



Searching for the Future of Traditional Professions in the Profession Stories of Craftsmen: The Case of Izmir

Geleneksel Mesleklerin Geleceğini Zanaatkârların Meslek Öykülerinde Aramak: İzmir Örneği

Elif Yücebaş*
Sultan Kavili Arap**

Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify the professions that are urban values of Izmir and are about to be forgotten, to examine and record the changes and transformations that these professions have undergone from the first time they were practiced until they face the danger of being forgotten. One of the important problems of these professions is that they are in danger of being forgotten. Another problem is that the development of these professions and the experiences of their craftsmen are not recorded today. However, these professions have an important place in the history, accumulation and economy of the city. If suitable conditions can be provided for

Geliş tarihi (Received): 31-12-2023 Kabul tarihi (Accepted): 02-07-2024

* Lecturer PhD., Dokuz Eylül University Izmir Vocational School Department of Management and Organisation, Izmir-Türkiye/Öğr. Gör. Dr., Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi İzmir Meslek Yüksekokulu Yönetim ve Organizasyon Bölümü. elif.yucebas@deu.edu.tr. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2544-1318

** Assoc. Prof., Dokuz Eylül University Izmir Vocational School Department of Management and Organisation, Izmir-Türkiye/Doç. Dr., Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi İzmir Meslek Yüksekokulu Yönetim ve Organizasyon Bölümü. sultan.arap@deu.edu.tr. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4752-8828

the transfer of these professions to future generations and for their actual practice, this will be an important step. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 48 craftsmen from 28 traditional professions in 10 districts of Izmir, and Maxqda 2020 package program was used to analyze the data obtained. Based on the professional stories of the masters, it is seen that the development and change process of a profession depends on the supply of raw materials, meeting the social need, the profit of the profession, the ability of the master to transfer his knowledge, skills, and experience to his apprentice, the ability of the product produced to find a market, and the ability of both the profession and the master to keep up with the changing conditions.

Keywords: *traditional profession, craftsmen, intangible cultural heritage, Izmir*

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İzmir'in kentsel değeri olan ve unutulmaya yüz tutmuş mesleklerin tespit etmektir. Ayrıca, bu mesleklerin ilk icra edilmesinden unutulma tehlikesiyle karşı karşıya kalmalarına kadar geçirdiği değişim ve dönüşümü inceleyerek kayıt altına almaktır. Bu mesleklerin önemli sorunlarından biri unutulma tehlikesi yaşamalarıdır. Bir diğer sorun ise bu mesleklerin gelişiminin ve ustalarının deneyimlerinin günümüzde kayıt altına alınmamasıdır. Ancak, bu meslekler kentin tarihinde, kültürel birikiminde ve ekonomisinde önemli bir yere sahiptir. İzmir'de eskiden ticari öneme sahip, ekonomik ve sosyo-kültürel açıdan yaşamın merkezinde yer alan kimi mesleklerin yok olmaya yüz tutma nedenleri ve bu süreçte yaşanan sorunları belirlemek de çalışmanın önemli bir parçasıdır. Bu kapsamda, İzmir'de yaşayan ve unutulmaya yüz tutmuş mesleklerin icracısı olan ustaların meslek öyküleri incelenmiştir. İzmir'in 10 ilçesinde 28 geleneksel meslekte 48 zanaatkar ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşmelerde elde edilen verilerin analizinde Maxqda 2020 paket programı kullanılmıştır. Ustaların mesleki hikâyelerinden yola çıkarak bir mesleğin gelişim ve değişim sürecinin hammadde teminine, toplumsal ihtiyacın karşılanmasına, mesleğin kârlılığına, ustanın bilgi, beceri ve deneyimini çırağına aktarabilmesine, üretilen ürünün pazar bulabilmesine ve hem mesleğin hem de ustanın değişen koşullara ayak uydurabilmesine bağlı olduğu görülmektedir. Ayrıca, ustaların geçmişte günlük ihtiyaçları karşılamak amacıyla ürettikleri ürünleri, günümüzde beğeni ve taleplere uygun tasarım ürünlere dönüştürmeleri, mesleklerinin devamlılığını sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: *geleneksel meslek, zanaatkar, somut olmayan kültürel miras, İzmir*

Introduction

Today, crafts either disappear or continue to exist by changing their form due to changing social needs, changes in technology, differentiation of production processes, and changes in raw materials. In this process, craftsmen also have problems in maintaining the profession and transferring it to future generations and they find it difficult to adapt to the conditions of the day. Various studies are carried out on a local, national and international scale to create

and maintain these crafts, which are also defined as professions that have been on the verge of being forgotten in recent years, in urban life. These studies increased especially in the 2000s and one of the reasons for this increase is the opening of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH Convention) for signature during this period. A second reason is the importance of competition between cities in the globalization process. In this competitive environment, the importance of urban culture has begun to be understood and for the cities that try to make their differences visible, professions on the verge of being forgotten have been highlighted as the distinctive features of cities. With the opening of the ICH Convention by UNESCO for signature in 2003, it is seen that this field attracts the attention of researchers from different disciplines such as tourism, folkloristics, visual arts, anthropology, and history and creates a diversity specific to this field (Arizpe and Amescua 2013). In this context, the classification related to the areas in which ICH Convention studies are concentrated on the basis of traditional professions and craftsmen in the literature can be expressed as follows in general: Identification and promotion of traditional professions and craftsmen (Diyarbakırlıoğlu 2010; Ozburun 2016; Alpman 2019); adaptation of traditional professions and craftsmen to current developments and technology (Ciptandi 2020; Sun and Liu 2022); professional and technical competencies (Pei-Chi and Shang-Chia 2017); local, national and international efforts to protect traditional professions and craftsmen (Kurin 2007; Lenzerini 2011; Perera and Chandra 2018; Petrillo 2019; Adewumi 2022); the socio-economic problems of traditional professions and craftsmen (Eser and Bal 2017; Pekersen and Calık 2017) and recommended solutions (Altıntas 2016) .

With the signing of the convention by Türkiye in 2006, ICH Convention studies at the central and local levels started. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has been designated as the executive; studies specific to this field such as researching ICH Convention, creating its inventory, and identifying and registering cultural heritage bearers have been carried out. The creation of the Living Human Treasures List and the Geographical Indication registration can be given as examples. Within the framework of the service areas of the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Treasury and Finance, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Services, various regulations were included in service areas such as the exemption of traditional professions from income tax, retail trade and their position in business lines. In this context, there are studies that identify traditional professions throughout Türkiye and briefly discuss their characteristics and development; there are also studies that focus on the definition and situation of a traditional profession or a few professions specific to a region. In addition to these, there are few studies focusing on the determination and evaluation of the problems experienced by the practitioners of traditional professions and handicrafts.

In addition to the studies conducted at the national level, there are also studies focusing on the professions on the verge of being forgotten specific to a city. Some of these studies have focused on the identification and recording the professions on the verge of being forgotten in the city (Deniz and Celik 2020). It is seen that some of them focus on the promotion of one or more profession on the verge of being forgotten on a city scale, the current situation, the problems faced by the profession, and their future prospects (Eser and Bal 2017; Pekersene and Calık 2017; Ozdemir 2019; Balcı 2020).

The subject of the study is to determine the reasons for the disappearance of some professions, which used to have commercial importance and were at the center of economic and socio-cultural life in Izmir, and to determine the problems experienced in this process. Izmir has an important place in the economy of the country and the region with its geographical location, history, natural harbor, and migration-receiving structure since the Ancient Age. It has been a city that has an important place in national and international trade for centuries and where different artistic, cultural, and traditional professions are practiced as it hosts many different cultures. However, there have been some problems in maintaining some traditional professions that have been going on for at least a few generations and some of them are no longer needed; for some reason, some of these professions have begun to disappear.

Some of the studies on the professions on the verge of being forgotten carried out at the national level also have examples of application at Izmir scale. In this context, the last representative of the evil eye bead in Izmir has been in the field of traditional handicrafts in the Living Human Treasures List prepared by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism since 2012 (AREGEM 2020). There are thirty-three geographical indications given in Izmir within the scope of the Geographical Indications registration granted by the Turkish Patent and Trademark Office. In this study, Bergama Hand Carpet (1997), Görece Evil Eye Bead (2005), Tire ‘Beledi’ Weaving (2020), and Ödemiş Silk (2022) are among the geographically indicated products (Turkish Patent 2022) and are examined among the crafts evaluated within the scope of professions on the verge of being forgotten, in this study. An inventory study was carried out by the Cultural Research Foundation to support traditional handicrafts and their representatives in Izmir during the Covid-19 Pandemic (Cultural Research Foundation 2020). In the study, forty professional representatives who applied through the digital platform introduced themselves and their works. It is seen that the inventory studies on the professions on the verge of being forgotten at the urban scale are still in the initial stage.

The study covers the determination of the professions on the verge of being forgotten, which are seen as the urban value of Izmir, and the comparative analysis of the process of these professions’ losing their importance and the problems of the craftsmen. In this framework, the research aims to create a discussion on the change and transformation of forgotten professions in Izmir in the historical process and how these professions will be positioned in the future; to contribute to the sustainability of these professions by providing important information to institutions and organizations operating in this field at local and national level.

1. Materials and methods

This study is a research on the change and transformation of professions on the verge of disappearing in the province of Izmir¹. The data collection process was carried out through semi-structured interviews with the last craftsmen of the professions². Thanks to these interviews, information was obtained about the history of professions, the ability of professions to meet the needs of daily life and the common and profession-specific problems of craftsmen. The following questions were asked:

- How would you describe yourself and your profession?
- What are the problems you face while performing your profession?

- What role does your profession play in meeting the daily life needs of the society from past to present?

- What are the reasons for your profession to be forgotten?

- What do you think about the transfer of your profession to future generations? Do these professions attract the interest of young people today?

- What is your opinion about the development of your profession from past to present and its current situation?

In this context, the professions on the verge of being forgotten in Izmir were determined and the professional stories of the last craftsmen of these professions were recorded. Data were collected to identify the problems that caused the disappearance of the profession from the eyes of the craftsmen.

Multiple resources were used in the process of preparing the interview questions and determining the craftsmen to be interviewed. These resources include interviews, observations and field notes, relevant institutions and organizations, professional organizations, and non-governmental organizations. Interview questions were prepared to obtain information about the history of professions, their current situation, problems, and recommended solutions. In the process of determining the craftsmen to be interviewed, first of all, those with professional knowledge and experience were selected. These are the last craftsmen of the profession or people who know the profession closely. Within the scope of this study, records and statistics of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Tire and Selçuk district municipalities, Izmir Culture and Tourism Directorate, Izmir Chamber of Merchants and Craftsmen (IESOB), and other relevant institutions and organizations were used to determine the professions on the verge of being forgotten. In addition, during the meetings held with the chambers, associations, and foundations in the visited districts, information was exchanged about the studies related to the oblivion of these professions.

On the other hand, reports prepared by the Turkish Employment Agency, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Commerce, and UNESCO, in which some studies on the professions on the verge of being forgotten are carried out, data shared in the digital environment and projects carried out on the subject were also evaluated. In addition, reports, books, news archives, etc. prepared on a local scale regarding the situation, importance, and development of these professions in the city from the past to the present were examined. The universe of the study is the craftsmen of the professions on the verge of being forgotten who continue to work in Izmir or who have become unable to continue their professions for various reasons. The universe could not be determined numerically due to the geographical size and the fact that some of the craftsmen were not registered. However, it is known by the chambers, the local administrations in the districts, and the tradespersons who have been living in the city for a long time, that which professions are gradually being forgotten in which districts and that one or a few of their representatives are left.

Purposive sampling was preferred in determining the sample due to the numerical scarcity of the practitioners of the profession on the verge of being forgotten and the limited number

of people with the expected qualifications in working life. In the sample determination process that took place in two stages, it was determined which of the professions on the verge of being forgotten were located in Izmir in the first stage. This determination started with the information obtained from the relevant public institutions and organizations and professional organizations, especially IESOB. In the second stage, it was aimed to interview at least one professional (in case the profession is not practiced, those that could be reached from among the craftsmen who used to practice the relevant profession) representing each professional group determined. In this context, after determining in which districts the craftsmen planned to be interviewed lived, district visits were performed. In the district visits, before starting the negotiations, it was decided who would be interviewed after determining the available craftsmen, and interview appointments were made.

The following criteria were taken into account while selecting the professions and craftsmen with whom interviews were planned in this study:

- The profession has been practiced in the city for a long time without interruption and its main input is manual labor,
- The craftsman learned the profession as a child or young person in a craftsman-apprentice relationship (from family or craftsman) (knowledge learned through traditional transfer),
- The craftsman has traditional knowledge about the profession,
- The craftsman has been practicing this profession for a long time (having the quality of a traditional transmitter),
- The craftsman is locally known as a craftsman defined by this profession (having the ability to represent their art),
- The craftsman knows the leading craftsmen of their craft in the region they live in and has historical knowledge about their craft,
- The craftsman is the last representative of the profession or one of the last few representatives,
- The craftsman has the ability to teach their art to others,
- There is a widespread belief in the city that the profession is forgotten or on the verge of being forgotten.

Within the scope of the study, the craftsmen from Bayındır, Bergama, Buca, Kemalpaşa, Konak, Menderes, Menemen, Ödemiş, Selçuk, and Tire districts who agreed to be interviewed were interviewed (Table 1). 48 craftsmen from 28 professions were interviewed face to face between July 2020 and August 2021. Of the 48 craftsmen interviewed, 8 were female and 40 were male. In some professions, more than one craftsman was interviewed. One of the reasons for this is to examine the differences created by craftsmen in some professions. For example, it is worth examining the fact that two craftsmen working as blacksmiths in Ödemiş and Konak and two craftsmen working as felt makers in Tire one street apart, have different products and their place in the market and their perspectives on the profession are different. The second reason is the idea that interviewing some of the craftsmen who accepted to be interviewed with their apprentices, whom they trained and to whom they have transferred or plan to transfer the profession, will contribute significantly to the story of the profession. In the study, Maxqda 2020 package program was used to analyze the data obtained from the interviews.

Code	Profession	District	Age	Gender	Age of Starting a Profession
P1	Woodturner	Ödemiş	45	M	15
P2	Coppersmith	Konak	48	M	24
P3	Weaving	Tire	88	M	14
P4	Weaving	Tire	50	F	45
P5	Carpet Weaving	Bergama	63	F	12
P6	Carpet Weaving	Bergama	58	F	9
P7	Carpet Weaving	Bergama	57	F	7
P8	Pottery/Ceramics	Menemen	58	M	14
P9	Pottery/Ceramics	Menemen	55	M	10
P10	Leather Tanning	Bergama	92	M	22
P11	Barrelmaker	Konak	58	M	15
P12	Wicker	Tire	83	F	8
P13	Wicker	Tire	57	F	10
P14	Tinsmith	Bergama	78	M	15
P15	Tinsmith	Konak	49	M	11
P16	Tinsmith	Konak	45	M	12
P17	Felter	Tire	64	M	13
P18	Felter	Tire	52	M	7
P19	Felter	Tire	24	M	12
P20	Bellows Boot	Tire	73	M	12
P21	Shoemaker	Buca	80	M	7
P22	Evil Eye Beads	Menderes	67	M	18
P23	Evil Eye Beads	Kemalpaşa	61	M	15
P24	Blacksmith	Bergama	87	M	7
P25	Blacksmith	Selçuk	75	M	9
P26	Pattens	Tire	91	M	10
P27	Silk Weaving	Ödemiş	50	M	20
P28	Silk Weaving	Ödemiş	50	M	10
P29	Cotton Fluffer	Menemen	63	M	15
P30	Sandal Making	Selçuk	57	M	7
P31	Chair Making	Ödemiş	46	M	18
P32	Saddler	Bergama	84	M	13
P33	Saddler	Menderes	57	M	9
P34	Hammersmith	Konak	55	M	7
P35	Hammersmith	Konak	50	M	4
P36	Hammersmith	Ödemiş	58	M	12
P37	Pack Saddle	Tire	76	M	16
P38	Basket Maker	Bergama	67	M	7
P39	Basket Maker	Bayındır	79	M	7
P40	Besom/Whisk	Bayındır	68	M	15
P41	Besom/Whisk	Selçuk	67	F	7
P42	Stonework	Selçuk	67	M	14
P43	Whitesmith	Menemen	86	M	7
P44	Whitesmith	Menderes	57	M	10
P45	Ropemaker/roper	Tire	63	F	7
P46	Quilter	Tire	65	M	13
P47	Quilter	Bayındır	63	M	10
P48	Quilter	Bayındır	63	M	14

Table 1. Distribution of Participants by Professions and Districts

2. The problems faced by traditional professions

With the development of industrialization and technology, the differentiation in production processes has changed the way professions exist in cities. While some professions disappeared, some others continued by adapting to the process. Although the reasons for professions' losing their value today have been conveyed based on the professional stories of the craftsmen, it is seen that the causes and results of the process are similar. As a result of the interviews with the craftsmen, the reasons for the oblivion of the professions based on manual labor are classified under 6 headings in the study, regardless of the order of importance.

- Inability to compete with mass production (Inability to cope with mass production in terms of both capacity and cost)
- Difficulties in accessing raw materials (Inability to access raw materials)
- Difficulties in training apprentices (Inability to maintain a craftsman-apprentice relationship, craftsmen see their apprentices as competitors and do not transfer the profession in all details)
- Impacts of aging, occupational diseases, and pandemics
- Social security and retirement
- Differentiation of daily life and needs (Development of technology; manufactured products are no longer needed; existence of new and various sales channels and craftsmen's inability to keep up with this process; craftsmen's inability to keep up with current developments)

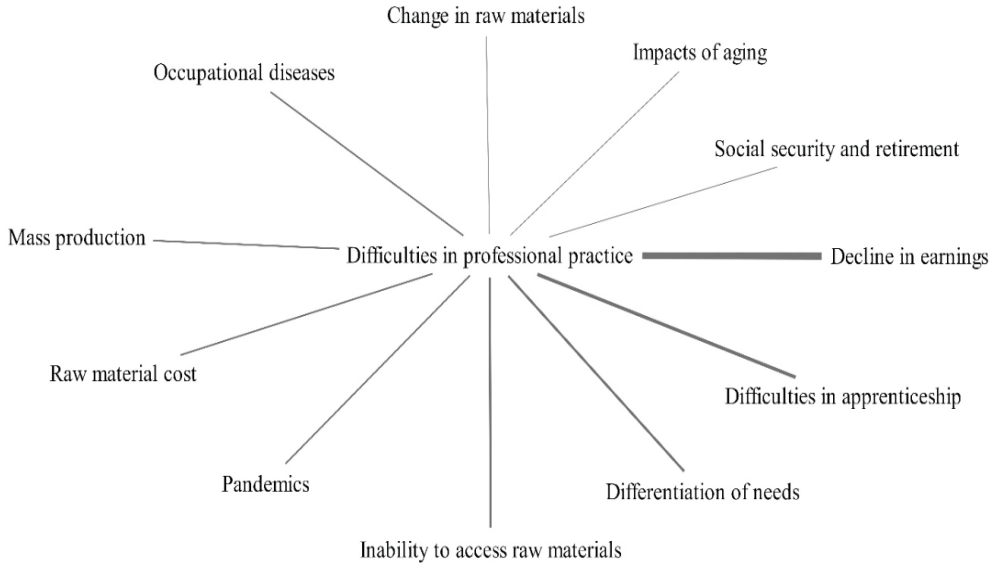


Figure 1. Views of Craftsmen on Difficulties Experienced in the Practice of Profession

When asked about the difficulties they face in their profession and the reasons for these, the answers given by each craftsman are quite diverse and not easy to classify. However, one of the most important challenges for many craftsmen is the decline in earnings (Figure 1).

2.1. Inability to compete with mass production

With the development of technology, the cycle of mass production and mass consumption has been one of the processes that negatively affect manual labor professions. The reason for this is that the production costs of mass production are lower and the production capacity is higher compared to manual labor professions. In other words, with the development of technology and accordingly the change in production patterns, labor-intensive production has left its place for technology-intensive production. This situation resulted in the inability of the craftsmen to compete with mass production and a decline in their earnings. However, it forced the manual labor professions and their craftsmen to change in many ways; it caused the disappearance of professions that could not adapt to change and the craftsmen to give up their professions. The answers given by the barrel maker and quilt maker to the questions asked in this context are as follows:

They set up factories abroad, so machines cut. But we make it by hand. We hit the circles with the hammer and they are cut one by one until the bottom is like this. It is sandpapered. Ours is manual labor. (P11, M, 58)

In my youth, it was popular until 1990. After the Gulf crisis, when our work started to turn into fabrication, this profession of ours gradually started to disappear. Our earnings have come to almost zero point. Now natural gas is used in the houses. (P47, M, 63)

We have been practicing this profession for about four generations. This profession was very common in the past. Now it's not very popular these days, but we're still keeping ourselves busy. In the past, dowry was prepared for the girls and boys before they get married. We used to sew beds, pillows, and quilts for them. Big stores set their hands on it. When people buy dowry, they go to a big store and buy their beds and quilts from there. There is also this credit card installment. We don't make installments when they come to us, but when they go to a big store, they buy these along with other goods. (P29, M, 63)

The fact that manual production is time-consuming, dependent on the production of a single person with simple tools, based on order, and without stock makes it difficult to compete with mass production. In addition, the consumer should pay special attention to the use of the handcrafted product. The necessity of tin plating the copper items at certain intervals or the fact that they can be repaired when they are disrupted can be given as an example. However, even if the craftsmen can repair their handcrafted products, they emphasize that this situation negatively affects their profession as they cannot keep up with the consumption rate of substitute products. The craftsman exemplifies the preference for plastics over tin as follows; 'When it is destroyed, they throw it away and buy a new one. But the tin is repaired. If it's pierced, you solder it. But no one comes. So we're passing the time.' (P44, M, 57)

Similarly, tinner said, ‘It is time-consuming work now, but it is not very continuous anymore. When nylon products, namely plastics and these shiny steel pots started to come out, our works were done.’ (P14, M, 78).

The craftsman who produces felt with the traditional method in Tire today expresses the fact that the production of substitute products reduces the demand for felt products, as follows; ‘felt making stalled badly in 1996. The biggest reason is nylon type, linoleum type materials. They stopped felt making in an instant and finished it.’ (P17, M, 64)

For the practice of professions, it is important that the products find buyers and that an income is generated in return. The income of the profession should be able to cover the livelihood of the person and their family, the materials and apprentice costs necessary for their work, and the expenses of the workshops. Compared to technology-intensive production today, the production process is slower and more laborious in manual labor activities. Based on the professional stories of the craftsmen, it can be said that their production and therefore their earnings have changed depending on the communal, economic, and social conditions of the period. Especially the preference for substitute and cheap products has caused the craftsmen’s handcrafted products not to find a market and consequently, the craftsmen to experience a decline in the earnings of the profession. It is seen that craftsmen sometimes take a break from their profession or deal with other professions besides their own profession. For example, craftsmen who have been working as blacksmith for three generations in Kemeraltı/Konak say that they have diversified their profession to overcome the economic difficulties they have experienced from time to time in their profession. They produced products such as tobacco needles, shoe molds, and knives. Then, while describing the production differentiation, they summarize the process as follows; ‘Of course, it undergoes changes over time, namely blacksmith. For example, we used to manufacture shoe-cutting knives, and tobacco needles; the tobacco business decreased, and shoe molds started to be manufactured by lasers or other things.’ Another craftsman (P17, M, 64), who practices the same profession in Ödemiş, expresses the profession and earning as follows: ‘It does not leave anyone starving, nor does it leave without a home. So there is not much profit, we manage that way.’ The craftsman produces sickle for Ödemiş and the surrounding provinces, which are used to clear millets or to prune bushes. He said that due to the low earnings of the profession, he went to wrap watermelons for the daily wage as extra work.

As can be seen, the stories of two craftsmen who have the same profession are different from each other. Some craftsmen make changes in their own profession to increase their earnings and some craftsmen make a living by doing extra work outside the profession. The reason for this is that in manual labor production, it is seen that the maintenance of the profession by the craftsman depends on the socio-economic structure as well as the craftsman themselves. In other words, the earnings from the profession are also related to the craftsman’s ability, knowledge, the way they practice the profession, and their ability to adapt to changes.

2.2. Difficulties in accessing raw materials

One of the situations that cause the development, decline, or change of professions is the procurement processes of the raw materials used in the production of the profession. The feature of the manual labor professions is that they can supply the raw materials they use in production from where they are located. One of the problems experienced by the craftsmen in the practice of their profession and frequently mentioned in the interviews is the difficulties they experience in accessing the raw material. The problems experienced in the supply of raw materials include:

- Some raw materials (such as chaste berry, and willow) are not/cannot be grown anymore depending on the soil and the environment,
- Cessation or reduction of raw material production due to policy and legislative changes affecting the production of some agricultural products (such as hemp and tobacco),
- Difficulty in accessing finished and semi-products used in the profession,
- Importing some raw materials such as silk yarn, which cannot be supplied locally.

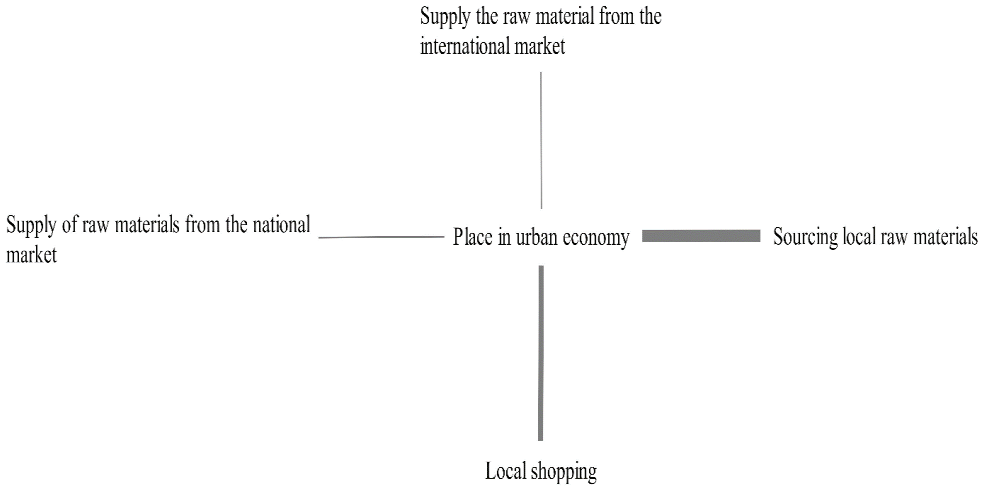


Figure 2. Change in Raw Material Supply of Professions

In traditional professions; soil, animal, and plant products are included in the production processes. While raw materials used in the performance of activities that require manual labor were initially supplied at the local level depending on the geography of the city, as time passed, it was tried to be obtained from national and international markets in cases where local resources were insufficient (Figure 2).

Some professions that obtain their raw materials from nature have difficulties accessing their raw materials. In professions such as pottery, broom tying, basketry, felt making and wicker weaving, access to raw materials is more difficult than in the past, but they can be obtained from local sources. The source of raw materials for these professions is found in nature depending on environmental and climatic conditions. For example, reeds grow along streams and lakes. Wicker is a dairy product made from reeds

grown in lakes and used instead of carpets in homes and plains in the past. The fact that the growth of reeds depends on climate and environmental conditions makes it difficult to obtain the same yield and quality at all times. The craftsman exemplifies this situation as follows:

The reeds are fewer now. It is very difficult to find reeds as the waters recede. And quality reed is hard to find. As soon as the water recedes, the reeds get worms, become disjointed, and cannot be weaved. Now we get quality, beautiful reeds from Bafa Lake, Aydın. (P12, F, 83)

The craftsman tries to overcome this difficulty in accessing raw materials, sometimes by using ready-made hemp ropes instead of reeds or by purchasing reeds from the surrounding province. Similarly, the craftsman who produces baskets by processing chasteberry and willow conveys the process of accessing raw materials locally as follows:

The harvesting season of chaste berries starts these days, but willow starts around March and is collected until this time (September). It is cut from wetlands for another twenty days. It is not peeled when there is no wetland. It starts in March. It lasts until this time but after April this does not peel off. Then we move on to Black Willow. (P38, M, 67)

Since chasteberry, willow or reeds are natural products, they can be accessed periodically. The amount of natural products collected by the craftsmen is therefore not always the same.

The craftsmen continue their production by supplying the raw materials that they cannot obtain from local sources from national and international markets. For example, the silk yarn used in silk weaving is supplied from China and the yarn used for 'Beledi' weaving is supplied from Italy and England. The hammersmith states that they obtain raw materials from a wide variety of places: 'Some of them come from abroad, from Istanbul. Other materials are from Izmir'. Craftsmen sometimes use cheaper and lower - quality raw materials to reduce production costs.

2.3. Difficulties in training apprentices

Manual labor professions include activities that allow craftsman to transfer their knowledge, skills, and experience to their apprentice. It is important for the development and continuity of the professions to transfer the knowledge created by the practice of professions to the next generation. The craftsman's teaching their apprentice the intricacies of the profession ensures both cultural transfer and keeping the urban memory alive.

When the professional stories of the craftsmen are examined, the transfer of the professions is either in the form of continuing the profession from the family or learning by working with another craftsman. Especially at a young age, it is possible to learn the intricacies of the profession with the family or to be directed by the family to a profession that is popular according to the conditions of the day. Today, however, it has become very difficult

to learn and maintain a manual labor profession at a young age. Due to the developments in production technologies and changes in consumer habits, the number of those who practice these professions is gradually decreasing and some professions are even disappearing completely.

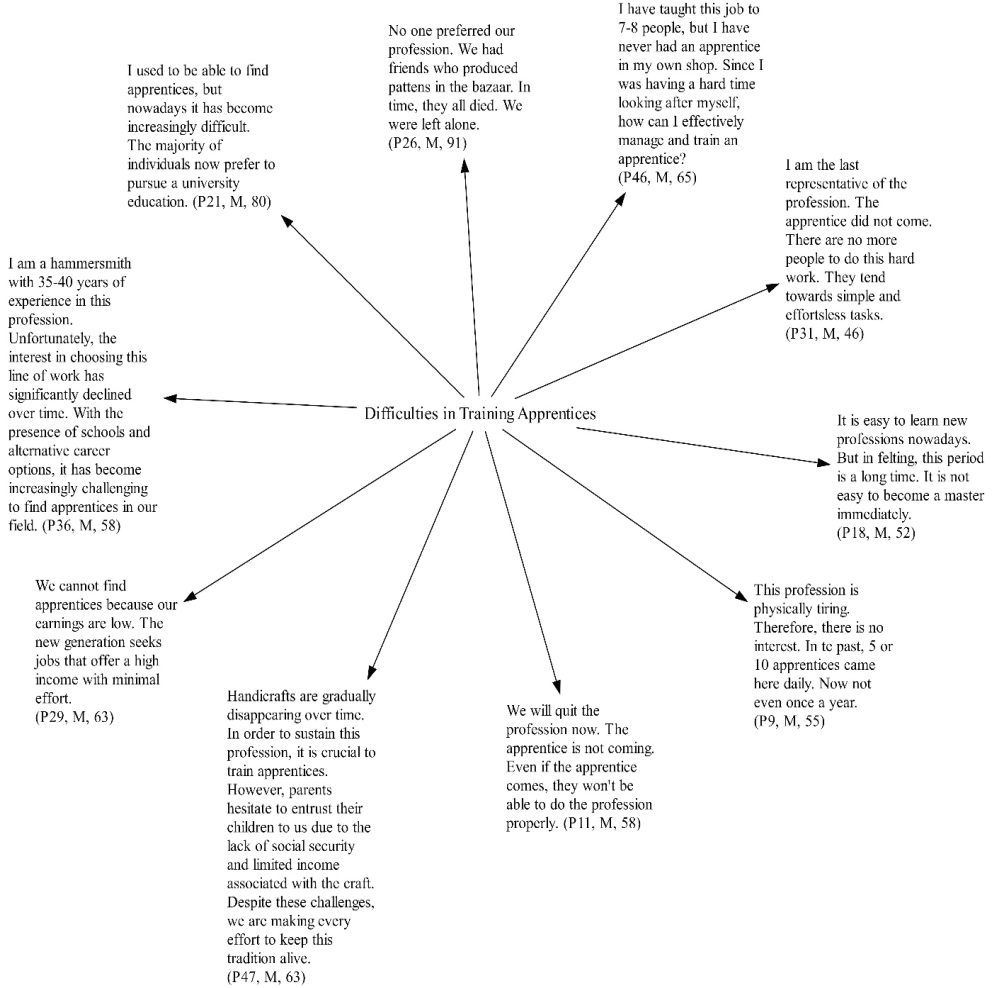


Figure 3. Views of Masters on Training Apprentices

Another problem encountered in the transfer of manual labor professions to future generations is the inability to train apprentices or the lack of a sufficient number of apprentices. Within the framework of the interviews with the craftsmen, the reasons for the difficulties in raising apprentices are grouped as follows (Figure 3):

- The education system delays a person's employment as an apprentice,
- Professions are not preferred by people due to the heavy or difficult working conditions

and the time-consuming process of learning the profession,

- Even if there is an apprentice, the craftsmen cannot afford it economically,
- The craftsmen see their apprentices as competitors and do not transfer the profession.

The craftsmen express that one of the main problems encountered in raising apprentices is that the people who come to them as apprentices are generally older. For example, the chair manufacturer stated that it was difficult for a person who started to work as an apprentice at the age of 17-18 to learn the details of the profession and the production process. One of the reasons is that traditional professions are not sufficiently integrated with the education system. As seen in the examples of saddle makers, blacksmith, and felt makers, today people avoid learning more demanding professions and allocating time to these professions. It is seen that the craftsmen have difficulty in paying the insurance of both their own and their apprentices due to the lack of earnings. This situation emerges as an important obstacle for craftsmen to train apprentices. While talking about their apprenticeship, the craftsmen (chair maker, hooded boot craftsman) stated that their craftsmen saw themselves as competitors and they learned the intricacies of the profession through their own efforts.

2.4. Impacts of aging, occupational diseases and pandemics

The majority of the artisans interviewed are above middle age and their ages range from 24 to 92. (Table 1). In manual labor professions, the fact that production is mostly based on simple hand tools and physical strength makes it difficult for elderly craftsmen to continue their profession. Despite this difficulty, it is observed that patten maker, farrier, and tanners insist on continuing the profession. Especially in the practice of some professions, as the time spent in the profession increases, the diseases that occur with increasing age negatively affect the health of the craftsmen. Quilter exemplifies this situation as follows:

Now that we sit like this, our back hurts a lot. Over time, our kneecaps begin to ache. If you don't do sports, it causes arthritis. You fold down as you do the edge of the quilt. As we age, these kneecaps no longer function and there is a loss of fluid. So they can malfunction. (P47, M, 63)

Similarly, the carpet weaver explains the negative impact of practicing the carpet weaving profession on their health as follows: '... We have low back pain, posture disorders because we sit all the time. We sit cross-legged. So that our feet do not get cold in winter. There will be some crookedness in the legs.' (P7, F, 57) Health problems arising from the practice of the profession are one of the situations that make it difficult for craftsmen to continue their profession.

Since the craftsmen are both advanced in age and do not have apprentices, the fact that they work alone affects them negatively. The craftsman working as a barrel maker in the center of the city summarizes their situation as follows:

The challenge is working alone. Not being able to produce large quantities of goods. Our place is not available. There are stairs. We can't get the barrels up. You hit with

these hammers, their engines are always in your hand and heavy. So you always work physically and it ends somewhere. We were swinging huge hammers when we were 25. Now the age is 50, it seems difficult. The body cannot tolerate it anymore. But we are trying to carry on our father's profession. (P11, M, 58)

According to the craftsmen, the working hours vary depending on the completion of the work in hand. Therefore, sometimes long working hours cause the craftsmen to wear out physically over time and this situation becomes more difficult as the age increases. Due to increasing age, they cannot reach their previous production capacities and cannot produce work.

The farrier has to go to the village for work or the basket maker has to collect the raw material themselves. Even if they want to continue their profession, their advanced age affects them negatively. As a result, they seem to reduce their production or stop working altogether.

Since the interviews were carried out under pandemic conditions, the craftsmen often referred to this process as the reason for making the practice of their profession challenging. The lockdowns during the pandemic process and the issuance of production permits only in certain sectors have put the manual labor professions and their craftsmen, who are currently experiencing low income, into an even more difficult situation economically. The craftsmen, who could not open their shops due to the pandemic and most of whom were aged 65 and over, had difficulties in maintaining their profession. This situation accelerated the decision of some craftsmen to leave their profession. The 91-year-old patten maker expresses their distress during the pandemic as follows:

There was a lockdown during Covid-19 for those over 65 years old. We couldn't open the shop for weeks and months, we were closed. Even if it was, who would come and buy it? People were dealing with the disease. They could only think of earning a living. I haven't sold a pair of these pattens for maybe a month. There is no shopping, the Coronavirus disease emerged and we closed the shop for good. We come to the shop, and our friends come. We sit with three or five people. That's enough for us. (P26, M, 91) There are days when we don't make one sale. In March and April, there was no sale. (P30, M, 57).

2.5. Social security and retirement

In the interviews, the relations of the craftsmen with the retirement system are seen as the retirement of the craftsman from their own profession, by working as an insured employee in another job while practicing their own profession or their being unable to retire because they could not complete the number of premium days. The 'Beledi' weaving craftsman (P3, M, 88) in Tire stated that he made a living by weaving during the day and working as a watchman in the municipality at night and that he was able to retire in this way.

The shoemaker in Buca, the quilt maker in Menemen, the farrier in Bergama, and the felt maker in Tire stated that they retired from Bag-Kur (Pension Fund for the Self-Employed) by practicing only their own professions and continued their profession in this way. However, craftsmen see their pensions as an additional income due to the low income of the profession.

The absence of social security for a craftsman is an important condition that affects their professional life and living conditions when they are too old to work. The craftsmen of professions such as evil eye bead, blacksmithing, broom making, quilt making, and basket making a point out that there is no social security opportunity for their profession and they do not have a dream of retirement.

2.6. Daily life and its impact on the professions

Technological innovations and changes, the differentiation of needs and demands, have transformed professions as well as reduced the need for professions and caused them to disappear. For example, the transportation of trade goods to Izmir by caravans of camels and horses in the 17th and 18th centuries explains the need for farriery, saddle-making, and harness-making professions at that time. However, with the development of technology, the dependence on agriculture and livestock activities, and transportation on animal power has disappeared. In addition, the decrease in the use of horses and donkeys and in their numbers from past to present has reduced the need for farriers, saddle makers, and harness makers, negatively affecting the sustainability of these professions. The saddle maker interviewed in the study tries to maintain their profession in Tire, the harness makers in Bergama and Menderes and the farrier in Bergama and Selçuk. For example, it is seen that harness makers and tinsmiths in Menderes use the same shop as there is no demand and they cannot afford the expenses. The saddle maker in Tire emphasized that they would close the shop soon as there was no business. Farrier and saddle maker explain the decrease in the need for their profession today as follows:

The farriers make and process horseshoes, they pierce the hole of the shoe and make the steel themselves. Previously, the roads were earth, the horse was not disturbed whether it had horseshoe or not, but now there is asphalt. As the horse walks on the asphalt, it wears out that nail like a nail file. There are no longer animals. Now they use things like small engines, tractors. (P25, M, 75)

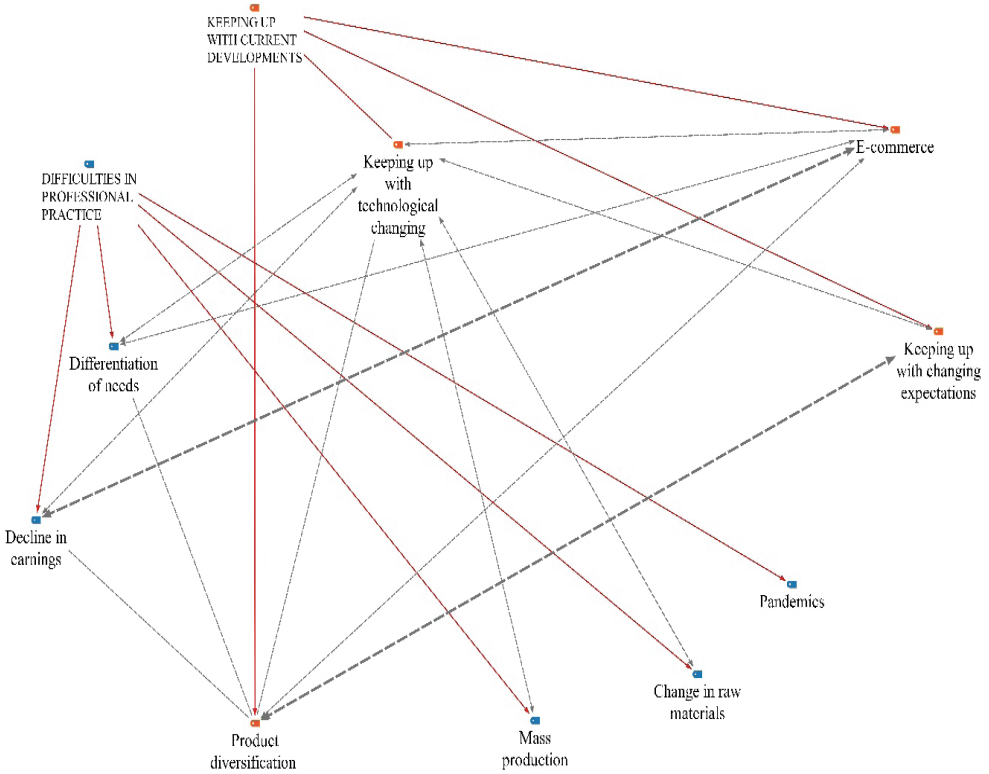


Figure 4. Daily Life and Demand Differentiation

The change in technology and the differentiation of consumers' demands are processes that affect the practice of professions. Craftsmen often mentioned this situation while talking about the development and change in their profession. They associated the impact of both processes on their profession with their earnings (Figure 4). Decreased earnings have both a cause and an effect on the continuity and sustainability of a profession. The decline in the earnings of a profession has not only made it difficult for the profession to continue but also has led to the search for different solutions in order for the profession to survive. When they had difficulties in keeping up with changing expectations and technology, they went to product diversification as a way out. It is seen that there are few craftsmen open to innovation among the interviewees. In particular, the craftsmen who cannot adapt to this process and cannot produce in accordance with the expectations often express that their earnings have declined considerably compared to the past.

Today, besides the traditional sales method, the sale of manufactured products is carried out through up-to-date sales channels such as e-commerce (social media, website, mobile applications). Most of the interviewed craftsmen prefer the face-to-face sales method, adhering to their habits from the past. It is seen that a limited number of craftsmen promote and sell their products using the Internet. Based on the professional stories of the craftsmen, it is seen that they define themselves only as craftsmen and are not satisfied with

doing the marketing and selling part of the business. For example, the sandal maker (P30, M, 57) says that ‘the artist will both make and sell. This will not work. We know how to make it, but we don’t know how to sell it. It is one thing to make and another to sell.’, states that they have difficulty in continuing the profession because they avoid applying current sales techniques. The craftsman is not open to innovations and is reluctant and insecure to ask for help from others.

The fact that the craftsmen transform the products they produce to meet daily needs into design products shaped within the framework of today’s tastes and demands makes it possible to continue the profession.

Two brothers, who have been working as blacksmiths in Konak for three generations, started to sell their products online when they experienced a decrease in earnings between 2010 and 2015. They tell the story of the change they have experienced in their profession with special orders they receive using e-commerce channels, as follows:

Normally, we went back to forging and had some difficulties for a while, frankly. Then, with the internet business, we started to make special orders. Namely, camping axes, knives, and special orders. For example, the man wants something special in Kastamonu but can’t find anyone to get it done. They started reaching out to us. From Ankara to Hakkari, can you do something like this? We make it, put it online, and someone else sees it. They want the same or something similar. It has been a lifesaver for us, so the development of this technology has helped us a lot. (P34, M, 55)

The craftsmen, who mostly produced tobacco materials and shoe molds at the beginning, have started to produce camping equipment such as knives and axes today. Blacksmith expressed the emergence of the artistic side of their profession with the production of specially designed knives:

Now, most of the work we do is made by the few artisans in Europe, it’s not like a craft anymore. What is art craft, it is done by anyone? What is art, what a painter does is art, but there are a thousand painters. There are not five blacksmiths who can do this. So ours is now art. Few can do our thing. (P34, M, 55; P35, M, M)

Conclusion

The study is carried out with the aim of creating a database that will contribute to the institutions that provide services in this field, both at the local and central level, to record the stories of the professions on the verge of being forgotten and their craftsmen, which have an urban value in Izmir and to ensure the awareness of these professions in the future with the change and transformation they have undergone in the historical process. In this context, study was started to identify the professions on the verge of being forgotten in Izmir and their craftsmen and to reveal their professional stories; the craftsmen, who were aimed to be interviewed in terms of quality and number, were reached to a great extent with the guidance of central and district professional chambers and of craftsmen and citizens sometimes. Coinciding with the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected the whole world, caused the interviews to take longer than planned and some craftsmen representing the professions on the verge of being forgotten could not be reached. The interviews were started under the pandemic conditions with the end of the lockdowns. During the interviews, a significant economic fatigue was observed in the craftsmen. As a natural consequence of this, some of them did not take kindly to the requests for meetings with scientific or social benefits other than the activities that generate economic gain, as in this study and they expressed this from time to time.

As a result of the interviews, the problems experienced by the craftsmen and the reasons why the professions are on the verge of being forgotten concentrate on some titles, although they stand out at different levels from profession to profession. In this context, the emphasis is that the manual labor professions cannot compete with mass production in terms of both capacity and cost. On the other hand, due to the effects of development and change in technology, some handcrafted products are no longer produced because there is no demand. The fact that handcrafted products have to compete with mass production and cheap substitute goods has been frequently mentioned as another problem that tires the craftsmen. Mass production is a situation that affects the rate of consumption, the abundance of alternatives offered, the price and the sale of manual labor products. The change in production and consumption patterns has also changed the consumer profile. In today's conditions, there is a rapid circulation related to the increase in consumption, the use of substitute goods, their rapid malfunction and replacement. The lifespan of handcrafted products varies depending on the use of consumers. Products such as copper and tin are not sold as much as substitute products, as they are long-lasting products provided that they are maintained and repaired at regular intervals. The fact that substitute products cannot keep up with the consumption rate is stated as another problem that negatively affects the professions. It is observed that the craftsmen resent when their handcrafted products are not preferred to substitute goods. This situation also shows that there is a market problem in handcrafted products. Demand decreasing for these reasons naturally led to a decline in earnings. Accordingly, the most vital problem for the craftsmen and the problem they have emphasized at the beginning is the loss of earnings compared to the past. The decline in earnings has been repeatedly stated as a factor that makes it difficult to practice the

professions and negatively affects the motivation to continue. Therefore, most of the craftsmen complained that they could not support their house with what they earned from their profession and that they could not even afford the expenses of their shops. In short, the main problem that caused them to give up their profession was the lack of demand and the decline in their earnings. Another impression gained within the framework of the interviews is that many of the craftsmen insist on continuing their profession even if they have various problems such as training apprentices or lack of social security.

In this context, traditional professions are an important component that forms the memory of a city. It is not only the craftsmen' responsibility to preserve and keep the memory of the city alive, but also the responsibility of other components of the city such as citizens, local governments, non-governmental organizations, central government and provincial units. This sense of responsibility will play an important role in the sustainability of traditional professions.

Notes

- 1 The data of the research were collected within the scope of the scientific research project titled "Professional Memory of Izmir: Professions Sunk into Oblivion" (2019.KB.SOS.005) supported by Dokuz Eylul University.
- 2 Ethics Committee Approval: Dokuz Eylul University 14.07.2020 - 87347630/42104268-2997

Research and publication ethics statement: This is a research article, containing original data, and it that has not been previously published or submitted to any other outlet for publication. The authors followed ethical principles and rules during the research process. In the study, informed consent was obtained from the volunteer participants and the privacy of the participants protected.

Contribution rates of authors to the article: Both authors contributed equally to this article.

Ethics committee approval: Ethics committee approval is attached to the end of the article.

Financial support: This research was supported by Dokuz Eylul University within the scope of "Professional Memory of Izmir: Professions Sunk into Oblivion" (2019.KB.SOS.005) project.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Araştırma ve yayın etiği beyanı: Bu bir araştırma makalesi olup daha önce başka bir yerde yayınlanmamış veya yayınlanmak üzere başka bir dergiye değerlendirmek üzere gönderilmemiştir. Yazarlar araştırma sürecinde etik ilk eve kurallara uymuşlardır. Çalışmada gönüllü katılımcılardan bilgilendirilmiş onam alınmış ve katılımcıların mahremiyeti korunmuştur.

Yazarların makaleye katkı oranları: Bu makaleye her iki yazar da eşit oranda katkı sağlamıştır.

Etik komite onayı: Etik kurul izni makalenin sonuna eklenmiştir.

Finansal destek: Bu araştırma "İzmir'in Meslek Hafızası: Unutulmaya Yüz Tutmuş Meslekler" (2019. KB.SOS.005) projesi kapsamında Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi tarafından desteklenmiştir.

Çıkar çatışması: Çalışmada çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

References

- Adewumi, A. A. (2022). Protecting intangible cultural heritage in the era of rapid technological advancement. *International Review of Law, Computers & Technology*, 36(1), 3-16. doi: 10.1080/136008692021.1997084
- Alpman, N. (2009). *Ustadan çırağa, dededen toruna Anadolu'nun elleri*. Türkiye Halk Bankası.
- Altıntaş, K. M. (2016). An analysis of disappearing traditional Turkish Craftsman's commercial problems. *Bilgi*, 77, 157-182. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/bilgi/issue/48704/619703>
- AREGEM. (2020). Living human treasures list. Retrieved from <https://aregem.ktb.gov.tr/TR-12929/yasayan-insan-hazinelere-ulusal-envanteri.html>
- Arizpe, L. and C. Amescua (2013). *Anthropological perspectives on intangible cultural heritage*. Springer.
- Balcı, F. (2020). Forgotten professions, masters, techniques and professional narratives: Kayseri-Develi example. *Motif Academy Journal of Folklore*, 13(30), 701-716.
- Ciptandi, F. (2020). The Ability to Adapt jBatik Software Technology for Traditional Batik Craftsmen. *6th International Conference on Interactive Digital Media (ICIDM)*. doi:10.1109/ICIDM51048.2020.9339671
- Deniz, T. and Ö. Celik. (2020). Intended cultural heritage carriers: A study on Safranbolu crafts masters. *Eastern Geographical Review*, 25(43), 123-138. doi:10.17295/ataunided.699175
- Diyarbakırlıoğlu, M. A. (2010). *Kaybolan Meslekler ve Son Ustalar*. İstanbul Ticaret Odası.
- Eser, F. and B. C. Bal. (2017). A research on mother of pearl inlay decoration and the situation of mother of pearl inlay workshops in Gaziantep region. *Journal of Advanced Technology Sciences*, 572-579. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/380388>
- Güçlü, F. 2015. *Tarihten dünümüze unutulmuş meslekler*. SABEV.
- Kurin, R. (2007). Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage: Key factors in implementing the 2003 convention. *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*, 02, 10-20. <https://www.ijih.org/retrieve/volumeDt/16>
- Lenzerini, F. (2011). Intangible cultural heritage: The living culture of peoples. *The European Journal of International Law*, 22(1), 101-120. doi:10.1093/ejil/chr006
- Ozburun, S. (2006). Kaybolan meslekler. Retrieved from www.kuveytturk.com.tr/kaybolanmeslekler: <https://www.kuveytturk.com.tr/kaybolanmeslekler>
- Ozdemir, M. (2019). Traditional professionals and the story of a craftsman: Blacksmithing in Giresun. *The Black Sea Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(21), 493-510.
- Patent, T. (2022). Türkiye'nin coğrafi işaretleri. Retrieved from <https://ci.turkpatent.gov.tr/cografi-isaretler/liste?il=35>
- Pei-Chi, S. and Shang-Chia. (2017). A Study on the traditional craftsmen in Taiwan a survey of vocational and technical competence. *Proceedings of the 2017 IEEE International Conference on Information, Communication and Engineering*. doi:10.1109/ICICE.2017.8479010
- Pekersen, Y. and İ. Calık. (2017). The evolution of felt tradition in terms of intangible cultural heritage. *Balıkesir University of Social Sciences Institute*, 20(37), 339-355. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/852332>
- Perera, K., and D. Chandra. (2018). Documenting the intangible cultural heritage for sustainable economic. https://cidoc.mini.icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/12/H_2_Perera_Chandra_paper.pdf

- Petrillo, P. L. (2019). *The legal protection of the intangible cultural heritage*. Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-72983-1.
- Sun, Y., & Liu, X. (2022). How design technology improves the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage products: A practical study on bamboo basketry craft. *Sustainability*, 14, 2-20. doi:10.3390/su141912058
- Vakfı, K. A. (2020). Benim sanat hikayem. Retrived from <https://kultur.org.tr/portfolio/benimsanathikayem/>



Bu eser Creative Commons Atıf 4.0 Uluslararası Lisansı ile lisanslanmıştır.

(This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License).