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Research Article

Gender Dynamics in the Turkish Workforce: The Interaction of Organizational Behavior and Management Practices with Sectoral Differences

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Abstract: This study analyzes the structural changes observed in the Turkish labor market during the 2021–2025 period in terms of occupation, sector, and employment status. Total employment reached 32.6 million in 2025, up from 27.4 million in 2021, with the share of salaried or daily-wage workers rising from 69.8% to 71.4%. In terms of sectoral distribution, the share of agriculture fell from 16.6% to 14.1%, while employment in the industrial and service sectors increased significantly. While salaried work dominates male employment in the industrial and service sectors, self-employment and family-based labor force are prominent in agriculture. The rate of paid employment among women has increased in non-agricultural sectors, while unpaid family labor remains high in agriculture. Women's share of total employment has risen from 31.4% to 33.9%, with increased visibility particularly in services and professional occupations. The findings show that processes of formalization, urbanization, and sector-based redistribution continue in Türkiye's labor market. Increased paid employment and growth in non-agricultural sectors have important implications for gender equality and labor force planning. Differences in male and female employment reveal that inequalities in gender-based division of labor and leadership representation persist, while women's economic independence and formal employment. Increased paid employment and growth in non-agricultural sectors have significant implications for gender equality and labour force planning. Differences in male and female employment reveal that inequalities in gender-based division of labour and leadership representation persist, while there has been an increase in women's economic independence and integration into the formal labour force.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Labour Force Analysis, Organizational Behavior, Management Practices, Sectoral Distribution

1. Introduction

Employment is a multidimensional phenomenon that goes beyond being a quantitative indicator of economic growth; it determines the welfare level of societies, the efficiency of the labour market, and the quality of life of individuals (Inanc & Kalleberg, 2022; Kirazci & Buyukgoze-Kavas, 2024; Wolf, Metzing & Lucas, 2022). Globalisation, technological transformation, digitalisation, and demographic dynamics have led to profound changes in employment structures; particularly in developing countries, the success of economic development policies is increasingly measured by the quality of employment and the capacity for structural transformation (Andabayeva et al., 2024; Oloyede et al., 2023; Sinha et al., 2025). The employment structure in Türkiye presents a critical area of analysis not only from an economic perspective but also from sociological, managerial, and organisational viewpoints (Akar & Bedük, 2023; Onuk & Aydin, 2024; Yıldırım et al., 2022). The sectoral distribution of production and employment in the Turkish economy, the skill profile of the workforce, gender-based segregation (Meltem & Yenilmez, 2019; Yenilmez & Karabıyık, 2016), and forms of informal employment (Duman, 2023; Eralp, 2024; Gunluk Senesen & Yobas, 2025) are of decisive importance for both macroeconomic policy and micro-level human resources strategies.

By 2025, total employment in Türkiye will have reached 31.9 million people; 56% of this group will be men and 44% women. The proportion of salaried or daily-wage workers in total employment will rise to 71%, while the proportion of self-employed workers will remain at 16%, employers at 5% and unpaid family workers at 8%. This picture shows that the trend towards formalisation in the Turkish labour market has strengthened significantly; however, traditional production relations, particularly family-

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based working patterns in rural areas, continue to exert their influence. When assessed from a sectoral perspective, the share of agriculture in employment declined to 14%, while the services sector accounted for approximately half of total employment, revealing an increasingly evident knowledge-based, customer-focused and human capital-based economic structure. This transformation is a concrete reflection of the process referred to in management literature as the 'transition to a service economy' in Türkiye's labour force structure (Fergül, 2023; Taşdemır, 2022; Tuncer et al., 2023).

This expansion in the service sector, when evaluated from the perspective of organisational behaviour and human resource management, gives rise to new requirements regarding the workforce's skill level, learning capacity, and work motivation (Aldabbas et al., 2023; Arokiasamy et al., 2023; Fulmore et al., 2023). While customer interaction, emotional labour, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities come to the fore for employees in service-based organisations, the decline experienced in the industrial and agricultural sectors necessitates organisations to develop strategies such as reskilling and internal talent pool management (Alsakarneh et al., 2023; Jung & Yoon, 2012; Tezcan Uysal & Yılmaz Kılıçkaya, 2022; Winkler et al., 2025). The sectoral and occupational transformation in Türkiye's employment structure is not merely an economic phenomenon; it is also a managerial transformation that requires redefining how organisations manage human capital, performance metrics, and leadership practices (Dinçer, 2024; Karadeniz, 2024; Uzun et al., 2023).

Gender inequality is a multifaceted phenomenon in labor markets, not limited to the participation rates of women and men in employment, but also shaped by organizational roles, promotion opportunities, and access to decision-making processes (Gunluk Senesen & Yobas, 2025; Kossek et al., 2017). In this context, the concept of the "glass ceiling" refers to the invisible and structural barriers that prevent female employees from rising above a certain organizational level. In the literature, the glass ceiling phenomenon is considered one of the fundamental concepts explaining the limited representation of women, especially in management and leadership positions. (Ciappei et al., 2023; Babic & Hansez, 2021)

Organizational behavior literature reveals that employment patterns are decisive in employees' motivation, organizational commitment, communication styles, and perceptions of leadership. While paid and regular employment strengthens the psychological contract that employees establish with the organization, informal, precarious, or unpaid work weakens organizational belonging and participation levels. Therefore, the transformation in the employment structure should be considered not only an economic process but also a dynamic that transforms organizational behavior and management practices. (Garcia et al., 2021; Kaufmann et al., 2021; Kirazci & Buyukgoze-Kavas, 2024)

This study contributes to the literature by providing a multidimensional analysis of the Turkish labor market for the 2021–2025 period through the integrated use of sectoral distribution, employment status, and occupational group data. Unlike many previous studies that focus on a single dimension of employment, this research simultaneously examines horizontal (sector–occupation) and vertical (status–gender) differentiation, thereby linking labor market dynamics with organizational behavior and management perspectives.

Developments in female employment indicate significant progress in terms of gender equality in the Turkish labour market. Between 2021 and 2025, female employment increased by 28.5 per cent, with women becoming significantly more visible, particularly in non-agricultural sectors. The concentration of women in service and professional occupations, along with increases in educational attainment and urbanisation, indicates expanded access to formal employment opportunities. The fact that women's representation in managerial and employer positions remains in the 3–4 per cent range indicates that the glass ceiling effect and vertical gender segregation persist in organisations. It offers a comprehensive perspective that assesses women's position in employment in Türkiye not only in numerical terms but also in terms of organisational roles and leadership opportunities.

The originality of this research lies in its analysis of three fundamental data sets relating to Türkiye's employment structure: occupational groups, employment status, and sectoral distribution. While the literature typically highlights one-dimensional analyses (e.g., focusing solely on sector or gender), this study examines employment along both horizontal (occupation–sector relationship) and vertical (status–gender) axes, offering a multidimensional structural transformation analysis. Thus, the study does not merely describe economic trends; it also reveals the points where these trends intersect with the literature on organisational behaviour, human resource management, and gender studies. In this respect, the article develops an interdisciplinary approach that links economic statistical data with management sciences, emphasising that employment is not merely a factor of production but also a cultural and behavioural dimension of organisational life.

Technological change and digitalisation have led to a decrease in routine tasks, creating a relative increase in service and professional occupations (Çelikok & Saatcioğlu, 2024; Baran Kaya, 2024; Özer, 2025). The growth in the professional and technician categories in Türkiye's 2021–2025 data reflects this global trend locally. The service-intensive employment increase is increasing the need for flexible working, innovation capacity, and continuous learning in organisations (Can et al., 2025; Husain et al., 2024).

In conclusion, the transformation observed in the occupational, sectoral and status-based components of employment in Türkiye during the 2021–2025 period is directly related to managerial issues such as organisational culture, job satisfaction, employee loyalty and gender equality, beyond the modernisation of the country's economic structure. This study demonstrates how employment can be integrated into organisational behaviour and human resource management literature beyond economic indicators; it also provides a concrete data-driven framework for public policies to support reskilling, promote female employment, and support formalisation processes. Thus, the research proposes an innovative model for the multidimensional analysis of employment in Türkiye, making a meaningful contribution to the management and behavioural sciences literature at both theoretical and empirical levels.

The main research problem of this study is to determine how the sectoral and employment-based transformation observed in the Turkish labor market during the 2021–2025 period has shaped gender inequalities and organizational roles. The study aims to examine, within a multidimensional analytical framework, whether the quantitative increase in female employment has created a qualitative transformation in terms of organizational behavior, leadership representation, and management practices.

2. Methodology and Data

2.1. Purpose and scope of the study

This study aims to examine the structural transformation of the Turkish labour market during the 2021–2025 period in a multidimensional manner, focusing on occupation, sector and employment status. The main objective of the research is to enable the interpretation of employment data in the context of organisational behaviour, human resource management and gender dynamics, rather than treating this data solely as economic indicators. The scope of the study covers the period from the first quarter of 2021 to the second quarter of 2025, based on current and reliable official statistics from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK).

2.2. Data sources

The primary data sets used in the study were compiled from the ‘Household Labour Force Survey’ statistics regularly published by the Turkish Statistical Institute. Three main data sets were used in the study:

Employed Persons by Occupational Group (TÜİK, 2025a)

Employment Status of Employed Persons (TÜİK, 2025b)

Employed Persons by Sector (TÜİK, 2025c)

These data sets enable the simultaneous assessment of the structural components of employment, gender differences, and sectoral distribution. The data sets have been validated on the basis of a total 100% distribution for each year, ensuring comparability between years.

2.3. Data preparation process

The data was obtained in Excel format from micro-level statistics provided by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK); it was then subjected to coding, classification and cleaning processes. The following steps were followed in this process:

Missing, abnormal or outlier values were systematically checked.

Employment types were standardised according to four main categories: salaried or daily-wage workers, employers, self-employed workers, and unpaid family workers.

Sector distributions were combined into two main groups: agriculture and non-agriculture; non-agricultural sectors were divided into industry, construction and services subgroups.

Occupational groups were categorised according to similar skill and qualification profiles and grouped into 10 main occupational classes.

This meticulous data preparation process ensured the compatibility of different data sets and their validity across years.

2.4. Analytical framework

The research employs quantitative and descriptive analysis methods in an integrated manner. The analysis process consists of three main stages:

Descriptive Statistics: Employment levels, inter-annual changes and proportional shares were calculated for each data set. These calculations were presented broken down by gender, sector and employment status.

Multidimensional Matrix Analysis: Three data sets were combined to create a matrix that allows for the simultaneous examination of the employment structure along the occupation–sector–status axis. This approach enables a comprehensive assessment of not only sectoral but also occupational and status-based distributions.

Trend and Change Analysis: Absolute and relative changes between years were calculated; trends in paid employment, self-employment, and unpaid family labour were identified. Gender-based differences were analysed based on female/male ratios.

This study adopts a descriptive and multidimensional analytical approach rather than econometric modelling, as its primary objective is to identify structural patterns and distributional changes in employment across sectors, occupations, and employment statuses. While econometric methods are effective in testing causal relationships, they may be limited in capturing simultaneous structural transformations across multiple dimensions of employment. Therefore, the chosen approach allows for a comprehensive interpretation of employment data and increases transparency in the assessment of gender-based and organisational patterns in the labour market.

2.5. Methodological innovation and contribution

The originality of the study lies in the integrated analysis of the occupational, sectoral and status dimensions of employment using time series logic. This method enables employment data to be interpreted not only as economic indicators but also in the context of organisational behaviour, motivation and gender. In particular, examining changes in female employment by sector reveals the structural aspects of gender segregation. Furthermore, analysing the distribution of employment status in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors provides both quantitative and qualitative indicators of modernisation and formalisation processes.

This methodological framework offers an interdisciplinary interpretation by linking the economic dimension of employment with organisational and behavioural dimensions; it enables the structural transformation observed in the Turkish labour market to be explained from the perspective of management and behavioural sciences.

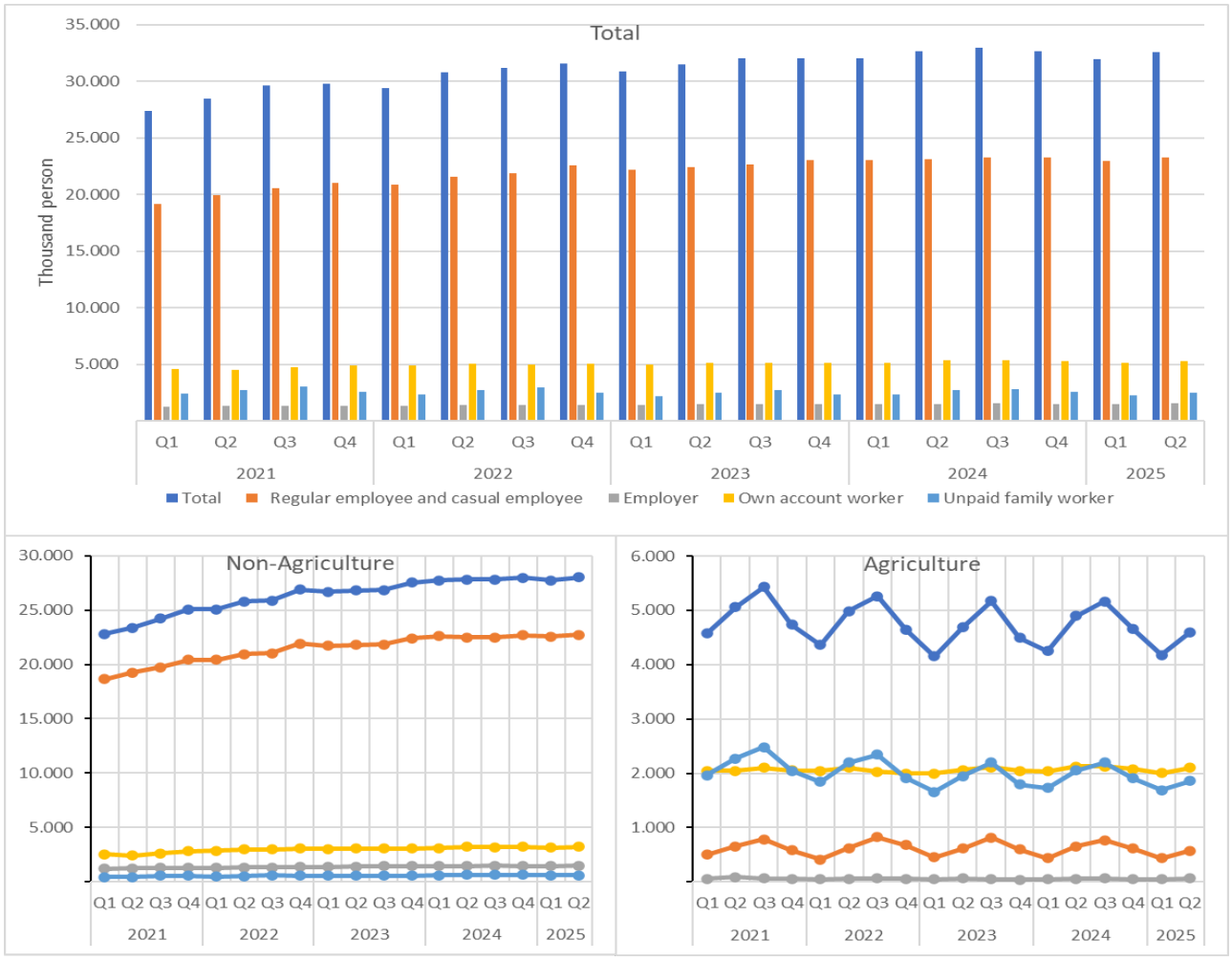
3. Results

3.1. Change in employment by employment status

The change in total employment by employment status is shown in Figure 1 based on sectoral distribution (agricultural and non-agricultural) and employment types (salaried or daily wage, employer, self-employed and unpaid family worker).

Figure 1

Change in Total Employment According to Employment Status



In the first quarter of 2021, the total number of employed persons in Türkiye was 27.39 million, while this figure rose to 32.62 million in the second quarter of 2025. This increase corresponds to an employment growth rate of approximately 19.1%. Looking at the overall structure of employment, the share of salaried or daily-wage workers in total employment was 69.8 per cent in 2021, while this rate rose to 71.4 per cent in the second quarter of 2025. This shows that employment in Türkiye is increasingly shifting towards salaried forms of employment. During the same period, the proportion of employers fell from 4.6% to 4.8%, the proportion of self-employed workers fell from 16.7% to 16.3%, and the proportion of unpaid family workers fell from 8.8% to 7.6%. Therefore, it can be observed that registered, paid and regular forms of employment have increased within total employment, while family-based and informal types of employment have decreased.

3.1.1. Distribution of total employment by agricultural and non-agricultural sectors

The number of people employed in the agricultural sector within total employment was approximately 4.57 million in 2021, while this figure stood at 4.60 million in the second quarter of 2025. No significant upward trend was observed in agricultural employment during this period; on the contrary, agriculture's share of total employment fell from 16.6% to 14.1%. In contrast, non-agricultural employment grew by approximately 22.8%, rising from 22.82 million in 2021 to 28.02 million. This situation reveals that the employment creation capacity of non-agricultural sectors (industry, construction and services) in the Turkish economy is gradually strengthening, while the share of the agricultural sector in total employment is structurally declining.

Distribution of employment in agriculture and non-agricultural sectors according to employment status

When assessed in terms of employment status, unpaid family labour and self-employment are predominant in the agricultural sector, while paid/daily wage employment is predominant in non-agricultural sectors. In the second quarter of 2025, approximately 33.8% of those working in the agricultural sector were unpaid family workers, 39.4% were self-employed, and 25.1% were salaried or daily wage earners. In contrast, in non-agricultural employment, the proportion of salaried workers was 81.1%, employers 5.3%, self-employed 11.5%, and unpaid family workers only 2.1%.

This table shows that the agricultural sector still relies on family labour, low income and informal working practices, whereas in non-agricultural sectors, formal employment, entrepreneurship and salaried work have gained prominence. The increase in the proportion of paid employment in non-agricultural sectors over the years is an indication of institutionalisation and transformation in labour demand in the industrial and service sectors.

3.1.2. Assessment of general trends over the years

During the 2021–2025 period, the share of non-agricultural sectors in total employment showed a steady upward trend, and in parallel, the proportion of salaried or daily-wage workers also increased. This development reveals that economic growth in Türkiye has largely concentrated in the service and industrial sectors, thus shifting the labour force structure towards these sectors.

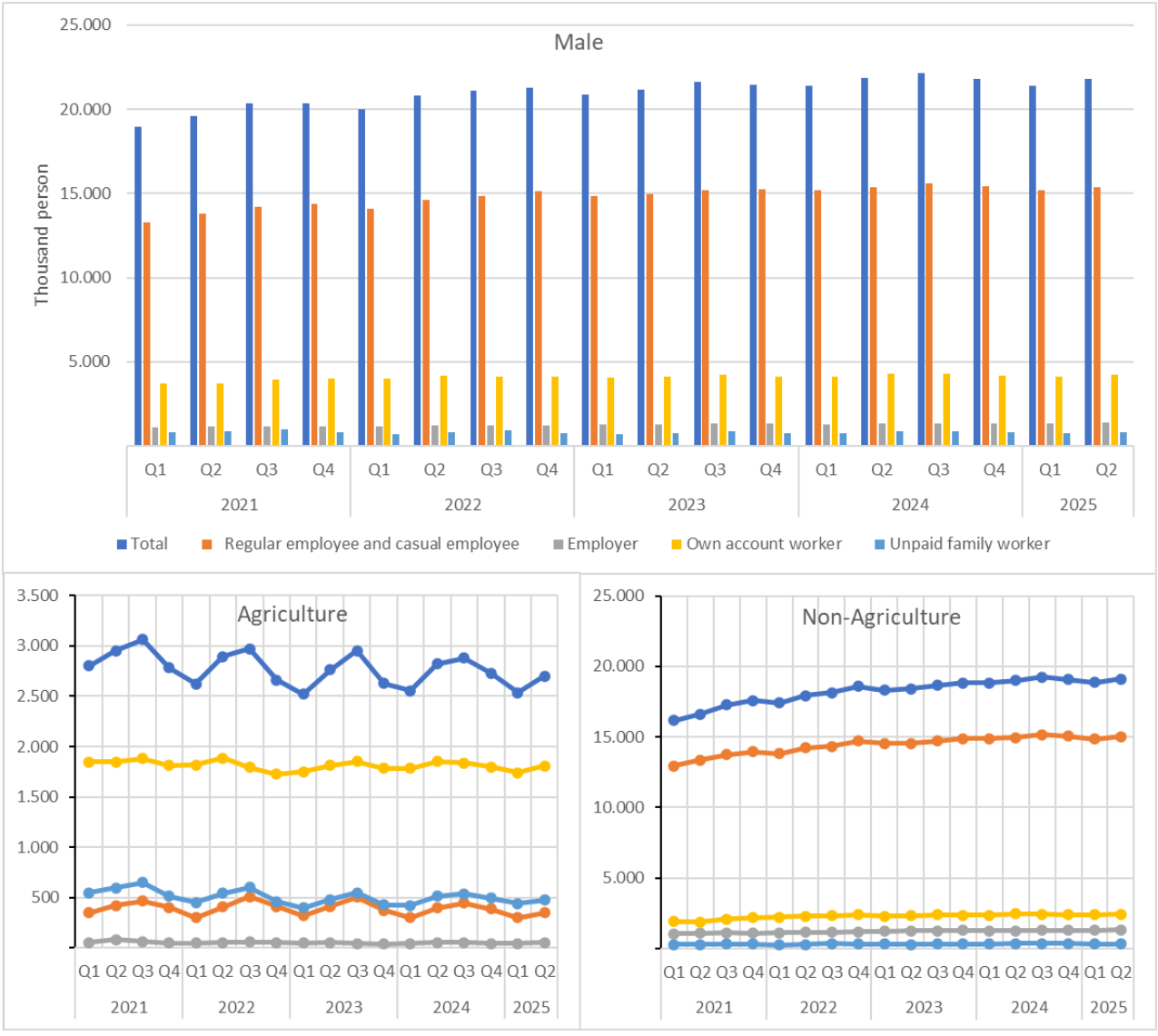
On the other hand, the decline in the rate of unpaid family labour points to a trend towards formalisation of women's labour in rural areas and a structural decline in agricultural activities. Unpaid family workers, who accounted for approximately 9% of total employment in 2021, fell below 7% by 2025. This trend shows that the processes of modernisation, urbanisation and transition to formal employment in Türkiye's employment structure are continuing.

3.1.3. Overview of total male employment

The overview of total male employment is presented in Figure 2 based on sectoral distribution (agricultural and non-agricultural) and employment types (salaried or daily wage, employer, self-employed and unpaid family worker). While the number of men employed in Türkiye in the first quarter of 2021 was 18.97 million, this figure reached 21.79 million in the second quarter of 2025. This increase indicates growth of approximately 14.9%. Male employment accounted for approximately 66–68% of total employment in each period, indicating that men hold a dominant position in the labour market.

Figure 2

Change in Male Employment by Employment Status



When assessed in terms of employment status, in 2021, 70.1% of male employees were salaried or daily-wage workers, 5.8% were employers, 19.7% were self-employed, and 4.3% were unpaid family workers; in the second quarter of 2025, these rates were 70.5%, 6.3%, 17.7% and 3.5% respectively. These figures indicate an upward trend in the proportion of male employers and a downward trend in the proportion of self-employed and unpaid family workers. Consequently, the male workforce is increasingly moving towards formal, registered and dependent forms of employment.

3.1.4. Distribution of male employment by agricultural and non-agricultural sectors

Looking at the sectoral distribution of male workers, in the first quarter of 2021, there were 2.80 million men employed in the agricultural sector and 16.17 million in non-agricultural sectors; in the second quarter of 2025, these figures were recorded as 2.70 million and 19.09 million, respectively. Male employment in the agricultural sector decreased by 3.5%, while non-agricultural employment increased by approximately 18.1%.

This result reveals that the male workforce in Türkiye is increasingly concentrated in non-agricultural sectors, with employment increasing significantly, particularly in the industrial and service sectors. While 14.8% of male employment was in the agricultural sector in 2021, this rate has declined to 12.4% as of 2025. This trend reflects labour mobility from rural to urban areas and the limiting effect of mechanisation in agricultural production on employment.

3.1.5. Distribution of male employment in agriculture and non-agriculture by employment status

When examined in terms of employment status, salaried employment is predominant among male workers in non-agricultural sectors, while self-employment is predominant in the agricultural sector. As of the second quarter of 2025, approximately 42.0% of men employed in the agricultural sector are self-employed, 29.2% are salaried/daily wage earners, 18.3% are employers, and 10.5% are unpaid family workers. In contrast, in non-agricultural sectors, 82.4% of men are salaried or daily wage earners, 5.4% are employers, 10.8% are self-employed, and 1.4% are unpaid family workers.

This distribution shows that men are concentrated in salaried and employer positions, particularly in non-agricultural employment, while traditional and individual production methods predominate in the agricultural sector. The increase in the proportion of male employers in non-agricultural areas indicates both a strengthening of entrepreneurial tendencies and the development of economic growth's capacity to create employment in a male-dominated manner.

3.1.6. Assessment of trends over the years

A notable trend in male employment during the 2021–2025 period is the significant increase in paid employment in non-agricultural sectors, while agricultural employment continues to decline. The number of male employees or day labourers rose from 14.10 million in 2021 to 15.36 million in the second quarter of 2025. In contrast, the number of self-employed men showed a limited increase from 4.16 million to 4.23 million during the same period, while those working as unpaid family workers experienced a decline of nearly 20%.

This structural change indicates that male employment is increasingly shifting towards urban, formal and registered sectors. The increase in non-agricultural employment reveals that employment in the industrial and service sectors, in particular, is growing in line with technological transformation and productivity gains. This trend also shows that men are in a position that is more sensitive to market conditions in terms of employment flexibility.

3.1.7. Overview of total female employment

An overview of total female employment is presented in Figure 3, based on sectoral distribution (agricultural and non-agricultural) and employment types (salaried or daily wage, employer, self-employed and unpaid family worker).

Figure 3

Change in Female Employment by Employment Status



In the first quarter of 2021, the total number of women employed in Türkiye was 8.42 million, while in the second quarter of 2025, this number rose to 10.06 million. This increase corresponds to a growth of approximately 19.5%. The share of female employment in total employment reached 31.4 per cent in 2021 and 33.9 per cent in 2025, demonstrating the increased visibility of women in the labour market.

Looking at the employment status of women, in 2021, 65.2% of female employees were salaried or daily wage earners, 1.7% were employers, 13.9% were self-employed, and 19.2% were unpaid family workers. In the second quarter of 2025, these rates were 69.0%, 2.1%, 13.2% and 15.7% respectively. This shows that paid forms of employment have strengthened among women, while unpaid family work has decreased significantly. Thus, women are increasingly establishing themselves in the labour market as independent income earners.

3.1.8. Distribution of female employment by agricultural and non-agricultural sectors

When examining the sectoral distribution of female employment, it is seen that in the first quarter of 2021, there were 2.09 million women employed in the agricultural sector and 6.33 million in non-agricultural sectors; in the second quarter of 2025, these figures were 2.01 million and 8.05 million, respectively. Female employment in the agricultural sector decreased by 3.8 per cent during this period, while non-agricultural sectors saw an increase of approximately 27 per cent.

In 2021, 24.8% of female employment was in agriculture and 75.2% in non-agricultural sectors, while by 2025 these rates were 20.0% and 80.0% respectively. This table shows that women are gradually moving away from agricultural production and towards the industrial and service sectors, with employment increasing particularly in areas such as education, health, finance, retail and public services.

3.1.9. Distribution of Women in Employment in Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Sectors According to Employment Status

The distribution of women according to their employment status shows significant differences between the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. As of the second quarter of 2025, 43.6% of women employed in the agricultural sector are unpaid family workers, 30.2% are self-employed, 23.5% are salaried/daily wage earners, and 2.7% are employers. In contrast, in non-agricultural sectors, 79.8% of women are salaried or daily wage earners, 3.4% are employers, 13.9% are self-employed, and only 2.9% are unpaid family workers.

This picture shows that female employment in non-agricultural sectors is increasingly shifting towards more formal and regular employment relationships, whereas in agriculture, family-based and unpaid forms of labour remain prevalent. The increase in the proportion of salaried women in non-agricultural sectors can be explained by rising education levels, urbanisation, and the impact of gender policies.

3.1.10. Assessment of trends over the years

The most notable trend in female employment during the 2021–2025 period is the strengthening of paid or daily wage employment and the sharp decline in unpaid family labour. While the number of women in paid or daily wage employment was 5.49 million in 2021, this figure rose to 6.94 million in the second quarter of 2025. During the same period, the number of women in unpaid family work fell from 1.62 million to 1.58 million, while the number of women in employer positions increased by nearly 25%.

This trend indicates that female employment in Türkiye is increasingly concentrated in modern, urban-centred sectors and that integration into the formal labour market is accelerating. However, the fact that women still work in high proportions in unpaid or low-paid jobs in the agricultural sector also shows that gender-based labour segregation has not been completely eliminated. Nevertheless, the overall trend points to a transformation that strengthens women's economic independence.

Significant changes are observed in both total employment and gender-based distribution in the Turkish labour market during the 2021–2025 period. Total employment reached 27.39 million people in the first quarter of 2021 and is projected to reach 32.62 million people in the second quarter of 2025. When examining the sectoral distribution of total employment, the number of people working in the agricultural sector declined from 4.56 million in 2021 to 4.27 million in 2025, while in non-agricultural sectors, it increased from 22.83 million to 28.36 million. This situation indicates that employment is increasingly concentrated in non-agricultural sectors, with the industrial and service sectors having a growing impact on employment.

Looking at the gender distribution, men accounted for 68.6 per cent of total employment in 2021, while women accounted for 31.4 per cent. By 2025, men's share had fallen to 66.1 per cent, while women's share had risen to 33.9 per cent. Thus, over four years, there has been an increase of approximately 2.5 percentage points in the proportion of women in total employment. Male employment in the agricultural sector fell from 2.47 million in 2021 to 2.26 million in 2025, while female employment fell from 2.09 million to 2.01 million during the same period. In non-agricultural employment, men rose from 14.86 million to 17.02 million, while women rose from 6.33 million to 8.05 million. Female employment in the non-agricultural sector showed a faster increase than male employment (27.1% vs. 14.5%).

When we evaluate according to employment status, in the agricultural sector, 51.4% of men are self-employed, 33.1% are salaried or wage earners, 11.6% are unpaid family workers, and 3.9% are employers; among women, the distribution is 43.6% unpaid family workers, 30.2% self-employed, 23.5% salaried or wage earners, and 2.7% employers. This table shows that women in agriculture still largely work as unpaid family workers, while men are more concentrated in income-generating and independent production activities. In non-agricultural sectors, as of 2025, 78.6% of men are salaried or daily wage earners, 9.9% are employers, 8.1% are self-employed, and 3.4% are unpaid family workers; while for women, these rates are 79.8%, 3.4%, 13.9%, and 2.9%, respectively. This shows that women have reached similar levels to men in terms of paid employment in non-agricultural sectors, but are still underrepresented in employer and managerial positions.

Over the years, there have been significant changes in the gender distribution in the workforce. The proportion of women in paid or daily-wage employment rose from 65.2% in 2021 to 69.0% in 2025, while for men it increased from 72.9% to 75.3%. The proportion of female employers rose from 1.7% to 2.1%, while that of male employers increased from 7.4% to 8.5%. The proportion of self-employed women decreased from 13.9% to 13.2%, while that of self-employed men fell from 14.8% to 13.7%. The proportion of unpaid family workers decreased from 19.2% to 15.7% among women and from 4.9% to 2.5% among men. This trend indicates increased formalisation in the labour force for both genders and a rapid expansion of women's employment in non-agricultural sectors.

In general, the difference between female and male employment is particularly evident in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. In agriculture, men are more likely to be self-employed and in employer positions, while women are largely unpaid family workers. In non-agricultural sectors, the rates of paid employment for women and men are converging, but men still dominate employer and managerial positions. Changes in the ratios over the years show that women's share of employment is increasing and that a transition from traditional roles in the agricultural sector to paid employment in non-agricultural sectors is continuing. These findings reveal that gender inequality in the Turkish labour market is decreasing, but that structural differences still exist in economic decision-making processes.

Findings for the 2021–2025 period indicate that the Turkish labour market has undergone not only numerical growth but also organisational, cultural and managerial restructuring. The rise in both total and gender-based salaried and daily wage employment reveals that the labour force is becoming increasingly integrated into institutional structures and that the formalisation process is becoming permanent. Conversely, the steady decline in self-employment and unpaid family labour indicates that the informal production culture is dissolving, with organisational systems replacing individual forms of work. This transformation has resulted in the emergence of security, belonging and performance-based relationships in the labour market, fundamentally changing leadership, communication and organisational behaviour dynamics.

With the increase in paid employment, professional identities within organisations have strengthened, and employees are no longer merely providers of labour but have become strategic actors playing an active role in shaping organisational goals. This situation has paved the way for vertical structures in communication processes to be replaced by horizontal and participatory communication networks. Internal information sharing, teamwork and interactive leadership styles have come to the fore. Thus, the formalisation of the employment structure has enabled the professionalisation of internal communication, the strengthening of rational decision-making mechanisms and the integration of leaders' strategic visions with employee participation.

Growth in male employment centred on the industrial and service sectors has reinforced a work culture focused on technical expertise, productivity and organisational performance, while the rise in female employment has increased the importance of concepts such as diversity, inclusivity and emotional intelligence-based leadership within organisations. Women's transition from unpaid domestic work to

paid and professional statuses signals a structural transformation in terms of both economic independence and organisational representation. This change has contributed to the dissolution of traditional gender roles, the strengthening of equality and justice-based values in organisational cultures, and the establishment of empathy, ethical sensitivity, and inclusive decision-making in leadership approaches.

The findings are also directly related to fundamental concepts in the organisational behaviour literature. The increase in paid employment strengthens emotional attachment elements among employees, such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction and identity affiliation; this, in turn, enhances the sustainability capacity of organisations. The decline in the rate of self-employment indicates that collective behaviour patterns based on organisational identity are coming to the fore, rather than individual autonomy. This situation coincides with concepts such as the 'learning organisation', 'psychological safety' and 'collaborative leadership' that are prominent in modern management thinking.

Therefore, the employment data for the 2021–2025 period represents a process of organisational and cultural restructuring in Türkiye's labour market that goes beyond its economic dimension. In this process, leadership concepts, communication styles and organisational behaviour patterns are also changing along with employment patterns. Increasing institutionalisation strengthens rational coordination and performance management within organisations, while the growing representation of women in the workforce supports the development of emotional balance, ethical leadership, and empathetic management practices.

The change in employment during this period, depending on the situation at work, reflects not only Türkiye's economic growth process but also the paradigmatic transformation in the management philosophy, leadership culture and gender-based division of labour within organisations. This restructuring of the employment structure paves the way for the institutionalisation of a human-centred, communication-based and inclusive management approach in the labour market of the future.

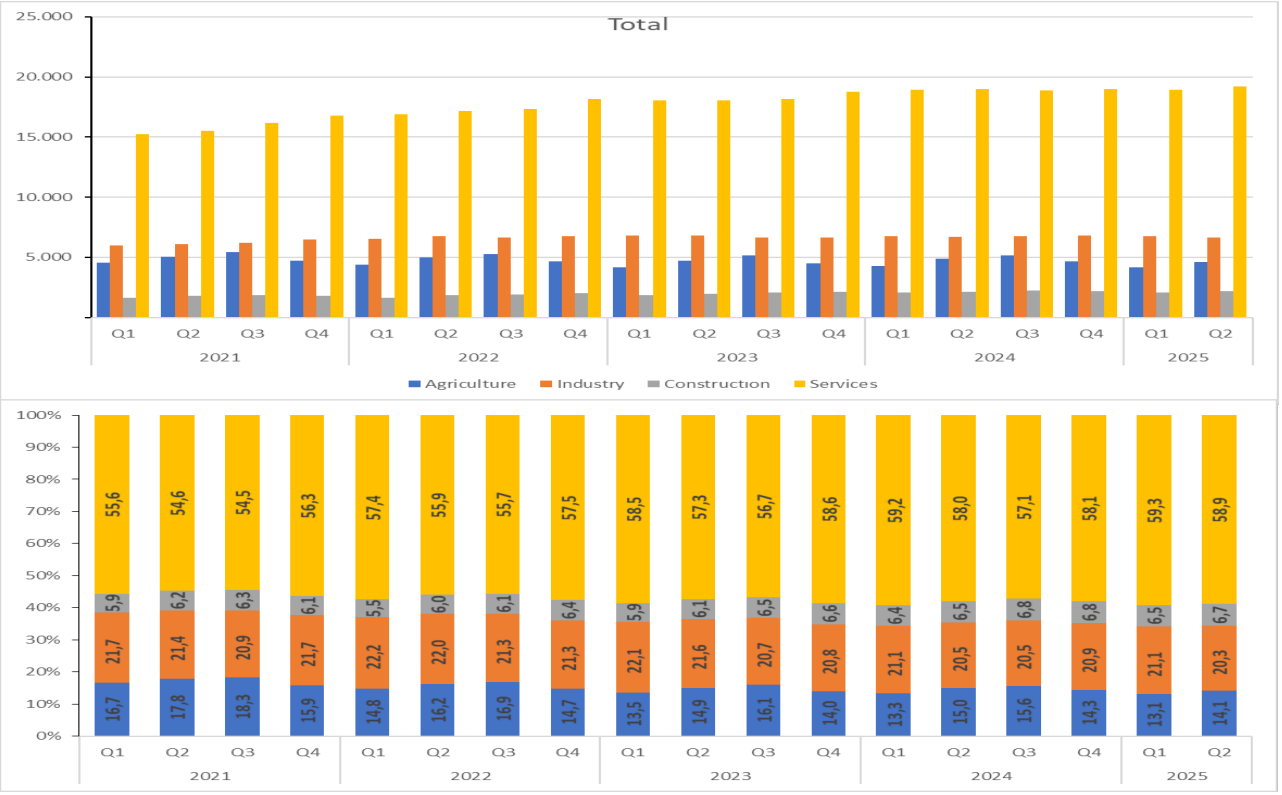
3.2. Employees by sector

3.2.1. Sectoral distribution of total employment

The sectoral distribution of total employment by agriculture, industry, construction and services, along with the number of employees and their sectoral percentage shares, is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Sectoral Distribution of Total Employment



The sectoral distribution of those employed in Türkiye during the 2021–2025 period shows significant structural changes in terms of agriculture, industry, construction and services. In terms of total employment, 27.39 million people were employed in the first quarter of 2021, of which 4.57 million were in agriculture, 5.96 million in industry, 1.63 million in construction, and 15.24 million in services. In the second quarter of 2025, total employment rose to 32.62 million; the number of people working in agriculture fell to 4.60 million, while industry reached 6.62 million, construction 2.20 million, and the services sector 19.21 million. As shown in Figure 4, the services sector has become by far the dominant sector in Türkiye's total employment. In 2021, 14.2% of employment was in agriculture, 20.8% in industry and 65.0% in the service sector; in 2025, these rates were 12.6%, 22.3% and 65.1% respectively. This table shows that while the share of agriculture is gradually decreasing, the manufacturing and service sectors are maintaining their weight in employment.

This trend demonstrates that the Turkish economy has transitioned from an agriculture-based production structure to one based on services and technology. In particular, the consistently high employment rate in the services sector is directly linked to digitalisation, urbanisation and the transition to a knowledge economy. The steady increase in the industrial sector reflects employment growth in manufacturing, energy and construction. The decline in agricultural employment parallels the migration of the rural population to urban centres; this process also entails the spatial and sectoral repositioning of the labour force.

When these data are evaluated, the employment intensity in the service sector indicates that behavioural processes such as communication, customer relations, team coordination and a learning organisation culture have become more important within organisations. The increase in employment in the industrial sector contributes to the strengthening of leadership approaches focused on technical expertise, process management and operational efficiency.

3.2.2. Sectoral distribution of male employment

The distribution of male employment across the agriculture, industry, construction and services sectors, along with the number of male employees and their sectoral shares within total male employment, is shown in Figure 5. When examining the sectoral distribution of male workers, a total of 18.97 million men were employed in the first quarter of 2021, of which 2.80 million were in agriculture, 4.52 million in industry, 1.55 million in construction, and 10.10 million in the services sector. In the second quarter of 2025, male employment rose to 21.79 million people; 2.70 million were employed in agriculture, 4.94 million in industry, 2.08 million in construction, and 12.08 million in the services sector. The data in Figure 5 on male employment shows that between 2021 and 2025, the sectoral distribution of men will increasingly favour industry and services, while agriculture's share will decline significantly, indicating a shift in the labour force towards non-agricultural sectors. In 2021, 10.8 per cent of male employment was in agriculture, 27.4 per cent in industry, and 61.8 per cent in services; in 2025, these rates were 9.3 per cent, 29.0 per cent, and 61.7 per cent, respectively.

This shift indicates that the male workforce is increasingly moving towards industrial production and technological services. This trend is consistent with Türkiye's industrialisation and digitalisation strategies. The rise in male employment in the industrial sector has led to the prominence of functional leadership styles within organisations, such as technical leadership, process control, production management, and team coordination. It shows that a discipline-based, performance-oriented and task-oriented communication culture has developed in production and operations areas where men are predominantly employed. This increase in employment in the industrial sector also shows that the male-dominated hierarchical structure of organisations remains more pronounced compared to the service sector. This difference indicates that leadership styles in organisational behaviour vary by sector.

Figure 5

Sectoral Distribution of Male Employment

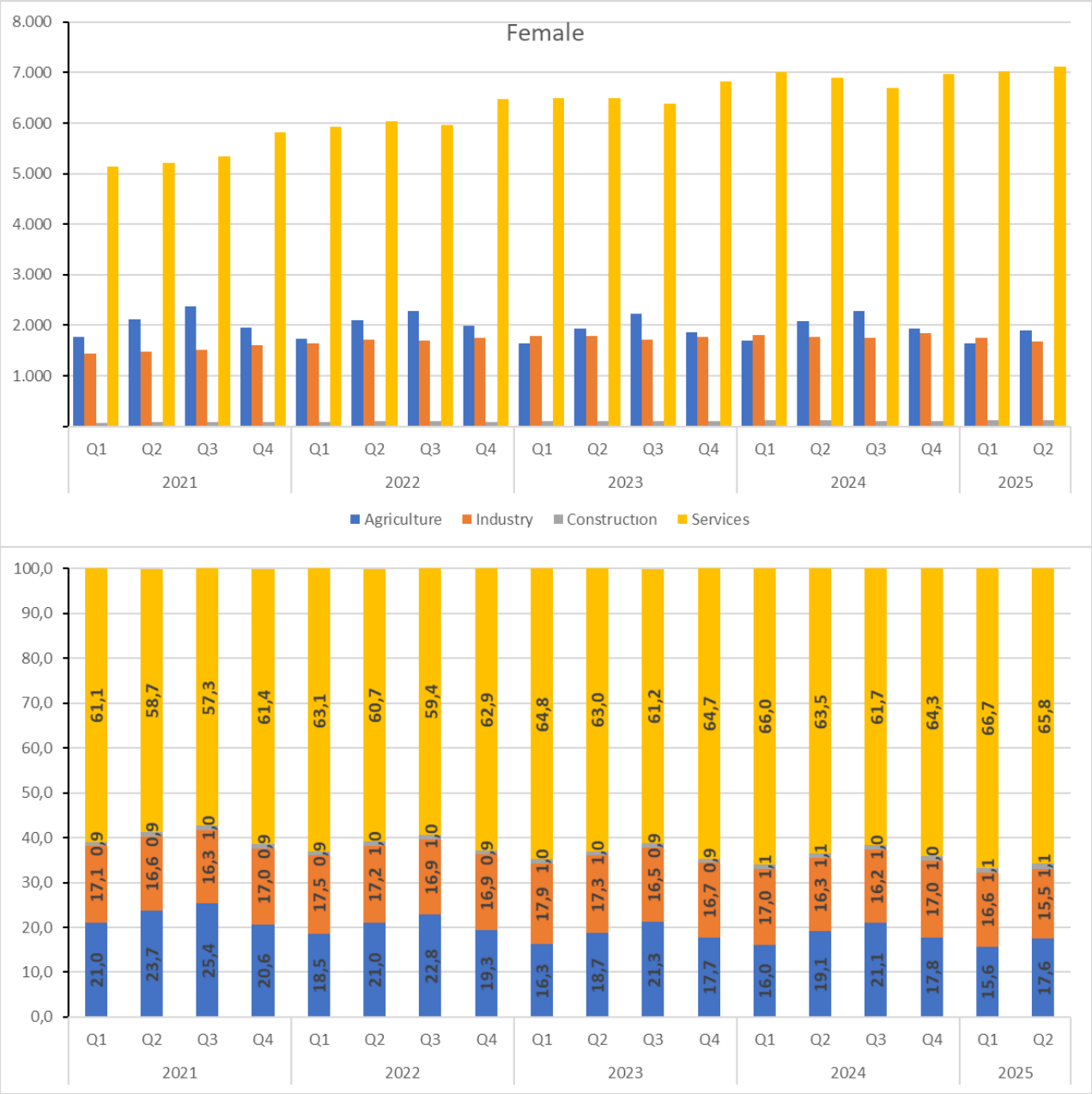


3.2.3. Sectoral distribution of female employment

The distribution of female employment across the agriculture, industry, construction and services sectors, along with the number of female employees and their sectoral proportions within total female employment, is presented in Figure 6. The sectoral distribution of female workers shows a different trend. In the first quarter of 2021, a total of 8.42 million women were employed, of whom 1.77 million worked in agriculture, 1.44 million in industry, 0.07 million in construction and 5.14 million in the services sector. In the second quarter of 2025, total female employment reached 10.83 million; 1.90 million women worked in agriculture, 1.68 million in industry, 0.12 million in construction, and 7.12 million in the services sector. The data on female employment shown in Figure 6 reveals that women in Türkiye have experienced a strong shift in the labour market from agriculture to the service sector. In 2021, 21.4% of female employment was in agriculture, 13.2% in industry, and 65.4% in services; by 2025, these figures will be 17.6%, 14.7%, and 67.7%, respectively.

Figure 6

Sectoral Distribution of Female Employment



This change has brought about two important structural outcomes: increasing women's visibility in the formal sector by directing them towards paid employment, and redefining gender roles with the qualitative improvement of women's labour in the service sector. Women's departure from agriculture is directly related to the decline in unpaid family labour. This process has accelerated the transition from invisible forms of labour in rural areas to participation in urban-centred formal jobs. The increase in female employment, particularly in service areas such as education, health, finance, public administration and tourism, brings behavioural elements such as emotional intelligence, empathetic leadership, communication skills and work-life balance to the fore in organisations. Women's increasing representation in the service sector strengthens the principles of transformational leadership, participatory decision-making, and equality in communication within organisations, replacing traditional male-dominated management approaches with more balanced and people-centred management styles.

Generally, trends observed in the sectoral distribution over the years reveal significant differences between male and female employees. Men are more highly represented in the industrial and construction sectors compared to women, while women are predominantly concentrated in the services sector. In the agriculture sector, women's share remains higher than men's, but it is gradually decreasing in total employment. These data show gender-based sectoral segregation in the Turkish labour market, with women concentrated in the services sector and men in industry and construction, and the agriculture sector being a declining area of employment for both genders. Changes over the years reveal that women's employment in the services sector is increasing and that they are following a trend parallel to men in transitioning to non-agricultural sectors.

The distribution of male and female employees by sector in Türkiye between 2021 and 2025 clearly reveals gender differences, both numerically and proportionally. Male workers are employed in higher numbers than females in the agricultural sector every year. In the first quarter of 2021, 2.803 million men and 1.766 million women worked; this ratio represents 61% of total agricultural employment for men and 39% for women. In the first quarter of 2025, the number of male employees in the agricultural sector decreased to 2.536 million, while the number of female employees reached 1.642 million, maintaining a male share of agricultural employment around 60%. The male predominance is even more pronounced in the industrial sector; in 2021, 4.515 million men and 1.440 million women worked, with men accounting for 76% of total industrial employment and 24% for women. By 2025, the gender gap remains, with men accounting for 5.003 million and women accounting for 1.745 million. The share of female workers in the construction sector remains quite limited. While 1.555 million men and only 74,000 women were employed in 2021, by 2025, the number of men employed was 1.966 million and women accounted for 119,000, leaving a female share of around 6%.

The predominance of women in the services sector is striking; in 2021, 10.095 million men and 5.142 million women were employed, representing a 34% share of total services employment. In 2025, the number of male employees in the services sector reached 11.902 million and the number of female employees was 7.016 million, with the female share rising to 37%. This data demonstrates that men dominate employment in agriculture, industry, and construction in Türkiye, while women constitute a significant portion of employment, particularly in the services sector, and that female employment in the services sector has been on the rise over the years.

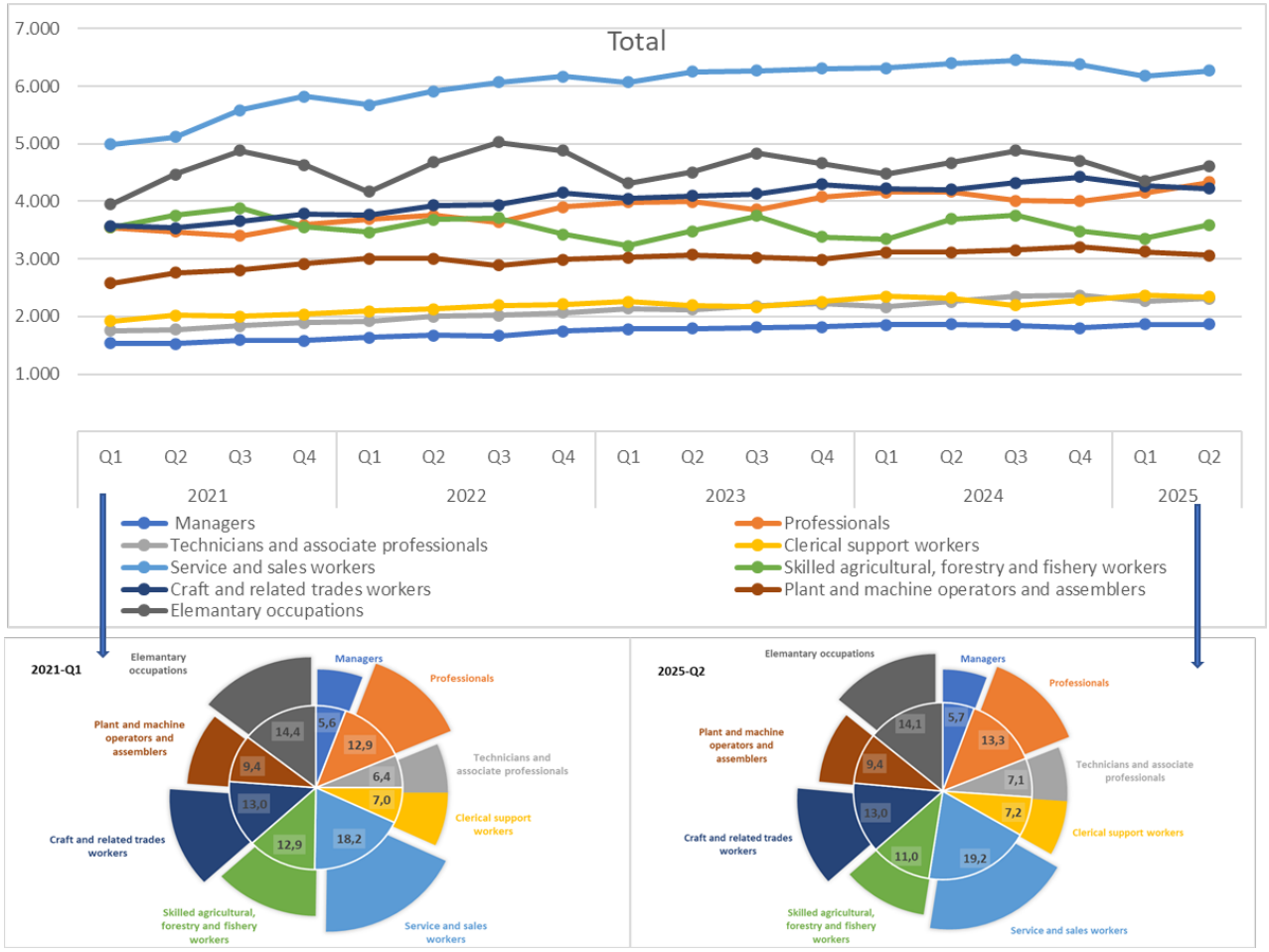
3.3. Total employees - employment by occupational groups

Examining the distribution of total employment in Türkiye by occupation during the 2021–2025 period, Figure 7 compares the first quarter of 2021 with the second quarter of 2025, demonstrating a gradual transformation in the employment structure. While total employment was 27,391,000 in the first quarter of 2021, this figure reached 32,623,000 in the second quarter of 2025. Total employment increased by 19% during this period. Within occupational groups, service and sales personnel

accounted for 18.2% of total employment with 4,989,000 employees in 2021, rising to 19.2% with 6,273,000 employees in 2025. Professionals, who were 3,547,000 (13.0%) in 2021, reached 4,331,000 (13.3%) in 2025, demonstrating the strengthening of knowledge-based jobs. Technicians and associate professionals also increased from 1,759,000 in 2021 to 2,313,000 in 2025, with a 31% increase in technical occupations. Employment in the managerial category remained relatively stable, rising from 1,537,000 (5.6%) in 2021 to 1,863,000 (5.7%) in 2025. On the other hand, skilled agricultural, forestry, and aquaculture workers showed a limited increase, from 3,543,000 in 2021 to 3,596,000 in 2025, while their share of total employment remained stable at around 12%. The number of workers in unskilled jobs increased from 3,948,000 to 4,616,000, accounting for 14.5% of total employment. These findings indicate a clear trend in the Turkish labor market: expansion in service, technical, and professional occupations, and stagnation in agricultural and low-skilled jobs.

Figure 7

Change in Total Employment by Occupational Groups



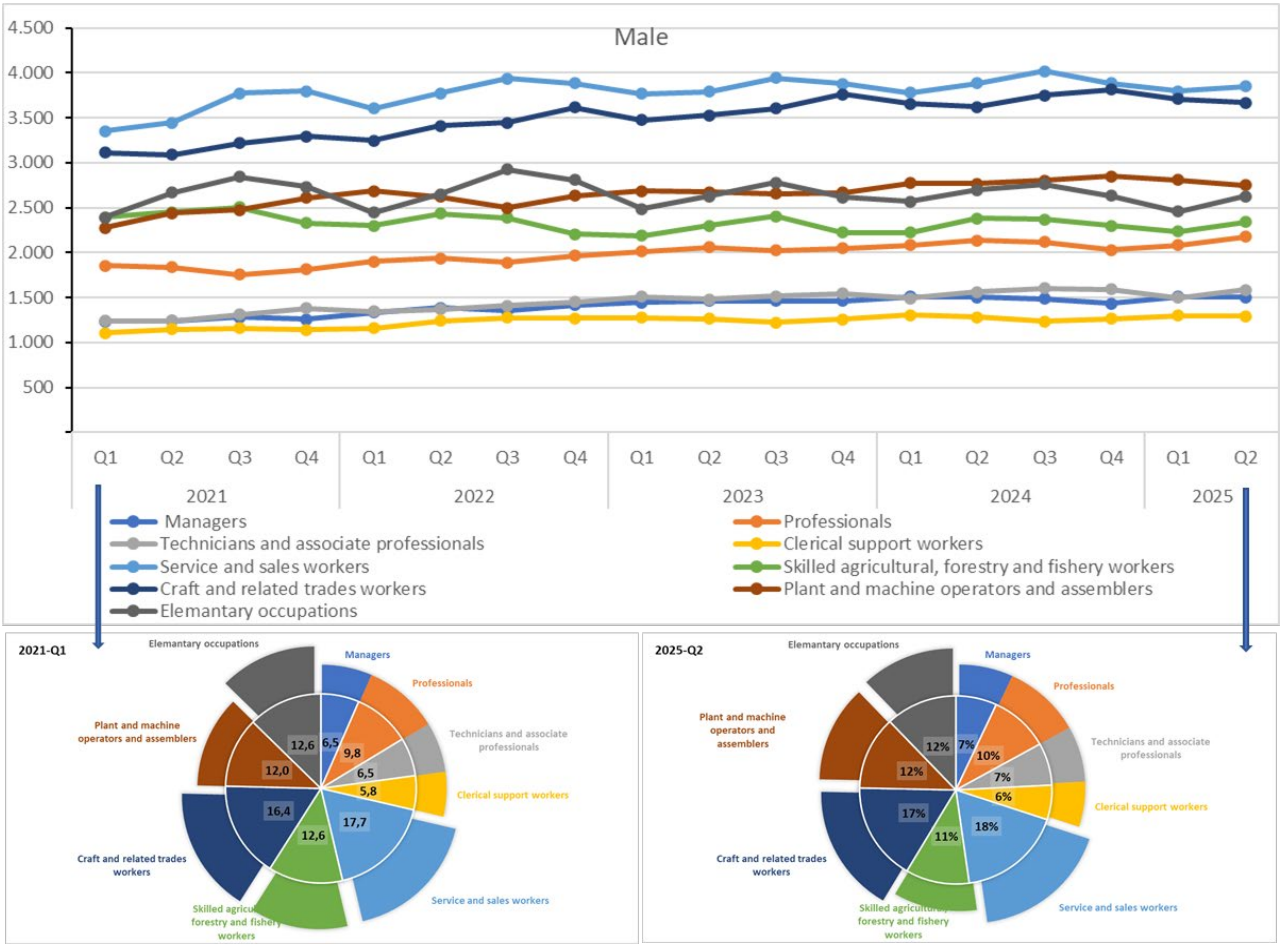
3.3.1. Male employees – employment by occupation group

Examining the distribution of male employment by occupation in Türkiye during the 2021–2025 period, Figure 8 shows a comparison between the first quarter of 2021 and the second quarter of 2025. Male employment increased from 18,968,000 in the first quarter of 2021 to 21,794,000 in the second quarter of 2025, representing an increase of approximately 14.9%. The largest share of male employees was in the service and sales group: 3,353,000 (17.7%) in 2021 and 3,849,000 (17.7%) in 2025. Craftspeople and related trades workers increased from 3,114,000 (16.4%) in 2021 to 3,667,000 (16.8%) in 2025. While the number of plant and machine operators was 2,274,000 (12%) in 2021, it reached 2,751,000 (12.6%) in 2025.

Unskilled jobs hold a significant share of male employment, reaching 2,394,000 (12.6%) in 2021 and 2,625,000 (12%) in 2025. Professionals, while the number of qualified agricultural workers was 1,856,000 (9.8%) in 2021, reached 2,178,000 (10%) in 2025. In contrast, the proportion of qualified agricultural workers decreased from 12% to 10%, increasing the weight of non-agricultural sectors in male employment. While technical and industry-based occupations continue to have a strong presence in male employment, the shift towards the service sector has increased significantly in recent years.

Figure 8

Change in Male Employment by Occupation Groups

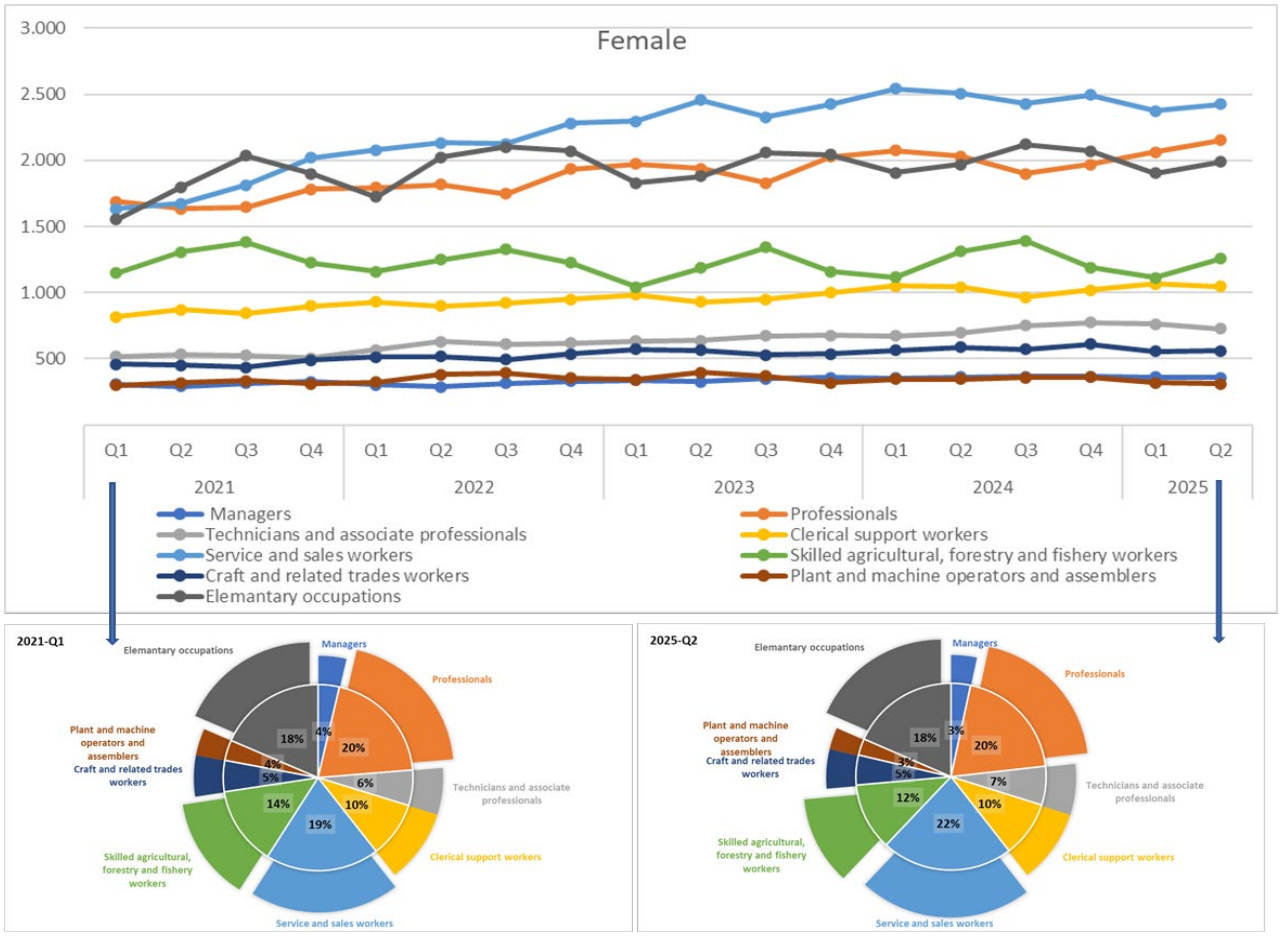


3.3.2. Female employees – employment by occupation groups

Examining the distribution of female employment by occupation in Türkiye during the 2021–2025 period, Figure 8 shows a comparison between the first quarter of 2021 and the second quarter of 2025. While female employment was 8,422,000 in the first quarter of 2021, it increased to 10,829,000 in the second quarter of 2025, representing a 28.5% increase in female employment during this period. The highest share of employment for women is in the service and sales personnel group, reaching 1,636,000 (19.4%) in 2021 and 2,424,000 (22.4%) in 2025. Professional occupations were expected to reach 1,690,000 (20.1%) in 2021 and 2,153,000 (19.9%) in 2025, with a strong representation of women in educated and specialized occupations. Office and customer service workers were 815,000 (9.7%) in 2021 and 1,047,000 (9.7%) in 2025. Skilled agricultural workers, which was 1,147,000 (13.6%) in 2021, decreased to 1,258,000 (11.6%) in 2025, indicating a decline in rural women's employment. Women working in unskilled occupations were 1,554,000 (18.4%) in 2021 and 1,991,000 (18.4%) in 2025, remaining stable as a percentage of the total. These trends indicate that women are increasingly turning to professional and service-based occupations, while their share in traditional agricultural and low-skilled jobs is declining.

Figure 9

Changes in Women's Employment by Occupational Group



Overall, total employment increased from 27.4 million people in the first quarter of 2021 to 32.6 million people in the second quarter of 2025, with the majority of this increase stemming from male employment. Male employment increased from 19.0 million to 21.8 million (a 14.7% increase) during the same period, while female employment increased from 8.4 million to 10.8 million (a 28.5% increase), with the female share of total employment rising from approximately 30% to 33%. By occupation, the proportion of women is relatively higher in the professional and technician-assistant professional categories; while the female proportion among professionals was around 47% in 2021, this proportion approached 49% in the second quarter of 2025 (2.15 million women; 2.18 million men). A similar trend is observed in the group of office and customer service workers, with a 28% increase from 0.82 million female employees in 2021 to 1.05 million in 2025. In contrast, the gender imbalance persists in the groups of facility and machine operators (85% male), craftspeople (87% male), and workers in unskilled occupations (60% male). In particular, the female share in skilled agricultural, forestry, and aquaculture workers, which was 32% in 2021, showed a limited increase to 34% in 2025. In the group of service and sales personnel, employment increased between 2021 and 2025 for both women (from 1.64 million to 2.42 million, +47.6%) and men (from 3.35 million to 3.85 million, +15%); accordingly, the female share in this occupational group increased from 33% to 38%. The gender gap is most pronounced in the management category: in 2025, only 0.36 million of the 1.86 million managers were women; this represents a small increase compared to 2021 (approximately 17%). Overall, the female employment rate in the Turkish labor market increased across all occupational groups between 2021 and 2025, with particularly rapid growth in white-collar and service-oriented occupations.

However, male dominance persists in technical, industrial, and manufacturing-based occupations, indicating a continuing gender-based occupational segregation.

While men are predominantly concentrated in industrial, construction, technical, and unskilled occupations, women are concentrated primarily in professional, office, education, healthcare, and service-based occupations. As of 2025, men's share of total employment will be 66.8%, while women's share will be 33.2%. The increase in women's employment is particularly pronounced in the categories of "professionals" and "service and sales personnel," which account for approximately 42% of total female employment. Among men, "craftspeople, machine operators, and service and sales workers" account for 46% of total employment. This suggests that gender-based occupational segregation remains strong in the Turkish labor market, but that women's increased visibility in education and service-based fields is transforming their labor force participation patterns.

The change in employment by occupational group between 2021 and 2025 reveals that the Turkish labor market is being reshaped around knowledge-based production, digitalization, and gender equality. While the share of low-skilled occupations is decreasing, the increase in professional and technical occupations indicates that the quality of the workforce is improving.

The predominant positioning of men in technical and industrial-based occupations reinforces a task- and performance-oriented leadership culture, while the rise of women in professional occupations reinforces communicative leadership, emotional balance, and people-centered management approaches in organizations. This differentiation demonstrates that the Turkish labor market is undergoing a multi-layered transformation, not only economically but also in terms of organizational behaviour and management philosophy.

In conclusion, occupational group data for the 2021–2025 period demonstrates that employment in Türkiye is being restructured based on knowledge, skills, and gender balance. This transformation is increasing the diversity of leadership cultures and fundamentally impacting communication styles, organizational roles, and human resources management practices. In this respect, the distribution of employment by occupational groups is not only an indicator of economic development, but also a mirror of the socio-cultural development level of organizations.

The increasing paid and regular employment of women in non-agricultural sectors is transforming communication, leadership, and collaboration practices within organizations. The concentration of women's labor in service and professional occupations increases the importance of concepts such as empathetic leadership, participatory decision-making, and emotional labor, which are highlighted in the organizational behavior literature. However, the limited representation of women in managerial and management positions indicates that the glass ceiling phenomenon persists at the organizational level.

4. Conclusion

The 2021–2025 period was marked by profound structural and cultural transformations for the Turkish labor market, beyond quantitative growth. Total employment rose from 27.39 million to 32.62 million, representing an increase of approximately 19.1%. This growth was particularly characterized by an increase in wage or daily wage employment (from 69.8% to 71.4%), demonstrating a marked advance in formalization in the labor market. The decline in the share of self-employed and unpaid family workers (from 16.7% to 16.3% and from 8.8% to 7.6%) during the same period indicates the disintegration of informal and traditional forms of employment. This trend is a concrete indicator of the transition to a modern economic structure in non-agricultural sectors.

In terms of sectoral distribution, the share of employment in the agricultural sector decreased from 16.6% to 14.1%, while non-agricultural employment increased by 22.8%, reaching 28.02 million people. The workforce in the agricultural sector, still concentrated in self-employment and unpaid family workers, demonstrates the persistence of an informal structure in this sector.

Conversely, the rise in paid employment to 81.1% in the industrial and service sectors demonstrates the strengthening of formal and institutional employment relationships. The increase in the employment rate (5.3%) indicates that economic growth

is shaped by male-dominated factors and confirms that entrepreneurial tendencies are more prevalent among men.

Remarkable transformations were observed in the gender dimension. Overall, female employment increased from 31.4% to 33.9%, with a 27% increase in non-agricultural sectors, significantly exceeding the 14.5% increase for men. As women shifted from unpaid family labor in agriculture to paid and own-account employment, they increased their integration into the modern non-agricultural workforce. While 43.6% of women in agriculture were still unpaid family workers, the proportion of women paid in non-agricultural sectors reached 79.8%. This demonstrates the quantitative and qualitative strengthening of the female workforce; however, limited representation in managerial and employer positions reveals the persistence of the glass ceiling effect. For men, the increase in non-agricultural sectors was 18.1%, while the decrease in agriculture was 3.5%. While men are still concentrated in self-employment and employer positions in agriculture, the increase in paid employment in non-agricultural sectors demonstrates that the male workforce is adapting to formal structures and organizational processes.

An examination of employment by job status reveals the trend toward formalization more clearly. While paid or casual employment increased from 65.2% to 69% for women and from 72.9% to 75.3% for men, the rate of unpaid family workers decreased from 19.2% to 15.7% for women and from 4.9% to 2.5% for men. This confirms the strengthening of work focused on security and belonging for both genders, and the decline of informal forms of work.

At the organizational and managerial level, increasing paid employment has transformed employees not only into labor providers but also into strategic and active organizational actors. The rise in women's employment has increased the importance of diversity, inclusivity, and emotional intelligence-based leadership in organizations, contributing to the dissolution of traditional gender roles. Task- and performance-oriented, hierarchical leadership comes to the fore in male-dominated sectors, while communicative, transformational, and empathetic leadership comes to the fore in service and professional fields, where women predominate. Occupational transformations have brought with them the need for skills and training. The 13.3% increase in professional occupations and the 31% increase in technicians confirms the need for "skill-based redistribution" and "continuous learning." These shifts in the Turkish labor market are forcing organizations to adopt reskilling and upskilling strategies and demonstrating that the economic structure is evolving toward a knowledge-based and service-oriented approach.

In terms of policy and institutional implications, the findings highlight the importance of targeted policies to support women's employment and entrepreneurship and to break the glass ceiling in managerial positions. Furthermore, training a skilled workforce in service and professional occupations and restructuring the skills of existing employees should be central to education and employment policies. Organizations are recommended to adopt a more inclusive, communicative, and flexible management approach, and to design leadership development programs to reflect this new organizational reality.

In conclusion, the Turkish labor market between 2021 and 2025 experienced not only quantitative growth but also structural, cultural, and behavioural transformation. Sectoral shifts, job status changes, and gender-based differentiation demonstrate that the Turkish workforce is evolving into a modern, formal, and human-centered structure. This transformation offers a data-driven, multidimensional, and interdisciplinary contribution to both academic literature and policy and management practice.

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