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RESEARCHER MENTAL HEALTH OVERVIEW IN TÜRKİYE

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What is in the News?



The following summary presents recent developments and news related to the academic sector in Türkiye, focusing on topics such as mental health, academic career progression, funding, and research culture.



- National Mental Health Action Plan (2020-2023): The Ministry of Health in Türkiye has launched the National Mental Health Action Plan for 2020-2023, aiming to implement a community-based mental health service model for the general population. This plan aligns with both national and international strategies but notably lacks a specific focus on the mental health needs of the academic community, which could be crucial given the unique pressures faced in academia [1].



- Disproportionate Academic Growth and Productivity Issues: According to the 2020 Türkiye Science Report by the Turkish Academy of Sciences, there is a significant imbalance in the growth rate of student enrollments compared to the increase in academic staff numbers. This imbalance has led to an increased workload and reduced productivity among academics. The report underscores the mental health implications for young academics who bear the brunt of this workload in their pursuit of career progression within the academic hierarchy [2].



- Council of Higher Education's Doctoral Education Workshop: On February 14, 2022, the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) conducted a workshop to discuss improvements in doctoral education in Türkiye. The workshop focused on enhancing doctoral students' support, including scholarships and improved research conditions, and proposed alternatives to traditional doctoral theses. However, the workshop did not address the mental health challenges faced by doctoral students, which is a significant oversight considering the stressors associated with PhD studies [3].

[1] National Mental Health Action Plan 2020-23. Retrieved from [Ministry of Health](#).

[2] Türkiye Science Report 2020. Retrieved from [Turkish Academy of Sciences](#).

[3] CoHE Workshop on Improving Doctoral Education. Retrieved from [Council of Higher Education](#).

What is in the News?



The following summary presents recent developments and news related to the academic sector in Türkiye, focusing on topics such as mental health, academic career progression, funding, and research culture.



- **Grant Program for Research Universities:** The CoHE and the Presidential Strategy and Budget Directorate co-signed a protocol for a grant program targeting 23 research universities. Starting in 2022, this five-year program aims to financially support health, social sciences, and advanced technology research. While this initiative provides economic support to these institutions, it falls short in addressing the mental health needs within these academic environments, which is a crucial aspect of ensuring a healthy and productive academic community [4].



- **Academic Brain Drain and Productivity Concerns:** An AI-assisted study revealed a worrying trend of approximately 12,000 academics leaving Türkiye, with those departing being 28% more productive than their counterparts in Türkiye. This exodus is creating a paradox in Turkish academia, as increasing productivity abroad is correlated with a decreased likelihood of these academics returning to Türkiye, thereby exacerbating the talent drain in the academic sector [5].



- **Fluctuating Academic Staff Numbers:** Recent statistics reported by the Council of Higher Education and national news portal Habertürk indicate a discrepancy in the number of academic staff in Türkiye. As of May 1, 2023, official statistics report around 182,000 academic staff, while other sources report a slightly higher number. This discrepancy suggests an ongoing issue with academics leaving the academic field, either for opportunities abroad or for other sectors, highlighting a pressing concern for the sustainability and vitality of the Turkish academic landscape [6],[7].

[4] Research Universities Grant Program. Retrieved from [Council of Higher Education](#).

[5] Study on Academic Brain Drain. Retrieved from [Dunya](#).

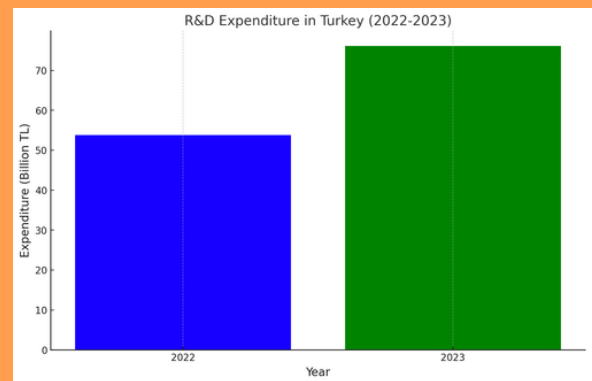
[6] Academic Staff Statistics in Türkiye. Retrieved from [Habertürk](#).

[7] Council of Higher Education Statistics. Retrieved from [CoHE](#).

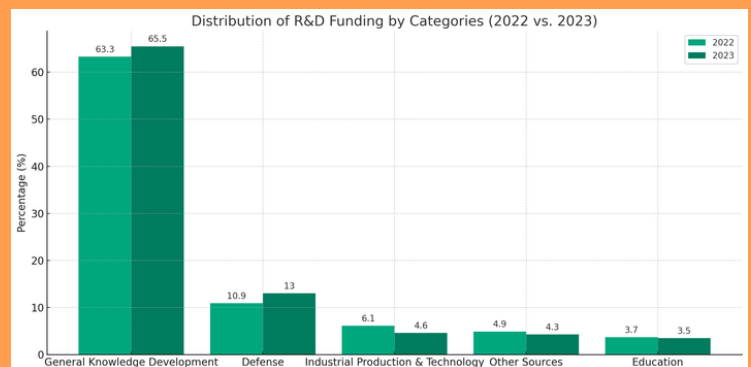
Funding for Research and Academia

The following overview provides an analysis of the funding landscape for research and academia in Türkiye in recent years.

In Türkiye, TÜBİTAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye) remains a key coordinator of funding for research and academia. It plays a crucial role in both national and international research funding programs, including bilateral programs and Horizon2027. As the central agency, TÜBİTAK is instrumental in promoting and integrating R&D activities throughout Türkiye, aligning with the evolving objectives and increased scope of Horizon2027, which aims to foster innovation and research development at a broader, more inclusive level.



R&D Expenditure Trend (2022-2023): The bar graph illustrates the R&D expenditure in Türkiye for the years 2022 and 2023. The R&D expenditure in Türkiye for the years 2022 and 2023 shows a significant increase. In 2022, the expenditure was 53 billion 844 million TL, and in 2023, it was projected to be 76 billion 101 million TL. This substantial rise in R&D expenditure highlights a growing investment in research and development activities within the country [10].



Distribution of R&D Funding by Categories (2022 vs. 2023): This bar chart compares the distribution of R&D funding across various categories for the years 2022 and 2023. In 2022, the largest portion of the budget was allocated to general knowledge development for universities (63.3%), followed by defense (10.9%), and industrial production & technology (6.1%). For 2023, the projection shows a similar trend with 65.5% for general knowledge development, 13.0% for defense, and 4.6% for industrial production & technology. These slight shifts indicate a strategic realignment in Türkiye's R&D funding priorities [10].

[10]: Turkish Statistical Institute's report on Central Government Budget Appropriations and Outlays for R&D Activities: [Turkish Statistical Institute, 2023](#).

Persona of the Researcher on the Career Ladder

The following overview delves into the structure of the tertiary education system, the various types of higher education institutions, and the unique employment challenges faced by researchers, particularly those in temporary academic positions.

Higher Education System: Türkiye's tertiary education system encompasses universities, high technology institutes, higher vocational schools, and off-university higher education institutions. The majority of these institutions are public, supplemented by foundation institutions. The system offers a range of degree programs across different levels, making higher education accessible nationwide.

Universities and Academic Degrees: The country has 208 higher education institutions, including state and foundation universities. State universities are directly funded by the government, while foundation universities are supervised by the state. Universities are authorized to award various vocational and academic degrees, with no intermediate stages between secondary education and higher education [11].



[11]: Eurydice Network on Education Systems and Policies in Europe. (n.d.). Higher Education in Türkiye. Retrieved from [Eurydice](#).

Persona of the Researcher on the Career Ladder

The following overview delves into the structure of the tertiary education system, the various types of higher education institutions, and the unique employment challenges faced by researchers, particularly those in temporary academic positions.

The 50/D Problem

The 50/d problem in Türkiye's academic system primarily concerns the employment status of research assistants at universities. This issue is governed by specific legislative provisions and recent changes in the law [12].

Employment Under Article 50/d:

According to Article 50/d of Law No. 2547 on Higher Education, research assistants are typically employed on a temporary basis during their doctoral or proficiency in arts education. They are required to balance their academic responsibilities with their ongoing education.

Career Path Post 50/d Employment:

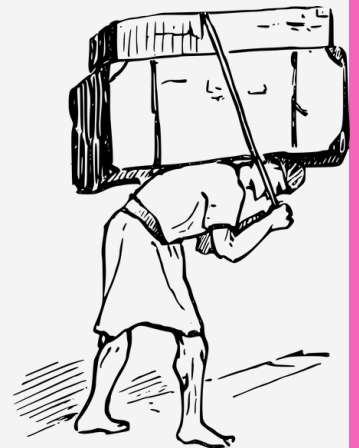
After their tenure under the 50/d status, research assistants often face critical decisions regarding their career paths. They may either advance to other academic positions or opt for career opportunities outside the university, posing challenges in postdoctoral career planning and job security.

Legal Transition to 33/a Position:

A significant legislative change was introduced with Law No. 7437, effective from February 9, 2023. The law allows 50/d research assistants, except those in certain medical fields, to transition to a permanent 33/a position within six months, provided they meet specific conditions and make a request for the transition.

Continuing Challenges:

This legal amendment offers a temporary solution to the 50/d problem. However, research assistants appointed after the implementation of this law face uncertainty, as the transition to a 33/a position is not guaranteed without further regulatory changes.



Amidst the expansive and diverse terrain of Türkiye's higher education, a pressing challenge looms large: The '50/d problem.

Persona of the Researcher on the Career Ladder

This section provides an insightful overview of the academic career progression in Türkiye, outlining the structured path from achieving associate professorship to the prestigious rank of full professor. It delves into the essential qualifications, research and teaching experiences, evaluation processes, and the significant academic contributions required to advance through these esteemed academic ranks.

Associate Professorship

Path to Associate Professorship: In Türkiye, becoming an associate professor requires acquiring a Ph.D. or equivalent qualification, along with developing a strong research portfolio through publications and conference presentations.

Teaching Experience and Research Contributions: Along with research, gaining substantial teaching experience at universities is essential. This experience complements the academic's research contributions and is a critical component of their professional development.

Evaluation by the CoHE (YÖK): Academic qualifications are evaluated by the Council of Higher Education of Türkiye. Applicants must submit a comprehensive CV, a list of publications, details of teaching experience, and research work for assessment.

Application and Evaluation Process: Depending on CoHE or the institution's requirements, candidates might need to pass a national academic qualification exam. The evaluation process includes the presentation of academic work and participation in an interview to assess the candidate's qualifications.

Appointment and Institution-Specific Criteria: Upon successful evaluation, candidates are appointed as associate professors. However, the specific criteria for this appointment can vary among different institutions and academic disciplines.

Professorship

Progression from Associate to Full Professor: The journey to becoming a full professor in Türkiye typically begins with achieving associate professorship. Candidates who have already attained this level through a Ph.D., along with significant research and teaching experience, are eligible to pursue a full professorship.

Deepening Academic Contributions: The next phase involves enhancing and expanding academic contributions. This includes conducting further research, publishing extensively in esteemed academic journals, and establishing oneself as a leader in the respective field.

Application and Evaluation Process: After a stipulated waiting period post-associate professorship, individuals can apply for a full professorship position. This stage involves a comprehensive evaluation process, assessing the breadth and depth of the applicant's academic accomplishments.

Appointment as Full Professor: Success in the evaluation process leads to the appointment as a full professor at a university. This appointment is a recognition of substantial academic achievements and influential contributions to the discipline.

Understanding Specific Criteria and Guidelines: Criteria and requirements for full professorship may vary between institutions. It is crucial for candidates to stay informed about the specific guidelines and expectations set by their universities or the Council of Higher Education of Türkiye.

Academic System of the Country

This overview offers a concise analysis of Türkiye's academic system, emphasizing the structure and governance of higher education institutions, including public and foundation universities and research-oriented entities and the supportive role of key scientific and technological institutions. It also covers the demographics and distribution of doctoral programs, reflecting the country's focus on advanced education and research development in recent years.

Higher Education Institutions:



- The higher education system in Türkiye is supervised by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE). The CoHE is an autonomous institution which is responsible for the planning, coordination and governance of higher education system in Türkiye in accordance with the Turkish Constitution and the Higher Education Laws.
- Türkiye's higher education system comprises consists of 127 active public state universities and 2 passive ones, along with 74 active private foundation universities and 1 passive, as well as 4 active foundation vocational schools. The total number of universities, including both active and passive, is 208.
- The concept of "research universities" was introduced in 2017 when the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) launched a program to classify certain universities as research-oriented. This initiative marked a significant shift towards emphasizing research and development in the higher education system.
- As of 2022, there are 23 research universities, including 20 public and 3 non-profit foundation universities [15]. These are selected based on criteria like research capacity, quality, and cooperative interactions [13].
- Research and Application Centers can be established within universities upon approval from the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) for specific research areas or interdisciplinary fields [14].

Additionally, the Turkish higher education and research landscape is supported by several key institutions:

- **YÖK (CoHE):** Apart from its overarching role in higher education, CoHE also establishes and maintains quality assurance mechanisms across all higher education institutions.
- **TÜBİTAK:** The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye, which develops science, technology, and innovation policies, supports academic and R&D activities, and provides funding for research projects.
- **TÜBA:** The Turkish Academy of Science, which focuses on scientific studies, advising on scientific issues, disseminating scientific thought, and encouraging young scientists. TÜBA works to improve science policies and support science and scientists in Türkiye.
- **TÜSEB:** The Health Institutes of Türkiye, dedicated to advancing health sciences and technologies, supporting sustainable development, and housing research institutes like the Cancer Institute and Biotechnology Institute.

Doctoral Programs and Student Demographics:

- As of 2023, there are 11,719 active doctoral programs in Türkiye with a total of 114,508 doctoral students enrolled. Among these students, 56,103 are female and 58,405 are male. This updated data reflects the current state of doctoral education across the country's higher education institutions.
- About 10% of doctoral enrollments are international students, primarily from the Middle East, which is lower than the OECD average.
- These programs are offered through 585 institutes/graduate schools, which are often specialized and divided into various fields within a university [16].



[13] Gokalp, G. (2023). International developments in doctoral education: The case of Türkiye. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 748-758. [Taylor & Francis Online](#).

[14] Council of Higher Education (CoHE). Graduate Education Regulations. [Mevzuat](#).

[15] Council of Higher Education (CoHE). (2022). Higher Education Institutions. [CoHE](#).

[16] Turkish Higher Education Statistics. [Council of Higher Education Statistics](#).

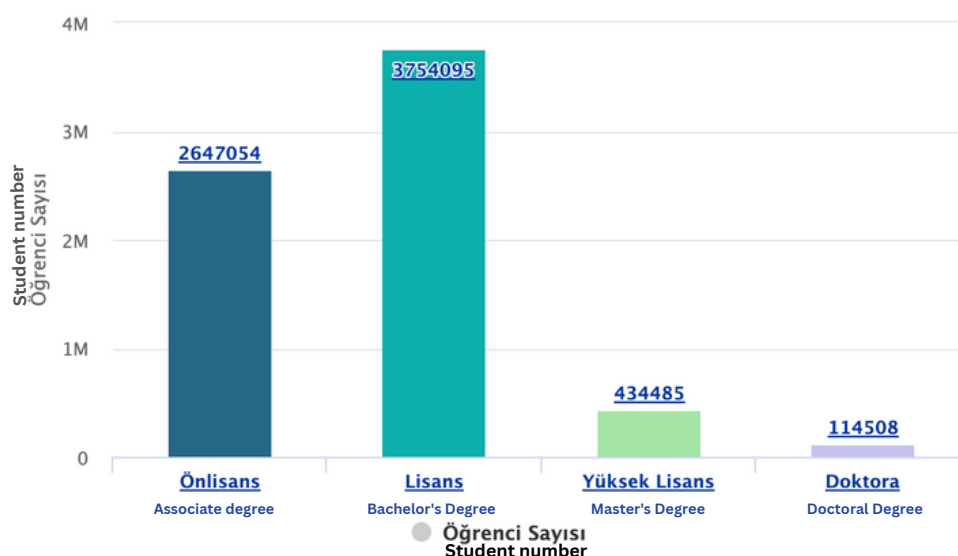
Academic System of the Country

The following overview provides an analysis of the academic system in Türkiye in recent years. It explores the structure and scale of higher education institutions, the distribution and focus of research centers, the governance of the higher education system, and the current status and variety of academic programs available to students.

University Students and Degree Programs:

- Associate's degree programs in Türkiye take two years, with vocational high school graduates eligible without centralized exams.
- Bachelor's degree programs generally span four years, with specialized programs like medicine, pharmaceutical sciences, and dentistry taking longer.
- Master's programs in Türkiye typically have a duration of two years for thesis programs and 1½ years for non-thesis programs. However, students are officially granted up to three years to complete their master's degrees. For doctoral programs, while the usual duration is around four years, students are officially allowed up to six years to complete their doctorate studies. The Department of Medicine offers programs spanning six years, while the duration for specialties varies, ranging from three to five years.
- Post-graduate opportunities are also available, with durations varying depending on the program and university

Following figure represent the student numbers in higher education in Türkiye in 2022-2023 [17].



[17]: Turkish Higher Education Statistics. [Council of Higher Education Statistics](#).

Career Track for Researchers

The trajectory of a researcher's career in Türkiye is an intricate path that spans temporary and permanent academic roles, reflecting a multifaceted system that supports individuals from their doctoral studies to tenured professorships. This outline examines the general career progression, the stability and challenges of academic careers, and the support mechanisms in place for researchers at various stages.

01. General Career Track:

Researchers typically progress from temporary positions such as assistant professorships to permanent roles, including tenure for professors and associate professors [18].

02. Precarity and Sustainability:

While early career researchers often face temporary and precarious positions, full-time teaching staff and faculty members at public universities enjoy civil servant status, contributing to the sustainability of academic careers [18].

03. Staff Distribution:

The academic workforce in Türkiye comprises a mix of permanent and temporary staff, with career stages influencing the distribution [18].

04. Performance Evaluation for Advancement:

Career progression in academia relies on performance evaluations, with metrics such as publications, grant income, and other factors playing a pivotal role [18].

05. Support and Training for Doctoral Students:

The "100/2000 PhD Scholarship Project" provides scholarships for doctoral students in areas deemed critical for the country's socio-economic development, although it does not assure job security after graduation [19].

06. Early Career Researchers (ECRs):

ECRs, while not explicitly defined, typically include researchers in non-permanent roles or recent doctorate recipients. Support and development programs for ECRs are offered, although the transition to permanent roles may be uncertain [18].

07. Country-Specific Aspects:

Türkiye faces specific challenges such as brain drain and the leaky pipeline, with efforts to increase internationalization within its academic institutions [15].

08. Priority Area Program:

This program involves appointing research assistants to specific fields and universities identified as 'Priority Areas.' The initiative aims to bolster the development of qualified human resources and escalate the production of high-quality scientific outputs at the international level.

09. ÖYP - Academic Staff Training Program:

The ÖYP is a comprehensive educational journey extending from master's education to the completion of a doctorate. It is specifically designed to train qualified academics for universities that need expertise in certain academic fields. This program plays a crucial role in shaping the career paths of future academics in Türkiye by providing focused training and development in areas of need.

Following table represents the number of the academic staff in Türkiye

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SUMMARIZED NUMBER OF ACADEMICIANS																		
University Type	Professor			Associate Professor			Assistant Professor			Lecturer			Research Assistant			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
STATE	19834	10245	30079	12514	8510	21024	18873	15626	34499	15315	14125	29440	17811	19749	37560	84347	68255	152602
FOUNDATION	3543	1952	5495	1315	1283	2598	4406	5181	9587	2254	4471	6725	1965	3209	5174	13483	16096	29579
FOUNDATION Vocational School	3	0	3	1	2	3	9	27	36	63	139	202	0	0	0	76	168	244
TOTAL	23380	12197	35577	13830	9795	23625	23288	20834	44122	17632	18735	36367	19776	22958	42734	97906	84519	182425

[18] Council of Higher Education (CoHE). (n.d.). Academic Staff Statistics. Retrieved from [CoHE Statistics](#).

[19] Council of Higher Education (CoHE). (n.d.). "100/2000 PhD Scholarship Project". Retrieved from [100/2000 PhD Scholarships](#).
er Education Statistics.

Mental Health and Well-being

The climate around mental health and well-being, particularly within the context of healthcare professionals and academia, has gained increased attention during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has led to a focus on the psychosocial risks and mental health needs of healthcare workers, highlighting the importance of support and research in this area.



01. Public Awareness and Mental Health Services:

A study conducted with healthcare workers across 19 pandemic hospitals in Türkiye revealed significant psychosocial risks during the pandemic. Out of 1,556 participants, 33.5% felt the need for mental health services, yet only 8.5% received such services, indicating a gap between the need for and the provision of mental health support [20].



02. National Burden of Mental Disorders:

There is a reported high prevalence of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, emotional burnout, and distress among healthcare professionals during the pandemic in Türkiye. The effectiveness of Mental Health Support Programs for these professionals has also been documented, showing a critical need for continued mental health interventions [21], [22].



03. Mental Health in the Academic Workplace:

Despite the recognized need for mental health services among healthcare workers, there is a lack of specific research focused on the mental health of academics in the health sciences and care fields. The pandemic period, however, has highlighted the overall need for mental health services in high-stress professions [23].

[20] Sandal, A., Karadoğan, D., Telatar, T. G., et al. (2023). Perceived Need for Mental Health Services Among Healthcare Workers During the Coronavirus Disease-19 Pandemic in Türkiye: A Multicenter Cross-sectional Study. *Balkan Medical Journal*, 40(4), 262-270. doi:10.4274/balkanmedj.galenos.2023.2022-12-5.

[21] Şahin, M. K., Aker, S., Şahin, G., & Karabekiroğlu, A. (2020). Prevalence of Depression, Anxiety, Distress and Insomnia and Related Factors in Healthcare Workers During COVID-19 Pandemic in Türkiye. *Journal of Community Health*, 45(6), 1168-1177. doi:10.1007/s10900-020-00921-w.

[22] Duru, H. (2022). The Continuing Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic on Physical Well-Being and Mental Health of ICU Healthcare Workers in Türkiye: A Single-Centre Cross-Sectional Later-Phase Study. *Journal of Intensive Care Medicine*, 37(9), 1206-1214. doi:10.1177/08850666211070740.

[23] Tuna, Ö., & Ermis, C. (2022). Mental Health Support Program for Healthcare Professionals in a Pandemic Hospital in Türkiye and Its Results on Anxiety, Depression, Insomnia and Sexual Disorders. *Psichiatria Danubina*, 34(3), 564-571. doi:10.24869/psyd.2022.564.

Mental Health Support and Service Systems

In Türkiye, a country that has recently placed a significant emphasis on mental health, the support and service systems are evolving to address the complex needs of the community. This includes specialized interventions, national action plans, and training programs designed to enhance the well-being of its citizens.

National Mental Health Action Plan (2020–2023):

The plan's ultimate goal is an integrated community-based mental health service model, with sub-goals that focus on improving and expanding mental health services across the country [29].

Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs):

Türkiye operates 186 CMHCs offering services such as psychosocial interventions and medication management, crucial for community mental health care [28].

Training Program (RSGÜÇ):

This program is a part of the national strategy to strengthen mental health services, particularly in primary care, by providing community-based services, counseling, and management [29].

Barriers to Providing and Accessing Resources:

CMHCs face challenges such as limited funding and staff shortages, while RSGÜÇ identifies issues in resource allocation and staff training. Stigma, lack of awareness, and geographical limitations are significant barriers to accessing mental health services [29].

Effectiveness of Resources:

The effectiveness of CMHC services is impacted by the barriers mentioned, with psychoeducation programs aiming to provide patients and their families with insight and improve their self-care and communication skills [29].

Service Subscription Levels:

With millions of people applying to psychiatry clinics and a high prescription rate for mental health medications, the demand for services outstrips the available mental health workforce in Türkiye [29].

[28] World Health Organization. (2020). Supporting Turkish mental health policy and service delivery. Retrieved from [WHO](#).

[29] Ministry of Health of the Republic of Türkiye. (2023). National Mental Health Action Plan. Retrieved from [Ministry of Health](#).

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Financing of Services:

The financing of mental health services in Türkiye includes coverage by the state, insurance, and out-of-pocket payments, with a focus on supporting mental health policy and service delivery [28].

Institutional Mental Health Aid:

Institutions may provide mental health aid and counseling distinct from general healthcare, with systems like Mental Health First Aid training available in some organizations [29].



[28] World Health Organization. (2020). Supporting Turkish mental health policy and service delivery. Retrieved from [WHO](#).

[29] Ministry of Health of the Republic of Türkiye. (2023). National Mental Health Action Plan. Retrieved from [Ministry of Health](#).

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Mental Health of Mental Health Workers



Mental Health Service Support Workshop (MHSSW):

Launched in response to the identified need for enhanced support for mental health professionals' well-being, MHSSW aims to develop frameworks and policies to ensure mental health workers have better access to services. This initiative, catalyzed by the Turkish Psychiatric Association, underscores the importance of addressing systemic challenges, promoting mental health care access, and implementing strategies to mitigate workplace stress, burnout, and improve job satisfaction among psychiatrists [30].

Disaster Mental Health Response Initiative (DMHRI):

Following the devastating earthquakes on February 6, 2023, the Turkish Psychiatric Association proposed the DMHRI. This initiative advocates for exempting health workers and state officials in affected areas from duty to address their mental health needs. Recognizing the psychological impact of such disasters, the initiative underscores the importance of mental health support systems in ensuring the well-being of those directly impacted, aligning with global mental health and psychosocial support principles in emergency settings. [31].



[30] Psychiatric Association of Türkiye. (2021). Mental Health of Mental Health Workers. Retrieved from [Psychiatric Association of Türkiye](#).

[31] Psychiatric Association of Türkiye. (2023). Opinion of the Turkish Psychiatric Association on Exempting State Officials in the Earthquake Zone from Work. Retrieved from [The Turkish Medical Association](#).

Mental Health Support and Service Systems

This overview examines the state of psychological support in Türkiye's higher education institutions, highlighting the availability of services for students and staff, the varying focus of university administrations, and their response to crises such as the 2023 earthquake. It presents a snapshot of current practices, underscoring the need for more inclusive mental health support across the academic community.



Universities



Availability of Psychological Support:

Of the 23 research universities in Türkiye, all have psychological counseling centers for students, but only 14 offer psychological support services to academic staff, leaving 9 universities without such support for their staff.

Service Units and Focus on Student Services:

Services are provided under names like 'medikososyal units' or 'psychological counseling and guidance units.' There is a noticeable emphasis on student services, especially in foundation universities, with less attention to academic staff's needs. This is reflected in the units' web pages and in the directives and regulations, where information or policies for staff support are minimal or absent.

University Administrations' Approach:

The limited psychological support for academic staff indicates a gap in university planning and a lack of comprehensive concern for the mental well-being of the entire academic community.

Response to Earthquake Disaster:

Following the 2023 earthquake disaster, many universities that typically do not offer regular psychological support to staff published guides for coping with psychological issues, including recommendations for academic staff.

İnönü University Case as a Response to Earthquake Disaster:

Within the scope of the "Post-Disaster Psychosocial Support Intervention Action Plan" established one month after the earthquake with the directive of the Rectorate, 27 volunteer experts from all over Türkiye are still providing individual and group psychological counseling services, family counseling, child-adolescent counseling, guidance and psychoeducation services [32].

Workplace of academia, employment

In academia, considered from the perspective of a workplace, the employment practices and national laws significantly impact the experience and retention of researchers. This includes early career researchers (ECRs), PhD candidates, faculty members on tenure-track, and those on temporary or permanent contracts.

These factors collectively create the employment landscape for researchers in academia, with the balance of workload, compensation, job security, and benefits playing a crucial role in their career paths and decisions. The ongoing challenge in Türkiye, especially for Healthcare Professionals (HCPs) in academia, underscores the need for supportive and sustainable employment practices to retain talent and ensure the vitality of the academic sector.



1. Salaries and Work Environment:

- The challenging work environment and relatively low salaries in academia are leading factors for academics, including healthcare professionals (HCPs), choosing to leave their positions. This trend is causing a drain of academic resources from Türkiye to other countries.



2. Holiday Entitlement and Sabbaticals:

- Employment practices in academia typically include provisions for holidays and sabbaticals, although the specifics can vary based on the institution and contract type.



3. Duty of Care and Social Security:

- The duty of care by employers and the burden of social security are key aspects that affect the work-life balance and job satisfaction of researchers. This includes considerations for healthcare, pensions, and other social benefits.



4. Healthcare System and Insurance:

- The most common healthcare system or insurance for researchers often relates to their employment status. In academia, particularly in public institutions, healthcare and insurance are usually provided as part of the employment package, though the extent and nature of coverage can differ.

Policy view on mental health/well-being

The mental health policy landscape in Türkiye is marked by several challenges and developments, particularly in terms of legal recognition, workforce categories, education and regulation, and workforce statistics.

1. Recognition and Awareness:

- There is a notable lack of recognition and awareness regarding the competencies and services of mental health workers in Türkiye. This impacts the perception and utilization of mental health services [33].

2. Absence of Comprehensive Mental Health Law:

- Türkiye currently lacks a comprehensive "Mental Health Law," which is crucial for the protection and regulation of mental health services and professionals. This leads to gaps in the legal foundation of mental health services [34].

3. Mental Health Worker Categories:

- The categories include Clinical Psychologists, Psychiatry Physicians, Psychiatric Nurses, Psychologists, Psychological Counselors, and Social Workers. Each category plays a unique role in the mental health landscape [35].

4. Education and Regulations:

- The Council of Higher Education (CoHE) decided in 2010 that no titles should be given to undergraduate programs or diplomas, with titles provided by other authorities instead.
- The 2020 Ministry of National Education Regulation defining the roles of counselors in primary and secondary schools lacks clarity in service provision.
- There are specific regulations for psychologists and clinical psychologists in healthcare settings.

5. Statistics and Workforce Shortages:

- Türkiye has only 16.33 mental health workers per 100,000 population, which is significantly lower than the European Region's average of 43.5 [33].
- Despite an increase in quotas for psychiatry and child psychiatry specialization, the total number of mental health professionals remains below WHO European Region standards.
- There has been an increment in employing psychologists, social workers, and nurses, but the numbers are still insufficient compared to regional standards.

[33] Turkish Ministry of Health. (2006). Turkish Mental Health Policy Document.

[34] Turkish Ministry of Health. (2011–2023). Action Plan for National Mental Health

[35] Ministry of National Education. (2020). Regulation defining the roles of counselors.

Policy view on mental health/well-being

This summary outlines the progression of mental health policies in Türkiye, from the first Mental Health Policy Document in 2006 to the latest 2021-2023 National Mental Health Action Plan. It highlights efforts to adapt global guidelines and enhance services, yet underscores a notable gap in addressing the mental health needs of the academic and research communities.

Evolution of Mental Health Policies in Türkiye

1. 2006 Turkish Mental Health Policy Document:

- The Turkish Ministry of Health released the country's first Mental Health Policy Document in 2006 [33], developed using the WHO's Service Guide Package. This document set the foundation for mental health policies in Türkiye, adapting WHO's modules to local conditions. However, it had limited focus on workers' mental health and no specific mention of mental health in academia or for researchers [34].

2. 2011-2023 Action Plan for National Mental Health:

- In 2011, building on the 2006 policy document, the 2011-2023 Action Plan for National Mental Health was formulated. This plan aimed to extend and refine the strategies initially outlined, but still did not explicitly address mental health issues within academia [34].

3. 2019-2023 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Health:

- This strategic plan set goals for protecting individuals from mental health risk factors, increasing awareness of mental health disorders, maintaining records and monitoring individual mental health, enhancing mental health services, and improving accessibility for those with special needs [36].

4. 2019-2023 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Family, Work, and Social Services:

- Similar to the Ministry of Health's goals, this plan emphasizes strengthening shelter, care, and rehabilitation services, especially for women, children, individuals with special needs, and the elderly. It also focuses on enhancing the quantity and quality of protective and preventive mental health services [37].

5. 2021-2023 National Mental Health Action Plan:

- The latest policy document, created by the Ministry of Health, continues to build on the existing framework for mental health policies in Türkiye [38].

Despite these comprehensive plans and strategic goals, there remains a gap in addressing the specific mental health needs of the academic community, including researchers, within these policy frameworks.

[33] Turkish Ministry of Health. (2006). Turkish Mental Health Policy Document.

[34] Turkish Ministry of Health. (2011-2023). Action Plan for National Mental Health.

[36] Turkish Ministry of Health. (2019-2023). Strategic Plan.

[37] Ministry of Family, Work, and Social Services. (2019-2023). Strategic Plan.

[38] Turkish Ministry of Health. (2021-2023). National Mental Health Action Plan.

Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in academia

In response to global shifts and increasing diversity, higher education in Türkiye focuses on equity and inclusiveness, highlighted by the studies. Emphasizing inclusive policies, mental health services, and cultural competence training, this approach aims to create an empathetic and diverse academic environment.

1. Recognizing the Link:

- The OECD report on "Education Equity and Inclusiveness: Strength through Diversity" highlights that governments and policymakers are increasingly focusing on education equity and inclusiveness due to significant global developments, including demographic changes, migration, refugee crises, increasing inequalities, and climate change.
- These developments contribute to increased diversity and necessitate rethinking how to promote greater equity and inclusiveness in education.
- The report synthesizes the main findings of the OECD's Strength through Diversity project, offering a holistic framework to examine diversity, equity, and inclusiveness in education and structuring its analysis around five key policy areas: governance, resource provision, capacity building, school-level interventions, monitoring, and evaluation [39].

2. Creating Supportive Policies:

- The "Diversity and Inclusiveness Training Program" emphasizes the need for inclusive policies in organizational contexts, including higher education.
- This program aims to introduce the concept of "Diversity and Inclusiveness" using Design Thinking methodology, focusing on creating diversity solutions tailored to the needs of institutions [40].

3. Mental Health Services:

- The study "Applicability of Inclusiveness in Higher Education" discusses the importance of mental health services in higher education, focusing on how open and distance learning can make higher education more inclusive.
- This study highlights the need for educational systems to cater to diverse student needs, including mental health support, in a manner that is inclusive and accessible to all students [41].

4. Inclusive Environment:

- The aforementioned sources suggest that creating an inclusive environment in higher education in Türkiye involves acknowledging the diversity of student populations and ensuring that educational practices and policies are responsive to their varying needs.
- This includes recognizing the challenges faced by students from different socio-economic backgrounds, cultural identities, and abilities [39-41].

5. Regular Training and Education:

- The "Diversity and Inclusiveness Training Program" provides insights into regular training sessions on cultural competence, unconscious bias, and the impact of microaggressions on mental health.
- This program supports the development of a more understanding and inclusive academic community by fostering inclusive leadership and promoting teamwork on diversity and inclusiveness issues.

6. Specialized Education in Psychological Counseling and Guidance:

- MEF University's "Psychological Counseling and Guidance" course is a notable contribution in the field of higher education, focusing on the training of counselors and psychologists. This course emphasizes skill development in psychological counseling, guidance services, and educational psychology, which are crucial for creating an inclusive and supportive educational environment. It underlines the importance of trained professionals in addressing the diverse mental health and educational needs of students in higher education [42].



[39] OECD. (2023). Education Equity and Inclusiveness: Strength through Diversity. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

[40] Diversity and Inclusiveness Training Program. (2023). Diversity and Inclusiveness in Higher Education. [Program Description].

[41] Altunoğlu, A. (2020). Applicability of Inclusiveness in Higher Education. [Study Analysis].

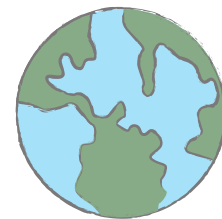
[42] MEF University. (n.d.). Graduate School of Social Sciences, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. [Program Description]

National Culture



The national culture of Türkiye, as profiled through Hofstede's cultural dimensions, offers valuable insights into how cultural attributes can influence mental health policies and practices [43].

- **Power Distance (Score: 66):**
 - Türkiye's high score indicates a society that accepts hierarchical order without much question. This cultural trait suggests that in mental health matters, authoritative guidance and top-down policy implementations are likely respected and expected. It also implies that discussions around mental health may be influenced by hierarchical dynamics in professional settings.
- **Individualism (Score: 46):**
 - Leaning towards collectivism, Turkish culture values group harmony and loyalty within close-knit circles. This indicates that mental health initiatives might be more effective when they incorporate family and community support, emphasizing collective well-being over individual-centric approaches.
- **Motivation towards Achievement and Success (Score: 45):**
 - Türkiye's consensus-oriented approach highlights the importance of group well-being. In the context of mental health, this suggests a preference for collaborative support systems and community-based interventions, as opposed to highly competitive or individualistic strategies.
- **Uncertainty Avoidance (Score: 85):**
 - The preference for clear rules and structures to manage uncertainty implies that structured interventions and well-defined treatment protocols might be favored in mental health care. This cultural aspect can influence how mental health issues are approached and managed within the society.
- **Long Term Orientation (Score: 35):**
 - Türkiye's normative orientation suggests a focus on maintaining traditions. This could impact the acceptance and integration of new or unconventional mental health treatments and discussions, potentially favoring traditional approaches.
- **Indulgence (Score: 49):**
 - The balanced score indicates a society that neither rigidly controls nor freely indulges in desires and impulses. This balance could suggest a holistic approach to mental health, recognizing the importance of both discipline and the need for relaxation and enjoyment.



Embracing Collective Well-being in Mental Health: Türkiye's Approach - In the realm of mental health, Türkiye's collective-oriented culture, as indicated by its Individualism score of 46, emphasizes group harmony and community support. This unique cultural perspective suggests that mental health initiatives in Türkiye are likely more effective when they integrate family and community networks, offering a communal approach to mental health care that resonates deeply with the nation's values.

[43] Hofstede Insights. (n.d.). Country Comparison: Türkiye. Retrieved from [Hofstede Insights](https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/turkey).