



## A RESEARCH ON LABOR FORCE REQUIREMENT IN TURKISH READY-WEAR INDUSTRY

Dr. Öğr. Üye. Ahmet ÖZBEK\*

Dr. Öğr. Üye. Yusuf ESMER\*\*

### ABSTRACT

Today, the Turkish ready-wear industry is undergoing a transformation process from a contract manufacturing to full package manufacturing. The most important input in the production of ready-wear is undoubtedly the labor force. For this reason, the success of the transformation process is possible by meeting the qualified personnel needs of the industry. In this study, labor force requirement of the Turkish ready-wear industry is examined. Qualitative research method is used in this study. Job adverts on ready-wear industry are investigated on [www.kariyer.net](http://www.kariyer.net) which is Turkey's largest human resources website. Firstly the job positions which are most needed by the ready-wear industry and then the characteristics required for candidates for these positions are determined. The obtained data are subjected to frequency and percentage analyzes in the SPSS 21.0 program. According to the result of the research; the most needed personnel positions of Turkish ready-wear enterprises are "stylist", "merchandiser" and "sales consultancy" respectively. It has also been found that ready-wear enterprises are primarily seeking communication skills and suitability for teamwork from the personnel who will work in these positions. The main problem for ready-wear enterprises is to meet the need for personnel from outside the production area such as merchandiser, sales consultant, because enterprises request professional knowledge as well as marketing knowledge from merchandisers and sales consultants. However, the marketing knowledge is given in the marketing programs and the professional knowledge is given in the professional departments in Turkey. This situation leads to the loss of time and money since firms have to give professional trainings to the marketing graduates for merchandiser position. The opposite of this case is also true; the staff with professional knowledge also needs marketing knowledge. Therefore, the ready-wear enterprises need vocational training education institutions which give both marketing and profession training to meet the labor force requirements of sales representatives and sales consultants. Because, in all the researches and studies carried out, it is emphasized that the contribution of education is important and the quality of labor force should be improved through education.

**Keywords:** Ready-wear Industry, Ready-wear Enterprises, Labor Force, Labor Force Requirement, Job Advert

### TÜRK HAZIR GİYİM SEKTÖRÜNDE İŞGÜCÜ İHTİYACI ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

#### ÖZ

Günümüz Türk hazır giyim sektörü, fason üretici bir sektörden tasarım ve moda üretici sektöre doğru bir dönüşüm süreci geçirmektedir. Hazır giyim üretiminde en önemli girdi hiç şüphesiz işgücüdür. Bu nedenle dönüşüm sürecinin başarılı olabilmesi, sektörün kalifiye eleman ihtiyacının karşılanmasıyla mümkün olacaktır. Bu çalışmada, Türk hazır giyim sektörünün işgücü ihtiyacı incelenmektedir. Bu çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmaktadır. Türkiye'nin en büyük insan kaynağı sitesi olan [www.kariyer.net](http://www.kariyer.net) adresinde hazır giyim

\*Marmara Üniversitesi Teknoloji Fakültesi, Tekstil Yönetim ve Pazarlama, [aозbek@marmara.edu.tr](mailto:aozbek@marmara.edu.tr), ORCID NO: 0000-0001-5015-8082

\*\*Bayburt Üniversitesi Uygulamalı Bilimler Fakültesi, Yönetim Bilişim Sistemleri, [yesmer@bayburt.edu.tr](mailto:yesmer@bayburt.edu.tr), 0000-0003-3691-1730

sektöründeki iş ilanları incelenmiştir. Öncelikle hazır giyim sektörünün en çok ihtiyaç duyduğu iş pozisyonları ve daha sonra bu pozisyonlar için adaylarda aranan özellikler belirlenmiştir. Elde edilen veriler SPSS 21.0 programında frekans ve yüzde analizlerine tabi tutulmuştur. Araştırmanın sonucuna göre; Türk hazır giyim işletmelerinin en fazla ihtiyaç duydukları personel pozisyonları sırasıyla “modelistlik”, “müşteri temsilciliği” ve “satış danışmanlığı”dır. Ayrıca hazır giyim işletmelerinin bu pozisyonlarda çalışacak personellerden iletişim yeteneği ve takım çalışmasına uygun olma özelliklerini öncelikli olarak aradıkları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Hazır giyim işletmeleri için asıl sorun müşteri temsilcisi, satış danışmanı gibi üretimin dışındaki alanlardaki personel ihtiyacının karşılanmasıdır. Çünkü işletmeler, müşteri temsilcisi ve satış danışmanlarından, pazarlama bilgisinin yanında mesleki bilgi de aramaktadır. Ancak Türkiye’de pazarlama bilgisi pazarlama programlarında, mesleki bilgi ise mesleki bölümlerde verilmektedir. Bu durum hazır giyim işletmelerinin pazarlama mezunu bir personeli müşteri temsilcisi olarak işe aldığı anda, personele mesleki bilgi vermek zorunda kalmasına, para ve zaman kaybetmesine neden olmaktadır. Bu durumun tam tersi de doğrudur; meslek bilgisine sahip olan personelin de pazarlama bilgisine ihtiyacı olmaktadır. Bu nedenle hazır giyim işletmelerinin müşteri temsilcisi ve satış danışmanı işgücü ihtiyacının karşılanması için hem pazarlama hem de meslek eğitimi veren eğitim kurumlarına ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Çünkü yapılan tüm araştırma ve incelemelerde, eğitimin katkısının önemli olduğu, işgücünün eğitim yoluyla kalitesinin iyileştirilmesi gerektiği vurgulanmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Hazır Giyim Sektörü, Hazır Giyim İşletmeleri, İş Gücü, İş Gücü İhtiyacı, İş İlanı

## 1. Introduction

Ready-wear is a type of garment production that meets the needs of people for clothes through mass production by taking advantage of statistical measurements (Ozbek, 2005). Industry of ready-wear clothing has emerged after the Industrial Revolution, especially in the Developed European Countries, North America and Japan. In the last quarter of the 20th century, these countries used technology to produce clothes, which has improved productivity and quality considerably in garment production. (Erdem Demirok, 2017). This situation has given them a significant competitive advantage in the clothing trade. But since the beginning of the 21st century, developing and underdeveloped countries have started to use technology in clothing production. In fact, these countries have invested extensively in the industry because the ready-wear industry is considered as a transition to heavy manufacturing industry. These investments increased the competition in the industry and decreased profits by making the industry became global.

Developed countries affected by the increase in competition have managed to avoid their competition by directing their investments in the field of design and fashion rather than production (Ozen, 2016). In addition, these countries have begun contractor in the Far East, Central and Eastern Europe, where prices for energy and labor are low. They have also succeeded in increasing their profits by marketing these products to the world. (Yesildal, 2017). However, this does not mean that the developed countries have completely abandoned the ready-wear production. For example, Italy is successful in many criteria such as the use of technology in production, the effective

delivery of the products, the collection preparation and the efficient production (Erdem Demirok, 2017a).

In the 1980s, Turkey started as a contract manufacturing and successfully maintained its position as the contractor of ready-wear thanks to advantages such as geographical location, overpopulation, high unemployment, qualified labor with low-cost, raw materials (cotton), short shipping time (because of the proximity to the EU countries) and flexible enterprises (SMEs). In fact, some of the Turkish contractor have succeeded in producing their own products with the experience gained from contractor (Uyanik and Ogulata, 2013; Erdem Demirok, 2017b). However, with the removal of quotas for ready-wear trade in 2005, the entry of Asian countries such as especially China, Bangladesh, and Vietnam, which produce at low-cost advantages, caused European countries to prefer these countries for contractor. Due to high production costs (high minimum wage, energy etc.), it is very difficult for Turkish garment enterprises to compete with Asian countries which can produce at low-cost. For this reason, Turkish ready-wear enterprises have to compete by focusing on design, collection, and fashion and that perform flexible, fast and high-quality small batch production as first stage enterprise (producing its own products and markets) (Turkey Clothing Manufacturers' Association, 2016; Yilmaz and Atilgan, 2016). However, in order to make such production Turkish ready-wear enterprises should employ qualified and educated personnel who can flexibly and rapidly adapt to new technologies with low costs (Gur, 2011; Atiker, 2015; Sahinoglu and Aydin, 2015; Sevinc and Eren, 2016). In addition, these personnel should be used effectively and efficiently (Zincirkiran and Akbulut, 2016a: 25). In this context, it is aimed to examine the need for labor in the Turkish ready-wear industry. For this purpose, job adverts on ready-wear industry are investigated on [www.kariyer.net](http://www.kariyer.net) which is website of human resources with Turkey's largest database of candidates and later on most sought positions and its required characteristics are determined.

## 2. Literature Review

In this part of the study, the studies that have been carried out in recent years concerning the subject are examined.

Zincirkiran and Akbulut (2016b) carried out research on the determination of the problem of vocational education or qualification of labor force in ready-wear industry. As a result of the research, important findings about the lack of qualified labor force are found. Accordingly, a large part of the managers emphasized the problem about the quality of the labor force and on the other hand, significant findings such as the importance of professional expertise, high labor, and energy costs, and marketing problems are found. According to findings, it can be seen that problems of quality management, industrial specialization, and labor costs would also be solved if the problem of labor education is solved.

Sahin (2015) emphasizes that the concept of competitiveness is very important in the ready-wear industry as well as in every industry. Competitive power in ready-wear industry is determined by abundant raw materials and cheap labor force. In particular, the need for labor-intensive workforce and the labor-wage that changes from country to

country determine the direction of competition in this area. Labor cost is important in the ready-wear industry. Therefore, in order to be successful, the labor force must be qualified.

Dogan and Palamutcu (2013a) numerically demonstrated the structure of the Turkish textile and ready-wear industry, and comparatively examined labor force requirements and vocational training activities carried out in order to meet these needs in terms of ISKUR activities in Denizli and Kayseri. Recommendations are made about the activities that can be done for the industry to achieve sustainable employment opportunities. In addition to academic and vocational training in formal education institutions, adult education programs, in-service training programs, life-long learning and forward-looking market forecasts and preparations of education programs are seen as very important and necessary investments of institutions such as ISKUR, NGOs, and private sector institutions.

Arslan (2012a) argues that the poor quality of inputs used in various stages of the production process affect productivity in a negative way by slowing down the production, stopping, and leading to deviations from predetermined standards. Likewise, the quality of the labor force, which is most important one of the inputs used in production, is also a factor directly affecting productivity. The labor force that is well-trained, well-nourished, protected from work accidents, and that can solve various problems is more productive.

Baydu (2007a) emphasized the importance of training in the branding process in the ready-wear industry. In this context, it is stated that the employees responsible for the brand must be trained by specialists. It is expressed that this situation is necessary for the success of the ready-wear enterprises.

Evsizler (2006) examined the determination of staff selection techniques, placement of staff, and applications related to staffing in ready-wear enterprises. In order to produce quality products, ready-wear enterprises should select their staff with more conscious and scientific methods than chance. Managers try to meet personnel requirements and to provide those requirements in various forms according to the required division.

Gokluberk Ozlu (2006a) examined the employee selection process in the literature and explored the methods used by ready-wear enterprises in the selection of personnel. It has been observed that ready-wear enterprises generally benefit from job announcements, recommendations of current employees and regular job applications during the personnel selection process. It has been determined that ready-wear enterprises do not get help from experts and organizations in the selection of personnel and do not use psycho technical methods and exams.

When the literature on the subject is reviewed, the fact that there are few studies in the literature on the labor force of the ready-wear industry reveals the importance of this work.

### **3. Material and Methods**

In this study, personnel positions of Turkish ready-wear enterprises and the characteristics required for the candidates of these positions are tried to be determined. For this purpose, the job adverts of the ready-wear enterprises are examined daily between 12/01/2017 - 30/01/2018 via the human resources website www.kariyer.net which has the largest database in Turkey (Cevher, 2013). The positions that are most needed by the industry are determined by analyzing the job adverts. Later on, the talents and characteristics most sought by the enterprises are identified for the three most needed positions. The data obtained are given below.

Within the scope of the research, 5362 adverts are examined. When these adverts are analyzed, it is concluded that these adverts are for 172 positions and that an average of 31 adverts are for each position. The obtained data are subjected to frequency and percentage analyzes in the SPSS 21.0 program. The distribution of adverts in terms of position types and cities is given in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Distribution of Position Types and Number of Positions in Terms of Cities

| No | City              | Position Type | Number of               | Percentage    |
|----|-------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1  | Istanbul          | 162           | 3980                    | 67,70         |
| 2  | Bursa             | 34            | 584                     | 9,93          |
| 3  | Izmir             | 22            | 201                     | 3,42          |
| 4  | Ankara            | 15            | 101                     | 1,72          |
| 5  | Kocaeli           | 10            | 97                      | 1,65          |
| 6  | Antalya           | 8             | 20                      | 0,34          |
| 7  | Denizli           | 8             | 145                     | 2,47          |
| 8  | Malatya           | 8             | 81                      | 1,38          |
| 9  | Tekirdag          | 7             | 93                      | 1,58          |
| 10 | Other cities (49) | 122           | 577                     | 9,81          |
|    | <b>Total</b>      |               | <b>5879<sup>1</sup></b> | <b>100,00</b> |

According to Table 1, 3980 adverts are made for 162 types of positions in Istanbul and it owns 67.70% of all adverts. Bursa and İzmir became the two other cities after İstanbul for which the number of job adverts are high.

Some of the 172 advert positions (pre-accountant, driver, cleaning staff, etc.) are excluded because they are not the subject of this research. In addition, some adverts are combined because they have the same position. For example, merchandiser, inspector and product control specialist are combined because they have the same position. For example, merchandiser, inspector and product control specialist are combined together because they are the same positions. As a result, the focus is on 136 positions.

#### 4. Results

<sup>1</sup> For example, there may be more than one positions in a job advert, hence there are differences between the number of positions and total adverts according to cities.

Table 2 lists the most advertised positions of ready-wear enterprises. Table 2 is based on the number of enterprises that advertise. The most advertised positions of ready-wear enterprises are respectively; styling, customer representation and sales consulting.

**Table 2:** Distribution of Adverts in terms of Location and Number of Enterprises

| No | Advert Position        | Number of Adverts | Percentage (%) | Number of Enterprises | Percentage (%) |
|----|------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1  | Stylist                | 511               | 9,56           | 78                    | 12,11          |
| 2  | Merchandiser           | 752               | 14,07          | 77                    | 11,96          |
| 3  | Sales Consultant       | 324               | 6,06           | 35                    | 5,43           |
| 4  | Designer               | 71                | 1,33           | 23                    | 3,57           |
| 5  | Store Manager          | 78                | 1,46           | 20                    | 3,11           |
| 6  | Production Manager     | 97                | 1,82           | 18                    | 2,80           |
| 7  | Assistant Merchandiser | 167               | 3,13           | 17                    | 2,64           |
| 8  | Procurement Officer    | 171               | 3,20           | 17                    | 2,64           |
| 9  | Fason Tracking Officer | 62                | 1,16           | 12                    | 1,86           |
| 10 | Other Adverts (127)    | 3110              | 58,21          | 347                   | 53,88          |
|    | <b>Total</b>           | <b>5343</b>       | <b>100,00</b>  | <b>644</b>            | <b>100,00</b>  |

According to Table 2, 78 ready-wear firms issued 511 advertisements for stylist needs. The stylist position is followed by the merchandiser position with 752 adverts of 77 firms. The third most wanted position is the sales consultant of 35 firms with 324 job adverts.

The adverts that are seeking stylists, merchandisers and sales consultants are examined to determine the required characteristics. These characteristics are given below for each of the three positions.

#### 4.1. Required Characteristics of Stylist for Ready-wear Enterprises

- Pattern knowledge (drawing, making a pattern from sample and table of measurement, sequencing, using the computer aided pattern programs (Gerber, Asist, Lectra, etc.)
- Ability to prepare a measurement chart (from the sample, etc.)
- Model application
- “Cloth spreading” knowledge (making drawings)
- Ability to prepare sewing instructions
- Ability to direct model technician
- Ability to give production approval
- Ability for using sample tracking program
- Ability to take necessary precautions by determining the risks that may occur with the finished pattern or product

- Ability to calculate cost
- Communication and team work

#### **4.2. Required Characteristics of Merchandiser for Ready-wear Enterprises**

- Marketing knowledge, market analysis and sales
- Knowledge about customer needs determination
- Knowledge about planning and organization
- Knowledge about fabric, auxiliary material and accessory
- Knowledge about model shop
- Knowledge about pricing (preparing precosting etc.)
- Production tracking programs (Corteks etc.)
- Knowledge about product quality control
- Knowledge about customer relationship (coordination between customer and enterprise)
- Knowledge about order and sample documentation (Filing a document)
- Motivation for Team work
- Foreign language (varies according to the market where the firm is working)

#### **4.3. Required Characteristics of Sales Consultant for Ready-wear Enterprises**

- Knowledge about fashion and trends
- Knowledge about product display (product presentation, product placement, etc.)
- Knowledge about consumer behavior (to provide alternative products by understanding customers' needs and expectations)
- Knowledge about product (Having detailed information about products offered to customers)
- Knowledge about communication and behavior (to express oneself well, to communicate and maintain well with customers)
- Knowledge about sales methods
- Style consulting
- Knowledge about tracking product and inventory (to use inventory programs)
- Knowledge about store transaction (accepting, labeling, alarming, hanging, placing, folding products; collecting items for return, arranging a department, getting alteration etc.)
- Ability for gathering information (sharing customer preferences and expectations with a top manager by observing and evaluating purchasing habits of customers)
- Computer and cash register program (MS Office and IBM cash registers etc.)
- Elocution education
- Foreign language
- Motivation for team work

### **5. Discussion**

Ready-wear industry is one of the most important industries for Turkey in terms of profit, employment opportunities, accumulation of knowledge and current equipment pool. This industry affects almost all sectors and social structure in Turkey positively by increasing employment and its contribution to the welfare of society and women's employment (Dogan and Palamutcu, 2013b: 2). However, in ready-wear industry, labor intensive technology is used mostly. Today, the most important resource for managers who are working on efficiency in labor-intensive technology enterprises is human. (Gokluberk Ozlu, 2006b: 200). Therefore, labor force which is one of the most important inputs of an enterprise must be qualified. Especially in today's ready-wear industry, where brand and fashion production is front-line, the need for qualified labor is more important.

When the job adverts of ready-wear firms are examined, it is concluded that Istanbul is the center of ready-wear and on the other hand, the most sought staff positions of Turkish ready-wear firms are respectively stylist, merchandiser and sales consultant. It is also observed that ready-wear enterprises request communication skills and suitability for teamwork for each position.

As a result of the research, ready-wear firms mostly search for "stylist" position. In addition, the personnel to be employed in the position of stylist are requested to use computer aided mold (Gerber, Asist, Lectra, etc.) and production tracking programs. Human resources required for this position is covered by Women/ Men Clothing Stylist programs of Vocational High schools and special courses in Turkey.

The main problem for ready-wear enterprises is to meet the need for personnel outside the production area such as merchandiser, sales consultant, because enterprises request professional knowledge as well as marketing knowledge from merchandisers and sales consultants. However, the marketing knowledge is given in the marketing programs and the professional knowledge is given in the professional departments in Turkey. This situation leads to the loss of time and money when firms hire marketing graduates for position of merchandiser since firms have to give professional trainings. The opposite of this case is also true; the staff with professional knowledge also needs marketing knowledge. Therefore, the ready-wear enterprises need vocational training education institutions which give both marketing and profession training to meet the labor force requirements of sales representatives and sales consultants. Because, in all the researches and studies carried out, it is emphasized that the contribution of education is important and that the quality of labor force should be improved through education (Arslan, 2012b: 44).

To meet the skilled labor force requirements of the ready-wear industry, both educational institutions and industry should develop projects together. Within this scope, university industry cooperation should be developed and related programs should be opened in universities (Eraslan et al., 2008: 296). In addition, the number of brand-trained personnel should be increased in order to be able to produce brand products, which are the first target of the industry (Baydu, 2007b: 77-78). As a result, it is thought that this study will contribute to especially ready-wear industry



representatives, ready-wear firm managers and education institutions for the management and training of human resource.

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