South Africa	31.2	28.7	30.8	26.6

Source: The original data were collected from the World Bank and OECD and calculated by the authors.

Table 2 describes the feasibility of self-employment by sex in 2009 and 2012. Table 2 shows that the feasibility of self-employment is higher than that of women, while the feasibility of men and women of self-employment in China is higher than that in OECD countries. In 2012, 35.9% of men and 28.5% of women were self-employed in France. In the UK, 39.8% of men and 25.2% of women are the feasibility of self-employment. In China, the feasibility of self-employment of men is 56.3%, while the feasibility of self-employment of women is 42.5%. In 2012, it was 35.6% for men and 23.9% for women to reach the feasibility of self-employment. In China, the

feasibility of self-employment of men is 51.9%, while the feasibility of self-employment is 51.3%. This shows that compared with men, the feasibility of self-employment is lower, while the feasibility of self-employment of women s in China ranks first in the world.

Table 2 Percentage of feasibility of self-employment by sex in 2009 and 2012

Country	2009		2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
France	35.9	28.5	36.7	27.4
Germany	36.1	24.9	35.6	23.9
Japan	14.8	10.2	25.5	13.6
United Kingdom	39.8	25.2	28.2	24.1
United States	43.1	30.7	48.8	39.6
China	56.3	42.5	51.9	51.3

Source: The original data were collected from the World Bank and OECD and calculated by the authors.

Fig. 6 shows entrepreneurs in the OECD and BRICS countries borrowing money to start a business. As can be seen from Fig. 6, the proportion of men borrowing money to start a business is higher than that of women, and the proportion of women borrowing money to start a business in OECD countries is higher than that in BRICS countries. Among them, 30.2% of men in French borrowed money to start a business, and 28.9% of women borrowed money to start a business. In the United States, the proportion of men borrowing money to start a business is 36.3%, while the proportion of women borrowing money to start a business is 31.6%. In China, 14% of men borrow money to start a business, while 10.8% of women borrow money to start a business. In Brazil, 6.6% of men borrow money to start a business, compared with 2.9% of women. This suggests that men are more likely than women to borrow money to start a business, and this phenomenon in OECD countries are more likely than BRICS countries.

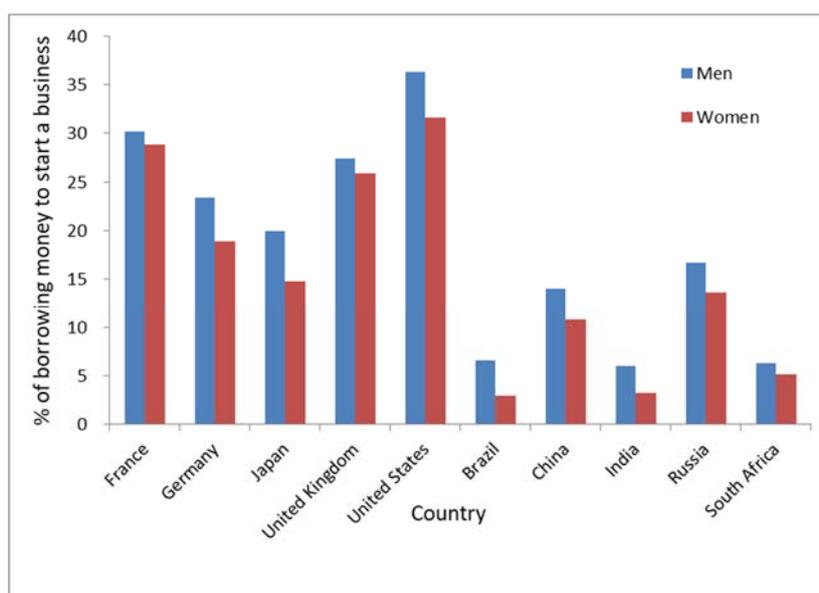


Fig. 6 Percentage of the population who report borrowing money to start a business by sex in 2017

Source: The original data were collected from the World Bank and OECD and calculated by the authors.

Fig. 7 illustrates the attitudes towards entrepreneurial risk by sex in the OECD countries and the BRICS countries. As can be seen from Fig. 7, men have a more optimistic attitude towards entrepreneurial risks than women, and there is no significant difference between women entrepreneurs' attitudes towards risks in OECD countries and BRICS countries. Among them, 61.9% of men and 44.1% of women are actively facing risks in British. In the United States, 70.2% of men and 57.3% of women are actively facing risks. In China, 61.5% of men and 53.9% of women are actively facing risks. This indicates that men and women have a relatively consistent and positive attitude towards entrepreneurial risk.

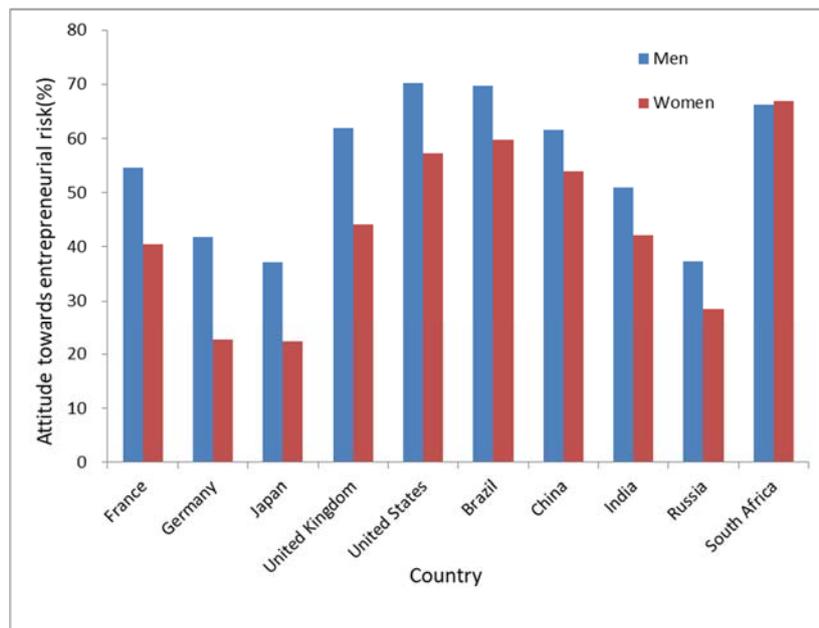


Fig. 7 Attitude towards entrepreneurial risk by sex

Source: The original data were collected from the World Bank and OECD and calculated by the authors.

Table 3 describes the proportion of male and female entrepreneurs in OECD countries and BRICS countries who have positive business status and outlook. As can be seen from Table 3, from the perspective of positive business status, male entrepreneurs are more likely to consider business current status is positive than women, and there is no significant difference between the proportion of women in OECD countries who consider positive current business status as positive and that in BRICS countries. In France, 45.9% of men and 38.7% of women have a positive business status. In Germany, 53.5% of men and 27.8% of women have a positive business status. In Brazil, 53.9% of men and 25.8% of women have a positive business status. In terms of positive business outlook, male entrepreneurs have more positive business prospects than female entrepreneurs, and the proportion of positive business prospects of women in OECD countries is not significantly different from that of BRICS countries. Among them, 64.6% of male entrepreneurs have positive business outlook, and 20.8% of female entrepreneurs have positive business outlook in Japan. In Russia, 46.9% of men and 34.9% of women have positive business outlook.

Table 3. Percentage of positive business status and outlook by sex in 2018

Country	Positive current business status		Positive outlook on business	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
France	45.9	38.7	44.3	41.3
Germany	53.5	27.8	52.7	28.9
Japan	66.3	17.8	64.6	20.8
United Kingdom	40.3	42.4	40.0	44.9
United States	38.0	44.5	37.2	45.4
Brazil	53.9	25.8	48.2	32.1
India	74.9	11.5	74.2	13.2
Russia	52.9	35.6	46.9	34.9
South Africa	40.9	37.3	40.2	39.2

Source: The original data were collected from the World Bank and OECD and calculated by the authors.

4. Transnational Female Wage Status

With the development of economy and society, the wage of workers increases rapidly, but the gender difference of wage increase also shows up constantly. Chi and li(2008) believes that for workers with high education level and high income, gender wage difference is mainly caused by endowment difference, while for workers with low education level and low income, gender wage difference is caused by return difference. This part mainly introduces the current status and characteristics by the influence of the average wage level of women in OECD countries on their education level and working hours. The specific conclusions are as follows.

Table 4 describes the differences in women's wages and incomes at different educational levels. In terms of full-time and full-year employment, women earn less than men. There is little difference in earnings between women of different education levels and women of different ages. Among them, women with all levels of education earn the highest earnings, while there is no significant difference between women with below upper secondary education and upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education. Women with tertiary education earn the lowest salary. From the perspective of all earners, women earn less than men, and there is no significant difference in education. Compared with full-time and year-year earners, women of all earners less than those of full-time and full-year earners. This is mainly because women are less likely than men to work full-time and are more likely to work in low-paid jobs to take on more family responsibilities.

Table 5 describes the proportion of men and women with differences in earnings between female workers by educational attainment. As can be seen from Table 5, from the perspective of gender, the proportion of men in full-time, full-year earners and part-time earners are higher than that of women. In terms of education attainment, the proportion of women with tertiary education engaged in full-time, full-year earners and Part-time earners are higher than that of women with below upper secondary education and upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education. The proportion of college-educated women out of work is much lower than that of women with below upper secondary education and those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education. This suggests that women with low education attainment may choose not to work in order to take on family responsibilities.

Table 4. Differences in earnings between female workers by educational attainment in OECD average

educational attainment	year	Relative earnings(men = 100)					
		Full-time, full-year			All earners		
		25-64	35-44	55-64	25-64	35-44	55-64
Below upper secondary education	2014	77	76	77	67	65	68
	2015	77	76	78	67	65	68
	2016	77	76	78	68	65	68
Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education	2014	78	78	79	70	68	71
	2015	77	75	77	69	66	70
	2016	77	76	78	69	67	70
Tertiary education	2014	74	74	74	68	67	66
	2015	74	75	77	68	68	70
	2016	74	77	72	68	69	70
All levels of education	2014	81	81	78	73	72	69
	2015	80	80	79	72	71	70
	2016	81	82	78	72	72	69

Source: The original data were collected from the World Bank and OECD and calculated by the authors.

Table 5. Percentage of population by category of earnings in 2016 of OECD average

education attainment	category	Men		Women	
		25-64	55-64	25-64	55-64
Below upper secondary education	Full-time, full-year earners	52	41	26	20
	Part-time earners	17	15	24	19
	No earnings	31	44	51	60
Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education	Full-time, full-year earners	67	51	41	31
	Part-time earners	15	15	28	24
	No earnings	18	33	31	45
Tertiary education	Full-time, full-year earners	75	62	55	43
	Part-time earners	14	14	27	24
	No earnings	11	24	19	34

Source: The original data were collected from the World Bank and OECD and calculated by the authors.

Table 6 describes the percentage of female by level of earnings relative to median earnings. As can be seen from Table 6, with the improvement of women's education level, the proportion of women above the middle income gradually increases. Specifically, when it comes to below upper secondary education, the proportion of women earning is highest in more than 1/2 the median but at or below the median level, followed by at or below 1/2 of the median. In terms of upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, the proportion of women

earning in More than 1/2 the median but at or below the median and at or below 1/2 of the median has declined, while the proportion of women earning in more than the median has increased. In terms of tertiary education, women with Master's, Doctoral or equivalent in more than 1.5 times the median and more than 2.0 times the median is highest. This shows that education level is an important factor in determining women's income level.

Table 6. Percentage of female by level of earnings relative to median earnings in 2016 of OECD average

educational attainment		At or below 1/2 of the median	More than 1/2 the median but at or below the median	More than the median but at or below 1.5 times the median	More than 1.5 times the median but at or below 2.0 times the median	More than 2.0 times the median
Below upper secondary education		37.1	50.9	9.5	1.8	0.9
Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education		23.2	49.0	20.0	4.9	2.9
Tertiary education		12.7	27.4	30.5	15.2	14.2
Tertiary education	Short-cycle tertiary education	15.5	38.3	30.5	11.2	6.4
	Bachelor's or equivalent education	12.3	30.4	32.7	13.4	11.2
	Master's, Doctoral or equivalent education	9.6	20.3	30.2	18.2	21.7

Source: The original data were collected from the World Bank and OECD and calculated by the authors.

5. Conclusions and Implications for China

This paper compares and analyzes the employment characteristics of women in OECD and BRICS countries from the perspectives of female employment, entrepreneurship and wages. The study found that the proportion of women in the total labor force in all countries showed an increasing trend year by year, and gender equality in employment became more and more obvious. Women's share of employment in agriculture and industry in developed countries is decreasing and that in the service sector is increasing. However, women's share of employment in agriculture and industry in developing countries is still large. Due to the development of economy and society, the female labor participation rate keeps rising, and the female unemployment rate shows the characteristics of small fluctuation.

From the perspective of the characteristics of female entrepreneurship, the self-employed proportion of women in the manufacturing industry in various countries shows a small decline trend, and the self-employed proportion of women in the service industry is rising slowly. The share of female inventors is growing slowly. Women in OECD countries are more likely to start a business through accessing to training than money. Women in OECD countries are more enthusiastic about entrepreneurship than those in BRICS countries. The proportion of men borrowing money to start a business is higher than that of women. The proportion of women

borrowing money to start a business in OECD countries is higher than that of BRICS countries. Men are more optimistic about entrepreneurial risks than women. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of women entrepreneurs in OECD countries and those in BRICS countries. Men are more optimistic about entrepreneurial risks than women. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of women entrepreneurs in OECD countries and those in BRICS countries. Men are more likely than women to be positive about business status and outlook, but the differences between countries are unclear.

From the perspective of women's wage status, the wage of women working full-time and full-year are lower than that of men. There is little difference in wage and income between women of different education attainment and women of different ages. Men hold a higher proportion of full-time, full-year earn and part-time jobs than women. The proportion of women with higher education in full-time earners and Part-time earners is higher than that of women with less than high school education and that of women with higher than secondary or post-secondary education. With the improvement of women's education level, the proportion of women above the median earnings gradually increased.

The research conclusion of this paper has certain reference value for policy making to eliminate gender inequality in China's labor market. At the present stage, the employment ratio of Chinese women in agriculture and industry is still high, the female labor participation rate is declining, and the proportion of female entrepreneurs is low, which leads to the obvious gap between Chinese women and developed countries in employment. Therefore, when encouraging women to enter the labor market, the government should pay more attention to the protection of children's education, pension and other aspects, encourage women to improve their education level, and improve their access to employment opportunities and wage, so as to ensure women's equal employment.

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