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CITY

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Employment and Vocational Training

EDUCATIONAL BOOKLET | TRAINING MODULE



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Employment and Vocational Training

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Introduction

When evaluated as an economic concept, employment can be defined as the work or employment of production factors during the production process to obtain material benefit (Özgüven, 1991; cited in Yıldız, 2010, p.5). In other words, employment refers to the utilization of production factors in a service or work (Kaya, 2012). The employment rate is important as it shows the extent to which the workforce participates in economic activities (Ministry of Development, 2018). Unemployment is the condition of not being able to find work to sustain oneself. Unemployment arises when, despite having the desire and ability to work, a person cannot find a job suitable for their interest, skills, abilities, education, or profession. Although the unemployment rate cannot be reduced to zero, countries produce various policies to combat unemployment according to their labor market and level of economic development. If the economic problems faced by unemployed individuals are not resolved, these problems can turn into sociological issues. Employment and unemployment are two important indicators of the labor market (Beyhan Acar, 2013).

General characteristics of the labor market in Turkey include rapid population growth causing increased labor supply, low levels of employment and labor participation rates, high unemployment as a result, a large share of agriculture, employment mostly in small-scale enterprises, and widespread informal employment (Tensel and Taşçı, 2010). The relationship between vocational education and employment in Türkiye is low.



While individuals with vocational education do not sufficiently possess the competencies demanded by the labor market, there is an increasing shortage of qualified intermediate staff. This imbalance between supply and demand in the labor market causes vocationally educated individuals to be underrepresented in employment data or to work in fields unrelated to their training (Özsoy, 2015). Vocational education is actually an important tool in economic development. Today, a primary issue faced by university graduates after education is unemployment in or outside their field. The demand for intermediate staff in industry and service sectors, continuously supported through investments and grants, continues to rise. University graduates often have to work in intermediate positions due to difficulties finding jobs in their own fields (Somuncu, 2020).



Therefore, temporary and permanent solutions are developed for job seekers in Türkiye. As a permanent solution, the right to work is protected under the Constitution; discrimination based on language, religion, race, sect, etc., is explicitly prohibited by the Labor Law; and individuals are helped find suitable jobs through the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), which acts as the public employment institution. Additionally, lifelong learning initiatives include employment-guaranteed On-the-Job Training Programs and Vocational Training Courses organized through İŞKUR, and vocational courses offered by Public Education Centers to increase the number of skilled workers. Furthermore, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization (KOSGEB) provides grants to increase the number of entrepreneurs, facilitating access to capital and expanding social security premium incentives.

As a temporary solution, unemployment benefits are provided via İŞKUR to individuals who become unemployed while working, and social assistance can be given through district governorates, municipalities, and social aid and solidarity foundations (SYDV) until household income improves.

Besides the importance of vocational education, entrepreneurship is seen as significant in reducing unemployment and establishing alternative job sectors. Entrepreneurship is the transformation of an individual's idea into a business in a creative and success-oriented way, essentially requiring risk-taking, foresight, and, if no external funding exists, capital ownership to realize the idea (Aykan, 2002). Entrepreneurship has both short- and long-term positive effects on increasing employment. Research from countries like Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Lithuania, Latvia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Estonia shows that entrepreneurial activities in agriculture and service sectors increase employment and per capita income in the long run (Najimudinova and Öskönbaeva, 2019).

To prevent unemployment and increase employment rates in Türkiye, a Practical Entrepreneurship Training Cooperation Protocol was included in KOSGEB's Support Programs Regulation in 2018, in collaboration with İŞKUR. Its aims to enable individuals with entrepreneurial spirit to establish their own businesses and support the sustainability of these enterprises (Çetinkaya, 2017).



After the COVID-19 pandemic, practical entrepreneurship trainings began to be offered via e-government platforms through videos and Q&A methods. However, despite many success stories worldwide and in Türkiye, failures and disappointments also exist. Common reasons for entrepreneurial failure include imitation, investing in wrong sectors, insufficient capital, high costs, management errors, unrealistic or no goals, hiring wrong employees, unnecessary anxiety or overconfidence, failure to follow current developments and technology, poor targeting or understanding of the customer base, lack of financial management experience, inability to increase customers, lagging behind change, failure to manage growth, and uncontrolled expansion (Ministry of Education, 2024).



Rationale

As of December 31, 2023, the population of Tokat province is 606,934. When looking at age group data, 401,553 are active population (aged 15-65), 109,139 are young dependents, and 85,762 are elderly dependents. In other words, about 66% of Tokat's population is active, working-age and value-producing, while roughly 34% is dependent, meaning the active population supports them, and they do not create added value (Tokat Chamber of Industry and Commerce, 2019; Turkish Statistical Institute [TÜİK], 2024a).

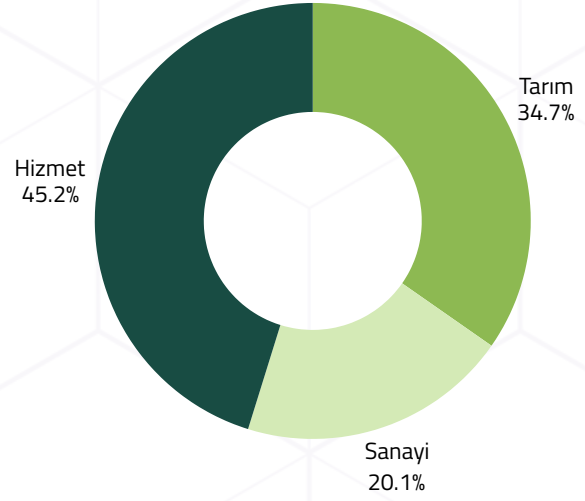
The last official provincial unemployment rates were announced by TÜİK in 2013. According to these data, Tokat's unemployment rate was 6.6%, compared to 9.7% nationwide. Labor force statistics for the TR83 Region—which includes Tokat, Amasya, Çorum, and Samsun—are published annually. In 2022, the labor force participation rate in TR83 was 54.2%, above the national average of 53.5% in December 2023. The employment rate was 49.9%, also above the national average of 48.8%.

The unemployment rate was 8.1%, below the national average of 8.8%. Sectoral labor distribution shows that in Tokat, 45.20% of the workforce is in the "Services" sector, followed by 34.70% in "Agriculture" and 20.10% in "Industry." Additionally, 21% of employed persons are unpaid family workers (Ministry of Labor and Social Security, 2023). In TR83, the unemployment rate in 2023 was around 8.6%, compared to 9.4% nationwide (TÜİK, 2024b).

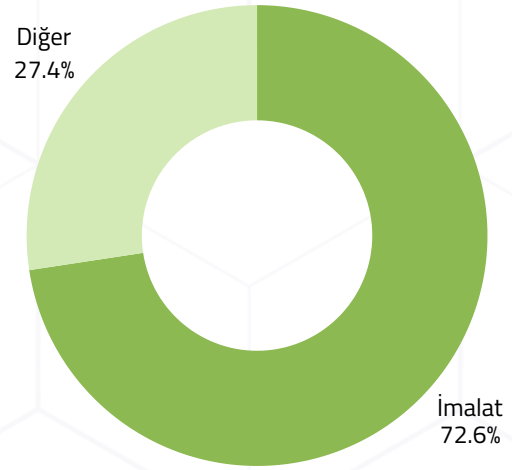
In 2022, the registered unemployed in Tokat numbered 27,247, with women accounting for 48.9% and young people aged 18-24 around 31.9%. Thus, almost half of the unemployed population are women. When looking at women's preferred employment sectors, manufacturing leads, with women making up about 72.6% of female workers in the province.

Within manufacturing, women mostly prefer working in ready-to-wear clothing. The sector with the highest female employment rate is "Information and Communication," with about 73% female workers (Turkish Employment Agency, 2022). As of January 2024, the national unemployment rate stands at approximately 9.1%.

Regarding entrepreneurship, a 2018 report on Entrepreneurship and International Comparison indicates that 35.54% of people in Türkiye want to become entrepreneurs but have not taken concrete steps yet. This ranks Türkiye first among European countries for entrepreneurial intent. Approximately 40% of people aged 18-64 express interest in starting a business in the future. Among women aged 18-64, 36.1% intend to become entrepreneurs, while among men it is 63.9%.



Grafik 1. Tokat ili sektörel iş gücü dağılımı.



Grafik 2. Kadınların en çok tercih ettiği sektör.

The gender participation ratio (men to women) in entrepreneurship is 2.38, making Türkiye the lowest among European countries for women's participation in entrepreneurial activities. Thus, female participation in entrepreneurship remains low. The report also states that while Türkiye ranks well for adult confidence and courage in starting businesses, it is weaker than countries like Switzerland, Poland, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg regarding perceived local business opportunities (Karadeniz, 2019).

The most critical factors for successful incentive programs to increase employment are the amount of the incentive, the correct targeting of audiences, and coverage of employers. During the preparation of incentive programs, the target audience must be accurately determined, the incentive duration should suit the goals and timeline, the incentive amount must motivate employers toward employment, and the method of offsetting incentives should be clearly established beforehand (Koç and Şahin, 2020).

Considering these data, it is clear that Tokat has an active population able to participate in the workforce, but employment rates are not at desired levels. Reducing unemployment and increasing especially women's employment rates can be supported by acquiring vocational knowledge in various new and different fields, vocational training, and entrepreneurship activities. One major reason for rising unemployment or prolonged joblessness is mismatch between supply and demand. In other words, as the similarity between the job seeker's skills and the employer's demands decreases, unemployment rises. Unskilled individuals or those lacking adequate skills face difficulty finding jobs. Similarly, training the labor force according to labor market needs is essential for both employees and entrepreneurs. Qualified workers help employers protect and grow their investments.

According to labor market research reports by İŞKUR over the past 10 years, the primary reasons for shortages of skilled professions in Tokat are "lack of employees with sufficient work experience" and "lack of employees with necessary vocational skills/qualifications." Therefore, vocational training courses organized by the Provincial Directorate of National Education and İŞKUR should be tailored to employers' needs and desired employee qualifications. This would positively impact the vocational-employment relationship in Tokat and increase the number of employed individuals.

Finally, rapid global transformations in science, technology, economy, and society are undeniable. Adapting to these changes and increasing national prosperity is likely to follow entrepreneurial activities, which individually boost self-confidence, create a sense of success and belonging, and contribute both to the individual and national economy. While the private sector underpins growth, entrepreneurship drives the formation and sustainability of the private sector and innovation.

Summary:

- *Employment is the utilization of production factors in the workforce for economic output.*
- *Unemployment arises from inability to find suitable work matching skills and interests.*
- *Türkiye faces challenges including rapid population growth, informal employment, and mismatch between vocational education and labor market needs.*
- *Vocational education and entrepreneurship are key tools to reduce unemployment and increase employment, especially for youth and women.*
- *In Tokat, labor participation and employment rates are slightly above national averages, but unemployment remains significant.*
- *Women's participation in employment and entrepreneurship is still low and needs support.*
- *Incentive programs should be well-designed to motivate employers and employees.*
- *Tailoring vocational training to labor market demands is critical to reducing unemployment.*
- *Entrepreneurship has positive effects on employment, income, and national prosperity.*

ENTREPRENEURSHIP



1. What is Entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship is the process of developing a new idea, product, service, or business model with the aim of creating economic value and bringing that idea to life. An entrepreneur is a person who takes risks, innovates, and seizes opportunities in the market.

Key Characteristics of Entrepreneurship:

- Taking risks and dealing with uncertainty
- Innovation and problem-solving
- Taking responsibility
- Creating value
- Leadership and developing vision

2. General Overview of Entrepreneurship in Türkiye

- Entrepreneurship has rapidly developed in Türkiye in recent years.
- Institutions like KOSGEB, TÜBİTAK, Development Agencies, and Technoparks provide support.
- E-commerce, software, agricultural technologies, green startups, and service sectors stand out.

3. How to Start a Business in Türkiye?

The business startup process consists of the following steps:

A. Defining the Business Idea and Business Plan

- Identify which need it will meet
- Conduct target audience analysis
- Perform competitor analysis and develop a differentiation strategy
- Prepare a financial plan (capital, expenses, revenue estimates)

B. Choosing the Company Type

Company Type	Characteristics
Sole Proprietorship	Easy to establish, low cost, suitable for small-scale business
Limited Company	Capital is limited, partnerships possible, most common type
Joint-Stock Company	Suitable for large investments, easy share transfer

C. Tax Office and Chamber Registration

- Obtain a tax certificate
- Register with the trade or artisan chamber
- Start SGK (social security) and Bağ-Kur (self-employment insurance) procedures

D. E-Invoice, E-Archive, and E-Ledger

- Begin e-transformation processes through a financial advisor

4. Where to Get Incentives and Support?

KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization)

- Entrepreneurship Support Program:
 - Grants up to 65,000 TRY for entrepreneurs who prepare a business plan
 - Support for company setup, machinery, software, and marketing
- R&D, Innovation, and Investment Supports

TÜBİTAK (Scientific and Technological Research Council)

- 1512 BiGG Program: Grants up to 900,000 TRY for technology-based startups
- Supports for university students and academics

Development Agencies

- Feasibility and investment support for regional projects
- Priority for agriculture, tourism, and technology-based investments

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Supports

- Rural development grants for young farmers
- Supports from TKDK (Agriculture and Rural Development Support Institution)

İŞKUR Supports

- Entrepreneurship training programs
- Special grant programs for disabled entrepreneurs

European Union and UNDP Grants

- Grants for civil society, environment, and social entrepreneurship projects
- EU Horizon Program supports technology-based projects

5. Legal and Administrative Issues Entrepreneurs Should Know

Legal Procedures in Company Establishment

- Prepare the articles of association (company purpose, capital, partners, etc.)
- Obtain notarized signature circular
- Register with the trade registry

Tax and Financial Obligations

- Obtain a tax number
- Follow VAT, income/corporate tax, provisional tax, and stamp tax
- Issue professional receipts or invoices
- Fulfill bookkeeping obligations

Social Security and Personnel Procedures

- Register with Bağ-Kur
- If employing staff, register workplace with SGK
- Monitor worker salaries, leave, compensation, and occupational health & safety obligations

Intellectual and Industrial Property Rights

- Apply to TÜRKPATENT for trademark, patent, and design registration
- Obtain copyrights for software, websites, logos, and similar content

6. Skills Needed for Entrepreneurship

Skill	Description
Financial Literacy	Budgeting, cost analysis, investment calculations
Marketing Knowledge	Target audience, digital marketing, customer communication
Strategic Thinking	Opportunity analysis, risk management, growth planning
Leadership and Communication	Team management, customer relations, persuasion skills
Legal Awareness	Reading contracts, tax tracking, knowledge of regulations

7. Sample Roadmap: Starting in 10 Steps for a New Entrepreneur

- Define your idea and conduct market research
- Prepare your business plan
- Decide on the company type
- Determine your capital
- Complete official registrations (tax, chamber, registry)
- Apply for KOSGEB or other supports

- Register your brand and domain
- Set up your digital infrastructure (website, social media)
- Start product/service production
- Continuously monitor, measure, and improve

"Being an Entrepreneur is the Meeting of Courage and Knowledge"

Entrepreneurship starts with an idea; it achieves success through knowledge, planning, resilience, and vision. There are many supports and resources available for entrepreneurs in Türkiye. However, the greatest capital is determination and the willingness to learn.

WHAT ARE THE PROFESSIONS OF THE FUTURE?

Global developments, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and climate change are transforming many professions. The following fields represent the occupational groups that will be most in demand in the next 10–20 years:

Digital and Technological Professions

- **Software Developer / Engineer**
- **Data Analyst / Data Scientist**
- **Artificial Intelligence Specialist**
- **Cybersecurity Specialist**
- **Blockchain Specialist**
- **Robotics Engineer**
- **Cloud Computing Specialist**
- **Game Designer / Developer**

Green and Sustainable Professions

- **Renewable Energy Specialist (Solar, Wind, etc.)**
- **Energy Efficiency Consultant**
- **Environmental Engineer**
- **Carbon Footprint Specialist**
- **Sustainable Agriculture Specialist**
- **Waste Management Specialist**

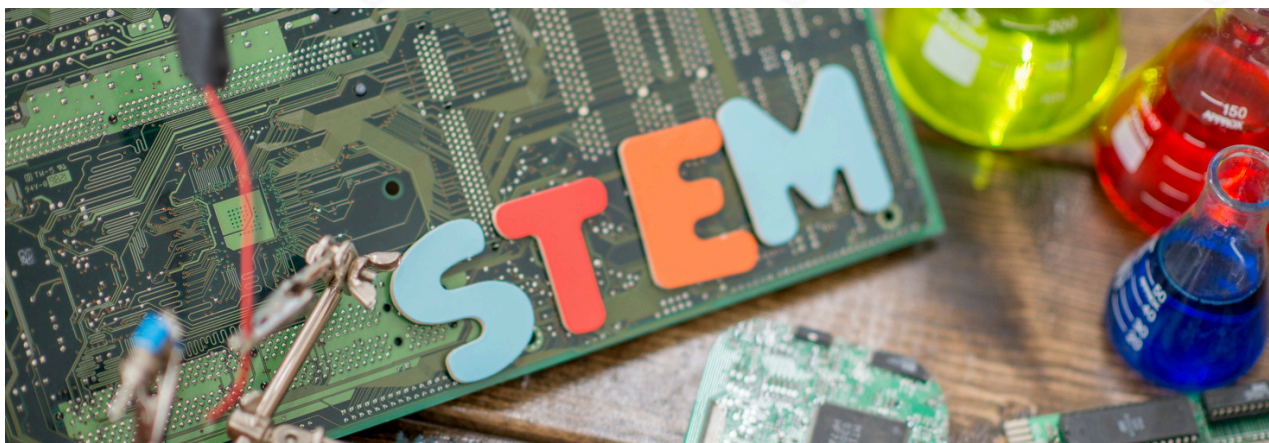
Health and Quality of Life Professions

- **Biotechnology Specialist**
- **Genetic Counselor**
- **Remote Health Service Specialists (Telemedicine)**
- **Digital Health Technology Developer**
- **Elderly Care and Geriatrics Specialists**

Next-Generation Education and Creative Professions

- **Educational Technology Specialist**
- **Online Content Creator / Instructional Designer**
- **UX/UI Designer**
- **Digital Marketing Specialist**
- **Virtual Reality (VR/AR) Developer**
- **Creative Industries Specialist (gaming, music, digital art)**

HOW SHOULD THE NEW GENERATION PREPARE FOR THESE PROFESSIONS?



Transformation in Education and Skill Acquisition: STEM-focused education (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) supports gaining the qualifications necessary for new generation jobs. Coding and algorithm training start from elementary school level; additionally, English and digital literacy are taught as basic skills. Skills such as entrepreneurship, problem-solving, and critical thinking should be supported, and a lifelong learning mindset should be adopted.

Certificate and Micro-Credential Programs: Nowadays, short-term certificate programs have become very important alongside university degrees. Examples include Google Career Certificates, Coursera, Udemy, edX courses in software, data analysis, UI/UX, digital marketing, and free tech trainings from major companies like IBM, Microsoft, and AWS, which are popular certificate programs recently.

Development of Diverse Skills: Improving abilities such as communication, teamwork, time management, creativity and innovation, digital ethics, and information security awareness will increase employment opportunities in new generation professions.

[Take the Survey, Test Yourself](#)