

Abstract

Low educational levels and the effect of children are recognized as the most important factor for low female participation rates. Over the last decades, female labour supply in Europe has shown a large increase. This may be the result of changes in the level of education or fertility. It is also possible that it is due to changes in behaviour, as influenced by the social and institutional context. Our results show that increases in participation rates cannot be explained by changes in either educational level or the number and timing of children. Female labour supply increases for all educational levels and for both women with and without children. In other words, it is mainly changes in behaviour driving the increase in participation rates over the last decades.