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Wool Industry: One of Traditional Occupations in Erzurum

Erzurum'da Yaşayan Geleneksel Mesleklerden Yüncülük

Abstract: Tradition, by its very nature, has the capacity to carry itself into the future. The extent to which this capacity can be realized or not is directly related to the level of civilization and culture. In particular, changes in the production form of the relevant society are as important as possible in the process of preserving and sustaining the existing, and in this process, the biggest obstacle in the transfer of the traditional to the future is the popularity preference that emerges in life forms and tools. The most notable among the existing culture-based professions that are negatively affected by this preference are traditional occupations. Among the traditional professions, those who can adapt to the existing business by including both commercial and touristic changes are able to survive, while those who cannot adapt to the current one somehow die or die, one of these professions is woolen, which is also the subject of our study. Wool, which has been among the sine qua non of the marriage transition period until recently, has attracted attention not only because of being a pre-wedding object demanded by the girl's house by the boy's house, but also because of its benefits for physical health. This interest has decreased day by day around the labor force and supply-demand relationship, which should be taken into account both in urbanization and in the supply, cleaning and preservation of wool, causing the profession, which is the subject of our study, to lose ground rapidly. In this direction, in our study, the woolen profession, which struggles for life with representatives whose number will not exceed the fingers of one hand, will be examined around the data obtained in the field of fieldwork methodology in Erzurum province, and the past, present and future of the profession will be brought to the attention from the point of view of the professionals.

Keywords: Erzurum, Profession, Traditional Professions, Wool, Woolen

Öz: Gelenek, tabiatı gereği kendini geleceğe taşıma kapasitesine sahiptir. Bu kapasitenin ne oranda gerçekleşip gerçekleşemeyeceği, içerisinde bulunulan medeniyet ve kültür seviyesi ile doğrudan bağlantılıdır. Özellikle

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ilgili toplumun üretim formunda yaşanan değişiklikler mevcudun korunması, yaşatılması sürecinde olabildiğince önem taşımaktadır ki bu süreçte geleneksel olanın geleceğe intikalinde en büyük engel yaşam form ve araçlarında ortaya çıkan popülerite tercihidir. Bu tercihten menfi açıdan doğrudan etkilenen kültür temelli mevcut içerisinde en dikkate değer olanı geleneksel mesleklerdir. Geleneksel meslekler içerisinde mevcuda gerek ticari gerekse turistik değişiklikler içermek suretiyle adapte olabilenler hayatta kalmayı başarırken, mevcuda bir şekilde adapte olamayanların can çekiştiği veya sonlandığı görülmektedir ki bu mesleklerden biri de çalışmamıza da konu olan yüncülüktür. Yakın dönemlere kadar özellikle evlilik geçiş döneminin olmazsa olmazları arasında yer alan yün, sadece kız evinin oğlan evi tarafından talep ettiği düğün öncesi bir nesne olmanın ötesinde, beden sağlığına dönük artıları nedeniyle de ilgi görmüştür. Bu ilgi, gerek kentleşme gerekse yünün temini, temizliği ve muhafazasında göze alınması gereken iş gücü ve arz talep ilişkisi etrafında günden güne azalarak çalışmamıza konu olan mesleğin süratle kan kaybetmesine neden olmuştur. Bu doğrultuda çalışmamızda, sayıları bir elin parmaklarını geçmeyecek temsilci ile yaşam mücadelesi veren yüncülük mesleği, Erzurum ili özelinde, saha çalışması metodolojisi eşliğinde elde edilen veriler etrafında irdelenecek, mesleğin dünü, bugünü ve yarını meslek erbabı nazarından dikkatlere sunulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Erzurum, Meslek, Geleneksel Meslekler, Yün, Yüncülük

Introduction

Human beings have used all properties in nature as a tool for survival since the beginning of history. Throughout history, humanity, which adopted the hunter-nomadic-gatherer production form at the very beginning, generated professions by learning and teaching how to make and use production-oriented tools and equipment later on. The occupations were able to maintain themselves with the skills of the masters who practised that profession and the supply-demand balance. In this journey, while some jobs could not adjust themselves to technical developments, others were able to continue to exist by adapting to the novelties. Of course, it carries vital importance to preserve cultural richness. Therefore, this is most important that society should maintain traditional professions that have survived from the past to the present for future generations as they are a part of the culture.

It is a point to note that cultural heritage is the collective memory of society. It is also an essential concept to protect the culture and pass it from generation to generation. Globalization, which has strengthened and continued its existence since the beginning of the 20th century, has a devastating impact on the assets of cultural heritage. In recent years, the concept of cultural heritage has become important with the increase in policies related to the protection and revealing of cultural elements that are unique to the locality and have not lost much of their originality. Identifying, producing and preserving traditional occupations, which are the main elements of cultural heritage, are significant for protecting local values from disappearing in the face of globalization (Aslan, Çağlar and Gürbıyık, 2017: 212).

The interview is conducted with the people who work in the wool industry in this field study which is carried out in Erzurum. The information obtained as a result of the interviews was reflected in our study. Before sharing the recordings of the interviews we conducted using face-to-face interview technique in the axis of fieldwork methodology, we consider it reasonable to touch on the concepts of occupation, traditional occupation, wool, and wool production.

Occupation- Traditional Occupation

In the dictionary of the Turkish Language Association, "occupation", which is of Arabic origin, is defined as: "A work that is gained through a certain education, based on systematic knowledge and skills, to produce useful goods, to provide services to people and to earn money in return" (<https://kelimeler.gen.tr>).

The profession is the title that people win at the end of a process that usually requires intensive education and works in order to survive.

Generally, every job has professional organizations that ensure the ethical values, development, licensing and recognition of that profession by other people. There are thousands of occupations in the world. There are around 600 officially defined professions in Turkey.

Definition for each occupation, areas of duty, tools and equipment generally used, their characteristics, working environment and conditions, working area and employment opportunities, places of vocational education, rules for entry to vocational education, duration and syllabus of education, advancement in the profession and opportunities, supporting professional organizations show different characteristics (<https://www.turkcebilgi.com/meslek#post>).

The people or groups that make up the society can make a business venture by revealing their knowledge and experience in any field. Thanks to this job, the person can come to a level where he can make a living with products that will benefit himself, his family and society. So much so that this knowledge and experience can enable professions to be effective and sustainable. The skills and experiences that the people have previously developed affect entrepreneurial activities and allow more production and service. Thus, the practices, abilities and experiences of professions or occupational groups in many fields such as craftsmanship, handicrafts, trade and agriculture-livestock breeding may become the fundamental element in meeting the needs (Yurtseven and Kaya, 2010: 19).

An occupation can be considered traditional if it has a long-term history and unique cultural texture. At this stage, it would be reasonable to take a brief look at the concept of tradition. The tradition, defined as "cultural relics, habits, knowledge, customs and behaviours, tradition, tradition, which has the power of sanction, which is respected and transmitted from generation to generation due to being ancient in a society, is a tissue that has been passing from the past to the present. At the same time, the concept of tradition or traditional can be defined as practices, customs, habits, and attitudes-behaviours that are rooted in ancient history, have survived from the past to the present, are kept alive from generation to generation, not forgotten in the memory of society (Yurtseven and Kaya, 2010: 19).

In this sense, tradition does not belong only to the past but it is an essence that is organically connected to past, present and future (Karadeniz, 2007, 39) It is a style of producing and using information, movement and material products that pass from generation to generation and that allow a certain degree of individual creativity and change and development in each generation according to the needs of the time (Ekici, 2004: 5-13).

The traditional occupation consists of activities such as hunting, gathering, clothing, gardening, fishing, animal husbandry and many other fields, where nature and benefit are prioritized according to the methods determined by the society. The continuation of production is provided through sales or barter methods. Production is limited. Since it depends on the power and ability of the person, there is no mass production in the factories. The person or persons only make a living with these activities (Yurtseven and Kaya, 2010: 19). Traditional professions include the production processes, cultures, traditions, practices and characteristics of the areas they live in, and the basis of sustainable development is also based on strong professional associations (Karakaş, 2017: 1-20).

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Wool Industry

Wool is a keratinous fibre found in the pelt of many animals such as sheep and goats, characterized by features such as fineness, length, softness and folds, as well as special surface patterns. Wool is obtained by shearing the fleece covering the animal's skin. Wool is obtained from some mammals, especially sheep, goats, camels, llamas, cashmere goats, island rabbits, etc. It is the common name of natural fibres obtained from animal hair. Wool takes the name of the animal from which it is obtained; such as sheep wool, camel wool. It is used in many areas, especially blankets, quilts, pillows and winter clothes, as it keeps warm. It shrinks when washed at high temperatures, deforms if hung to dry, insulates heat very well, has high humidity properties and easily finds its original shape. It is prone to matting and yellowing.

Wool fibre is obtained by different methods, generally by shearing from live animals. This type of wool is called shear wool. The commercial value of this wool is higher than that obtained by other methods. The wool obtained by processing the skins of animals for butchery is named plate wool (Tabak yünü) or (kasapbaşı yün) butcher's wool. The wool obtained from the hide of an animal that has died for any reason is called greasy wool. If plate's wool or greasy wool (fleece, fleece) is plucked from the skin, it is of lower quality than sheared wool, as it also contains hair roots. Livestock shearing is usually done with hand scissors or motorized hand tools developed for this work. Wool fibre is generally sheared and collected as a whole without being dispersed. It is given names (such as tulip, shirt, widow or overalls) according to the regions. Chunky wool from the animal has the thinnest fibres in the shoulder region and the thickest in the thigh region. Different types of wool are obtained from various sheep breeds. These wool types are divided into 5 classes: - Fine wool (Merino wool) type, Medium (medium) wool type, Longwool type, Crossbred (hybrid) wool type (obtained from crossbred Merino sheep and English sheep) and Carpet wool type. The quality of the wool: depends on the climate, the race of sheep, the shearing season and the shearing time (<https://tekstilsayfasi.blogspot.com/2010/11/yun-nedir.html>).

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In Erzurum, livestock farming is very common due to its continental climate. As a result, the wool industry was important in this city. Since Erzurum is a centre where trade routes intersect, it is

a very rich city in terms of traditional occupations (Özcan and Bozkaya, 2021: 927) and one of the traditional occupations that continue to live in the city is wool production.

Currently, the "Yüncüler Çarşısı" located in Erzurum Kongre Caddesi Nazik Çarşı and Ali Paşa Neighborhood continues its struggle for life with its preserved cultural texture from the past to the present. As it is known, the Ali Pasha district is one of the places where there were many traders in the past and where trade was kept alive. This Neighborhood is among the witnesses of history, as it hosts many elements of tradition and culture and is located in an area that includes the Congress building.

Today, there are five wool shops located 50 meters down the marketplace in the corridor connecting Gül Ahmet District to Kavak District, across from Köse Ömer Mosque, Ali Paşa District entrance and Ali Paşa Mosque. Wool in purple, brown, black and white colours can be seen in front of these shops, highlighting that the business is the wool producer.

Wool is a must-have product for clothing and living areas in Turkish traditions. The bride-to-be is supposed to have wool products in their dowry. Ihram clothing, a garment used by women for short distances walking, and other products such as socks, underwear and belts are made of wool.

It is obvious that the demand for wool gets lower and lower day by day. The decrease of traditional living style continues due to urbanization, popular culture and ready-made consumption, and the situation is not much different in terms of wool production, which is one of the production methods directly related to customer's demand.

According to a 2010 report of the Erzurum Newspaper, Feridun Ertekin, who has been working in the wool industry in Erzurum for years, stated that wool sales drastically reduced due to the ready-made products. He added that they started to use the 'washed wool' method to prevent this situation. He believes that washing sheep wool and preparing it for sale in a clean way will increase wool sales. He also stated that housewives do not prefer to buy wool because they have difficulties in washing the wool and they prefer ready-made beds.

Expressing that they have started a new application in wool sales and that they have started the washed wool period in Nazik Çarşı, "While the weight of unwashed wool is 3 TL per kilo, we sell washed wool for 5 TL per kilo". (<https://www.yerelnet.org.tr/> By saying il/erzurum/), he pointed out that they had serious problems in terms of the future of the profession 12 years ago. We would like to include the interview we conducted with Teymur with the title of the past and present of the wool industry.

Q-1) Can you introduce yourself?

"İbrahim Hakkı Can, I was born in 1955 in Tortum, Erzurum. I am retired. I have six children, two of them are married and four of them are studying. After my retirement, I have been working in the wool business to help my father" (KK. 1).

"My name is Hacı Mecid Can. I was born in Tortum, Erzurum. I am over 90 years old. I am a retired civil servant. After I retired, I started wool business in 1978" (KK. 2)

"My name is Oktay Can. I was born in Tortum, Erzurum. I am 46 years old. I continue the job as a father's occupation, I started as an apprentice. It's a father's job" (KK. 3).

"My name is Osman Dumlu. I am 45 years old. I started working in this field as a father's occupation" (KK. 4).

"My name is Asım Teymur. I am 67 years old. I'm originally from Çamlıhemşin, Rize" (KK. 5).

Q-2) How many years have you been in this business?

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“We have been doing this business for 40 years, but after I retired, I turned to wool business. I am doing this job to help my father rather than for profit” (KK. 1).

“After I retired from civil service in 1978, I started to help my fellow countryman who was doing this job” (KK. 2).

“I have been dealing with this business for more than 30 years as long as I can remember. This occupation was inherited from my father and I continue it. It's still my father's again, I'm just helping him. I received a master-apprentice education” (KK. 3).

“It is a father's profession. I've been doing this for almost 40 years. Father is master, I am an apprentice” (KK. 4).

“I have been doing this business since 1980” (KK. 5).

S-3) Who owns the shop? Can you give information about the shop in general?

“It belongs to my father. It consists of three parts. We store all the material here” (KK. 1).

“The shop belongs to me. First of all, my fellow countryman was doing the wool business, and when he left, I wanted to continue this business as it is in this place. Storage and selling happen in the same place” (KK. 2).

“It is rent. It is very hard to pay the rent under these conditions. They suggest that we sell other products in the shop, such as food, but the shop is very close to markets 20 m from BİM and 25 m from ŞOK. Who comes and buys products from me? We are obliged to continue this work” (KK. 4).

“The shop is a heritage property. I have a share; at least I'm not paying rent. It's small, but it's enough since we don't buy a lot of products” (KK. 5).

Q-4) Do you think this profession is valid today? Can you earn enough to meet your needs?

“It's just busyness. Unfortunately, we don't get much money. Before, my father used to sell trucks, now we are selling per kilo. There isn't much room for that either” (KK. 1).

“We used to sell more than 200 tons, lately we can sell between 10-20 tons at most. With the emergence of the space beds, the demand for wool decreased. We were unable to work” (KK. 2).

“It is not enough. Nobody is using it. Generally, sponge, silicone, fiber are preferred. After the place is full of beds, we're done” (KK. 3).

“The ready-made beds are pushing us. It is not possible for us to compete with the rich. Now the man is rich, making YATAŞ; He goes to the doctor and asks him to praise the bed they have produced in terms of health. When people hear that it is healthy, they buy space beds, which are more effortless. Therefore, we cannot compete with them. People buy fiber made from petrochemicals, not wool. Currently, fiber is more expensive than wool. As such, we cannot earn any profit. I can't even get the shop rent out. I cannot pay BAĞKUR. Most of the time, we don't have the money for tea in our pockets” (KK. 4).

“No, unfortunately we cannot make a profit. It's over. People prefer new mattresses. No wool sales for three months. There is seasonal work. It more or less supports the house, it is not possible without the side incomes. There is no good on either side: the seller and the buyer.” (KK. 5)

Q-5) Why do you continue this business?

“Obligation. As there was nothing else we could do” (KK. 1, KK. 2, KK. 3, KK. 4, KK. 5).

Q-6) Is your profession your father's profession? Would you recommend it to your children?

“Yes, my father was also a wool smith, but it was not our main occupation. I don't think I will recommend it to anyone after me. I will continue as long as I can” (KK. 1).

“No. After I retired, I started knitting. My child also did this job with me. I won't recommend it to anyone after me” (KK. 2).

“It is a father's profession, and I continued it. I would not recommend it to my child. We made the same mistake. I studied technical high school. I graduated from the electrical-electronics department. There were also technicians, but we did not go and do our own business. We decided to continue the wool industry; Of course we lost everything. My friend gets 3500 TL in TEDAŞ, and I try to make a living by selling wool for 3 liras per kilo. We also sell seasonally. Not much in the winter. Warm air is needed to clean the wool” (KK. 3).

“Yes, it is a father's occupation. I would never recommend it to my child. God forbid. Would I do such a disservice to my child? The life of this profession is 3.4 years no matter how you look at it. 3.4 years later, no one will look at his face. Even if we do not give up wool, wool will leave us” (KK. 4).

“No, it's my own profession. All of my children studied, I did not get involved in this” (KK. 5).

Q-7) Who are the buyers?

“The villagers usually buy it. They usually come from Karayazı and Tekman. And bride-to-be who buys it for dowry” (KK. 1, KK. 2, KK. 3, KK. 4, KK. 5).

Q-8) What is made of wool?

“Beds, quilts, pillows can be made into layer pants, headgear, socks, shawls, trousers, and jackets after they are made into threads. They used to do almost all of them, but now it doesn't exist anymore” (KK. 1, KK. 2, KK. 3, KK. 4, KK. 5).

“We call it Ihram, where ladies take it; The only place that processes it right now is Mahmud's place in Ilica.” (KK. 3)

Q-9) Where do you buy the wool from?

“They bring it from the mountains. The producer brings it” (KK. 1, KK. 3, KK. 4).

“We buy from Tekman, Karayazı, Iğdır, Konya. We send the dirty wool to Konya and have it washed. There are also in Diyarbakir, but they wash it with hot spring water.” (KK. 2)

“From the manufacturer. We buy from a wholesaler in Bingöl” (KK. 5).

Q-10) When is wool sheared?

“It varies from region to region. It starts when the temperature rises. It starts here in June” (KK. 1, KK. 2, KK. 3, KK. 4, KK. 5).

“It is sheared in three stages. In the first place, it is sheared when it is a shearling lamb. Secondly, it is sheared when the sheep is hogget or one year old. The actual shearing is the one year after the satiety. They clip in the spring that comes after the lamb is born. They start shearing in June. They do this so that the lamb can thrive. This is the main purpose, otherwise, no one will do it; trimming is also costly” (KK. 3).

Q-11) What is wool shear with?

“In the past, there were wool shears, and now they are made with wool machines” (KK. 1, KK. 2, KK. 3, KK. 4, KK. 5).

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Q-12) How long is the life of wool?

“Once you buy it, you can use it for a lifetime. However, it needs to be washed and whipped every year. Washed wool should not be kept too long, it can rot” (KK. 1, KK. 2, KK. 3, KK. 4, KK. 5).

Q-13) What stages must wool go through to become usable?

“It has to be washed first. Now we wash it at the factory. It used to be taken to streams. It was washed by the tocking method. No need to add detergent, wool cleans itself with its foam. It is that foam that we call "mes" that makes it clean. Then the wool is beaten with the wool knuckle” (KK. 1, KK. 2, KK. 3, KK. 4, KK. 5).

Q-14) Which tree species are used in making wool sticks?

“They make it from cranberry so that it will be solid. Now it is made of all types of trees” (KK. 1, KK. 2, KK. 3, KK. 4, KK. 5).

“They also make it out of elm” (KK. 2).

“It is made from cranberries. The bark is cooked and then peeled; so that it doesn't get caught in the wool. It is durable and can be used for a long time. Nowadays, our women use the water pipe rather than the rods; It doesn't stick” (KK. 3).

“There are different kinds of trees. In my hometown is a dogwood there, and there is a tree that we call sısık, and they usually make it from it. They cook the gnarled tree, burn it in the oven, and then peel the bark. They are not used anymore. Now they sell normal sticks as wool sticks” (KK. 4).

Q-15) How many types of wool are there? Can you give information about the varieties?

“There is merino wool (short wool) but not in Erzurum. Factories prefer merino; soft, easy to handle. Purple wool (red wool) is found between Iğdır, Tekman, and Karayazı. This wool is found in the Orient. Even if this wool is available elsewhere, it is not as durable as here. There is white wool and there is black wool” (KK. 2).

“Mor (Karaman) is the best quality wool here (Iğdır, Tekman). We used to give it for weaving before; They used to do it for the yarns of the carpet. Now they bring it from China and the cost is cheaper. Acrylic is used, although it is mostly called wool blend yarn, it does not contain wool. It's kind of like polyester, but it doesn't shine like that. Merino (short wool) is used for weaving, it is thinner and softer than others. White wool (Safak) is the wool of Erzincan. It will be harsh depending on the region. It is of low quality. Hemşin wool is hard wool, black. It's not used much around here” (KK. 3).

“The purple wool is fringed and solid on the Iğdır side. It is loose on the Karlıova side and is mostly used for quilts. There is white wool in Elazığ, it is fringed, it is hard, it comes out of the mattress. It usually has no value. The white wool in Siverek-Urfa is generally good and does not come out of the mattress” (KK. 4).

Q-16) How should good wool be? Where do you think the best wool belongs?

“It has to be soft, fine stranded. The best wool is Red Iğdır wool. Here, this wool is mostly preferred, too. Urfa-Siverek wool is good as white wool” (KK. 1, KK. 2, KK. 3, KK. 4, KK. 5).

“There shouldn't be no animal manure in wool so that it will be efficient. Washed white is beautiful, it has no animal manure” (KK. 2).

“Recently, white wool is more preferred. Now, pillows and throw pillows are made rather than bed quilts. White is preferred as other colors look bad in the mattress” (KK. 4).

“The wool of gimmer which is a female sheep is softer” (KK. 3).

“The wool of the nomads becomes white. Again, white wool is preferred in Rize (KK. 5).

Q-17) What are the wool prices like?

“It depends on the quality. Dirty wool costs 3 TL or 2.50 TL. Washed and combed wool 6 or 7, 8 TL” (KK. 1, KK. 2).

“On average, it is 3 lira. The washed and combed version varies between 7 and 10 TL, depending on the quality” (KK. 3).

“The best dirty wool is 2.50 TL” (KK. 5).

Q-18) What are the benefits of wool for humans?

“Let him sleep in the wool that cares for his health” (KK. 2).

“Canan Karatay also said that the fibers are unhealthy. They do not absorb sweat and they are petroleum products. Wool is healthy; It absorbs sweat, good for rheumatism, prevents low back pain, relaxes the body. When some come, we give a piece of wool (dirty). We wrap the trimming side of the wool around the waist. To make it more effective, we mix honey and hot pepper and apply it to the waist, and wrap dirty wool on it. It is very good for back pain and hernia. Also, there are many who apply it for joint pains and knee pains” (KK. 3).

“Wool keeps you warm. When I open the shop in winter, I see that the shop is warm. Wool is infuriating. Wool absorbs sweat but does not make you sleep. Our friends, who have back pains, usually wrap dirty wool. When the child wets the bed, they say, make the child sleep on a wool mattress. The child lying on the wool mattress did not wet the bed yet. I have not seen sponge mattresses or other mattresses heat up in winter. We laid one of the last quilts and started to warm up. It attracts people in the same way as a sponge absorbs water, but wool is not like that, hug a piece of wool in 40 C° cold, you won't get cold” (KK. 4).

“They started taking it for health for a year or two. For example, his feet hurt, his knee hurts, he wraps the dirty wool. For this reason, I gave a lot of wool this year. I don't know much about this subject, people want it and I give it. I don't sell the ones for health, I give them for good.” (KK. 5)

Q-19) How many people have you left dealing with this business?

“We had 10.11 people before. Three people closed last year. We are left with 5.6 people who are doing this job. Yuncu Mecid Can, İbrahim Hakkı Can, Oktay Can Osman Dumlu, Asım Teymur, Naci Ünlü” (KK. 2, KK. 3, KK. 4).

Q-20) What should be done to make wool widespread or to be consumed more?

“We need to expand the usage areas. You have to give direction. Where will it be used? It has to be used on carpet. The biggest usage area of wool is carpet. There is very little consumption in the bed quilt. Turkey has a lot of wool, it's not like it will run out. In the past, it was not enough, we imported from abroad. That problem is now over. This is related to the decrease in the usage areas rather than the increase in wool. Once a man buys wool, he uses it for many years; the area does not buy again, so something like aging is not possible” (KK. 3).

“One side of the newly made beds is summer and the other side is winter. I wonder what's on the winter side? Has anyone asked? Ok, there is a sponge on the summer side, but what on the winter side? If he puts wool on the winter side, the wool retains its value. Men like us also eat bread, and the villagers get their fill in the village. It is important in the use of wool carpets. Antep makes carpets

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for 100 TL, Isparta makes carpets for 5000 TL. A 100-lira carpet is made of things like synthetics, the other is wool” (KK. 4).

Q.21) What are the effects of wool on human health?

“What blessing wool is. Wool refers to goat, sheep, and camel wool come. The best wool is female sheep wool. The characteristics of the wool of the female sheep are not found in the others. The wool occupation came to an end. We are the last representatives of the occupation that has been going on for centuries from past to present. It would not be wrong to say that the woollen profession is over, citizens prefer orthopedic mattresses instead of wool mattresses. The number of artisans who make a living by selling wool in Erzurum does not exceed five out of ten fingers. We are suffering from the decrease in our sales day by day. The new generation now prefers spring mattresses instead of wool mattresses. Everything made from wool is very beneficial for human health. Wool rests the human body and prevents stress, which is today's disease. Wool mattresses that prevent lumbar hernia and neck pain are also very important for human health. But in recent years, no one prefers to sleep on wool beds. In the past, people slept on wool pillows and wool beds. Due to the troublesome maintenance of wool, our new generation of women no longer demands wool. Because the wool that is slept on needs to be washed, whipped, and ventilated once a year. Our elders would first wash the wool by the streams, then air it and dry it by whisking under the hot sun. The wool used for a year would make people healthy and hospitals would not be overflowing. Newly married couples now prefer siliconized fiber, which has emerged in recent years. If the new generation continues not to prefer wool, I think we will close our shops now. However, whatever is beneficial for human health should be evaluated, made into the policy of governments, and both animal husbandry and wool farming should be supported in this respect (KK. 4).

Q22. Do you feel responsible for the decline of this profession over time? What could you do yourself to continue this occupation?

“Our women customers take the easy way out of everything. If they see some dirty wool, they think they cannot deal with it and argue with us. We were unsuccessful at this point. We should have explained the benefits of wool to women who did not buy wool because it was dirty. If we had made the wool cleaner and ready for use, of course, people would not prefer other alternatives. Nowadays, I try to make wool bead-like fibre and sell it. The poor opinions of the politicians are another factor for the decline of the wool industry. The Yün Şayak Factory (A Woolf Factory) was established in Tortum Kaledibi forty-three years ago. The opening of a factory would help the economy and tackle the unemployment in this region. However, it could be operated actively for 6-8 months. With the change of government, the activity of this place also came to an end. Now people are struggling to live a healthy life. They put a value on wool, but getting wool has become extremely expensive for various reasons. This occupation is not supported by any business. Only big companies make a profit” (KK. 4).

Q23. What is the impact of technological developments on the occupation? What is your reaction to the technological developments?

“With the development of technology, the production of spring and orthopaedic mattresses has increased. Silicone fibres are preferred because they are easy to wash and inexpensive. This situation harmed the profession. We started selling silicon fibre in the wool shop” (KK. 4).

Conclusion

In the city centre of Erzurum, the last representative of the wool industry answered some questions about the past, present and future of the occupation. The result of these interviews gives both general information about the wool profession and the current situation of this profession.

The data shows that traditional occupations, which have witnessed the deep-rooted history of societies, are under the influence of social and industrial developments and globalization. Moreover, this impact increases day by day and by destroying the traditional. Therefore, today, everything that belongs to culture needs to be protected more than ever before (Kolaç, 2009: 82).

It is now crystal clear that synthetic fabrics, clothes, synthetic fibre pillows and beds used in daily life threaten health (Uslu, 2021: 18-29). The elimination of this threat is the introduction of the natural by adapting it to changing life forms or consumption savings. For example, the highest rate of use of wool was the demand during preparations of marriage. These savings have been replaced by petrochemical products due to reasons such as urbanization, pretence, access, the convenience of consumption, etc. This development causes serious blood loss for the relevant profession, in which case it may be appropriate to meet the demand with ready-to-use product production rather than with raw materials.

Processing the wool and turning it into a product suitable for the demand is possible with the processing facilities to be established in the region where the supply takes place. If facilities cannot be provided, a valuable material such as wool will continue to be used as fuel in processes such as cheese production.

Wool is not only used for the supply of bedding, quilts, etc. This substance also has an area of use that gives very effective results, especially in low back pain accompanied by folk medicine. It has many examples that many people find a cure, especially with the use of unwashed wool by wrapping the painful waist area for 1-2 nights. Good management of this situation may lead to a partial improvement in terms of the future of the profession.

Using wool for products such as ihram, baby, socks, underwear, belts, etc., which carry the socio-cultural characteristics of our region, can be a positive step for the wool industry to reach a production form that will appeal to the visitors. The social change experienced in every field brings about the necessity of protecting traditional occupations and their representatives to preserve cultural traditions and the continuity of wool production. It is essential to protect the last surviving representatives of the wool trade and transfer their knowledge to future generations. The wool occupation should not be considered only as of the sale of wool. Those who sell wool also have a lot of knowledge and experience about wool. People who work in the business of wool in Erzurum are equipped with comprehensive information about types of wool, their quality the products which are obtained from what kind of wool, the care and protection of wool, its importance in our culture and its health benefits.

The loss of tradition should not only be considered the loss of occupations. By losing these values from the past, society will lose the cultural spirit that will shape the construction of the future. In this sense, first of all, local and central administrators must take action urgently to prevent all kinds of values belonging to tradition and culture which are at the edge of destruction due to popular culture and mass production.

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- Source 5.** Asım Teymur, Erzurum, Yüncü, 67, İlkokul



Photograph 1



Photograph 2

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Photograph 3



Photograph 4



Photograph 5



Photograph 6

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Photograph 7



Photograph 8



Photograph 9