

Trends in Konkur Participation in Iran

Applied Microeconomics 2025

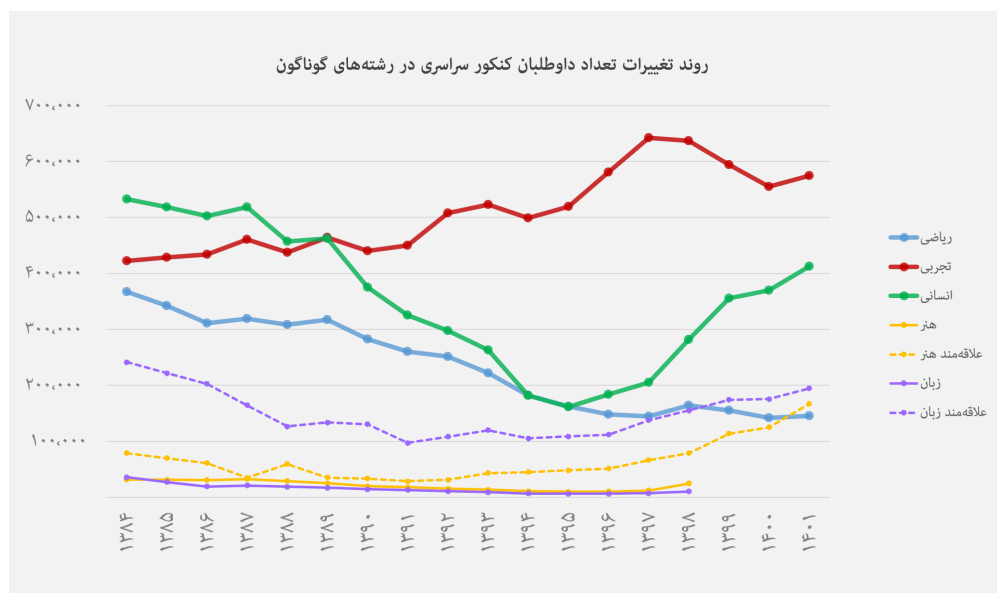
Final Project

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Due on: 21/04/1404, 09:59 AM

1 Objective

Using the provided country-level visualizations and any supplementary data you assemble, investigate how participation in the national university entrance exam (Konkur) has evolved across the main fields—Riazi, Tajrobi, Ensani and the other ones. Your goal is to uncover how economic returns to education, labor-market conditions, policy shifts, and social forces shape students' field choices and exam performance. Your analysis should aim to get as close as possible to establishing causal relationships.



2 Core Research Tasks

2.1 Linking Participation Trends to Key Determinants

Link *Konkur* participation to *one or more* of the following factors—or others you deem relevant. Move beyond correlation toward credible causal links wherever possible.

- **Policy interventions & exogenous shocks.** Quantify how district- to country-level reforms (e.g. quota changes, curriculum revisions) and shocks (e.g. sanctions, COVID-19, natural disasters) affected participation rates and average scores over time.
- **Earnings premiums.** Estimate field-specific returns to education and relate them to both participation decisions and study effort.
- **Labor-market conditions.** Compare unemployment rates, skill demand, and sectoral employment structures across districts; assess their influence on field choice.
- **National vs. local policies.** Disentangle the impact of nationwide reforms from local initiatives using suitable econometric methods.
- **Societal factors.** Investigate cultural norms, parental education, and gender roles as drivers of participation and field selection.

2.2 Extra Credit (optional)

Develop a structured econometric model linking *Konkur* participation to expected earnings, unemployment risk, policy parameters, and social norms. Define all variables, derive reduced-form equations, and discuss identification challenges such as reverse causality (e.g. participation affecting observed earnings premiums).

3 Deliverables & Deadlines

Item	Description	Suggested Length / Format
Research report	Comprehensive write-up covering data, methodology, results, robustness, and policy implications.	≤ 15 pages (excluding appendices)
Presentation	Slide deck summarizing key questions, methods, findings, and take-aways with clear self-contained visuals.	$\sim 12\text{--}15$ slides
Code & replication package	Well-commented scripts (R or Stata) reproducing all figures and tables, plus a README with instructions.	Structured project folder

Submission deadline: 21/04/1404

4 Evaluation Criteria

- **Econometric rigor (40%)** – Appropriate model choice, correct inference, credible identification.
- **Substantive insight (25%)** – Strength of links between empirical results, economic theory, and policy relevance.

- **Data handling & visualization (15%)** – Clean, reproducible code; informative and well-designed graphics.
- **Writing & presentation quality (15%)** – Clarity, logical structure, and professional formatting.
- **Extra credit (up to 10%)** – Quality and originality of the optional modelling component.

5 Important Notes

Pay close attention to these in this project:

- **Endogeneity:** Identify potential endogenous variables and explain how you will address bias (e.g. fixed effects, IV, DiD).
- **Temporal dynamics:** How do estimated effects evolve across cohorts or calendar years? Use interaction terms or sub-period analysis.
- **Heterogeneity:** Explore treatment-effect variation by gender, urban/rural status, parental education, SES, regional labor markets, etc.
- **Mechanisms:** Through which channels (expected earnings, social norms, school quality, information frictions) do effects operate?
- **Policy implications:** Translate findings into actionable recommendations (e.g. targeted scholarships, career-guidance reforms, regional investment).

Questions? Contact the TA.