

## **Do field-specific labour market conditions and regional per capita income affect the likelihood of field of study mismatch? Evidence from labour force surveys in Turkey.**

**Ahmet Alper EGE**

Department of Science and Technology Policy Studies, Middle East Technical University, Turkey  
ahmetalperege@yahoo.com

**Erkan Erdil**

Middle East Technical University, Turkey  
erdil@metu.edu.tr

### **Abstract:**

Based on concerns stemming from sharp expansion in higher education and by using micro dataset from labour force surveys, this paper conducts two analyses on field of study mismatch for Turkey. First, it examines incidence of mismatch on the basis of FOET-99 classification for two specific target groups over time. Second, it estimates determinants of mismatch by focusing on 11 hypotheses, four of which are unique to some extent. More specifically, it investigates whether the mismatch can be explained by differences in labour market conditions at field of study level (not at macro level), regional per-capita income, education background and demographic and job-specific characteristics. Analysis of incidence reveals that Turkey has high incidence of mismatch at an increasing trend between 2012 and 2016. Regression results indicate that mismatch is highly responsive to field-specific labour market conditions and education background which might be a signal of quantitative imbalance between the demand for and supply of graduates. The novel results suggest that graduates from highly saturated fields of study, which have low absorption capacity with low labour force participation rate at the time of entry to labour market, are more likely to be mismatched. Further, graduates who search for jobs in a region (at NUTS-1 level) which has low level of per-capita income will most probably work in mismatched jobs. The new evidence and insight from this study is expected to further contribute to balancing the supply of graduates and improving the effectiveness of labour market mechanism.

**Keywords:** field of study mismatch, horizontal mismatch, education mismatch, labour market, labour supply, higher education, Turkey

**JEL Codes:** J2, J1, J6