

## Women Entrepreneurship in Tourism: The Case of Turkey

\* Gülsün YILDIRIM <sup>a</sup> , Abdullah TARINÇ <sup>b</sup> , Ceyhun C. KILINÇ <sup>c</sup> 

<sup>a</sup> Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University, Ardeşen Faculty of Tourism, Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, Rize/Turkey

<sup>b</sup> Akdeniz University, Manavgat Tourism Faculty, Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, Antalya/Turkey

<sup>c</sup> Akdeniz University, Manavgat Tourism Faculty, Department of Tourism Management, Antalya/Turkey

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### Abstract

As a developing country, women's participation in business life is low in Turkey. In this context, action plans and projects have been carried out to empower women. Starting from the fact that one of the sectors with the highest female entrepreneurship is the service sector, the main aim of this study is to reveal the status of women's entrepreneurship in tourism sector of Turkey. In this context, a literature review was conducted on the subject. There is a focus on in rural tourism within the tourism sector with regard to women entrepreneurship. Although there are women's tourism initiatives in Turkey, which can be accepted as good examples, women have been going through some difficulties in the process of starting entrepreneurship in the field of tourism and after the initiative has been taken place.

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\* Corresponding Author

E-mail: gulsun.yildirim@erdogan.edu.tr (G. Yildirim)

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most general definitions of entrepreneurship is ‘the process of establishing a profit-making business, expanding it, creating an unrealized product and service’ (Bird, 1989). The entrepreneur is the person who renews and regulates the production system by using an invention or a technique that has never been used (Schumpeter, 1950, p. 132).

The first study in the field of women entrepreneurship is ‘Woman’s Role in Economic Development’ written by Boserup in 1970. With this study, Boserup’s intentions was to point out the contributions of woman entrepreneurs on the improvements of agriculture and industry. In 1976, Elenor Brantley Schwartz discussed the motivations, characteristics, and attitudes of women entrepreneurs in an article entitled ‘Entrepreneurship, A New Female Frontier’. Some studies on women's entrepreneurship in the literature have focused on the obstacles in women's entrepreneurship and the difficulties women face in this process (Dhameja, 2002; Gorji & Rahimian, 2011, p. 33; Jennings & Brush, 2013; Okpara et al., 2011; Schindehutte et al., 2003, p. 94; Winn, 2005; Yordanova, 2011, p. 289; Zhang et al., 2009, p. 94). The obstacles and difficulties women face in the workplace as employees are among the most important factors that push women into entrepreneurship (Lerner, Brush & Hisrich, 1997). There are positive and negative aspects of being a female entrepreneur. Various studies carried out about this point (Dhameja, 2002; Huarng, Mas-Tur & Yu, 2012; Warnecke, 2013; Winn, 2005). Some studies have focused on the differences between male and female entrepreneurs (finding capital, personal characteristics, etc.) (Warnecke, 2013). Some studies in the literature focus on individual entrepreneurship and economic factors that lead to entrepreneurship (Akhmetshin et al., 2018; Blancero et al., 2014).

Characteristics and motivations of women entrepreneurs vary. Some of them are the desire to start their own business, providing additional income to the household, not being able to find work, or being independent (Belwal, Belwal & Saidi, 2014). Women decide to become entrepreneurs because there is no other option or job opportunities are not satisfactory (Chaganti, 1986). Flexibility of working hours, the possibility of establishing a balance between family and work life or the desire to gain power are the other factors that lead women to entrepreneurship (Lerner, Brush & Hisrich, 1997). In addition, women may decide to be entrepreneurs by chance, enforcement or being invited to entrepreneurship. Factors leading women to entrepreneurship are also classified as intrinsic motivations, compulsory, and attractive factors (Marlow & Carter, 2004).

According to the 2018/2019 Report of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2018), which analyzes the entrepreneurial data of 49 countries, entrepreneurship rates are low in Europe and North America. According to this Monitor, entrepreneurship tendencies are low in high income economies. The reasons behind this are different job opportunities and high competition. According to the same report, among the 49 countries, the countries with the highest rate of entrepreneurship were Angola (41%), Guatemala (28%), and Chile (25%), respectively. In low-income economies, one of the reasons that pushes 35% of entrepreneurs to entrepreneurship is the lack of a better option for working. According to this report, 6 out of 49 countries have equal proportions of men and women in total entrepreneurship activities. These six countries are Indonesia, Thailand, Panama, Qatar, Madagascar, and Angola

Entrepreneurship activities are encountered in different sectors in different countries. The rate of manufacturing / logistics entrepreneurs in East and South Asia and Korea is %23. Middle East, Africa and Madagascar display the greatest proportion of agriculture/extractive/construction early-stage entrepreneurs (25%), while Angola has the

highest level of wholesale/retail activity (74%). Service and technology businesses show high levels in Europe, with Austria exhibiting the highest percentage of health/education/government/social and consumer services early-stage entrepreneurs (33%). Switzerland has the highest proportion of early-stage entrepreneurs in finance/real estate/business services (30%). Ireland shows the largest percentage of entrepreneurs in ICT (13%) (GEM, 2018).

According to the World Bank's Entrepreneurship Survey in Turkey, the rate of women on company ownership is just 25.4% (World Bank Data, 2019). According to the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report (2017), Turkey ranks 131 among 144 countries in terms of gender equality. Turkey ranks 128 in the economic field, 94 in literacy rates, 59 in the health field and 118 in the field of gender equality in the political arena.

Starting from the fact that one of the sectors with the highest female entrepreneurship is the service sector (World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report, 2017), the main aim of this study is to reveal the status of women's entrepreneurship in tourism sector of Turkey. Secondary data (reports, books, articles etc.) on female entrepreneurship in the tourism sector of Turkey will be gathered within this context and literature review regarding women's entrepreneurship in tourism sector of Turkey will be made. Current situation of women tourism entrepreneurship in Turkey will be analyzed and some suggestions for developing the women entrepreneurship will be given.

### **Women Entrepreneurs in Turkey**

Today's changes require all countries and societies to turn their approach to the concept of entrepreneurship with a gendered look, which is one of the environmental factors, from an individual-axis perspective, that's why both changing social structure and changing technology make it mandatory for women to be in entrepreneurship as an individual.

For centuries, women have been working hard at every stage of production, but have not received their fair share of development, even forming one of the most affected segments in the world. Women should get a fair share of socio-economic development despite being at every stage of life, production, and sharing, but it is a great contradiction that it creates the most affected segment (Kocacık & Gökkaya, 2005, p. 196).

Although there is a significant increase in the number of female entrepreneurs worldwide, it is seen that the proportion of female entrepreneurs is lower than the male entrepreneur rate when looking at gender differences. Zhang et al. (2009, p. 94) in his study in various countries, gender is the main factor as one of the reasons why the number of female entrepreneurs is lower than male entrepreneurs.

As for Schindehutte et al. (2003, p. 94), 2533% of the businesses in the registered economy are women. When looking at the studies on female entrepreneurs, determining the socio-demographic characteristics of women, problems they face while setting up and maintaining business and organizational tendencies are heavily mentioned (Gorji & Rahimian, 2011, p. 33; Schindehutte et al., 2003: 94; Soysal, 2010: 74; Yordanova, 2011: 289; Zhang et al., 2009, p. 94).

Eser and Yıldız (2015, p. 92) and Warnecke (2013) in their studies state that the subjects examined in the field of entrepreneurship today are divided into three areas. The information about these three fields is as follows.

- Social entrepreneurship that examines topics such as environment, education, economy, health,

- Entrepreneurship during the student period with the increase of entrepreneurs at a young age,
- Female entrepreneurs are mentioned as female entrepreneurs due to the increase in numbers.

Uluköy and Demireli (2014, p. 49) in their study on the genetic basis of entrepreneurship, the effects of gender and personality and Zhang et al. (2009, p. 94-105) state that genetic effects influence entrepreneurship, according to the findings of their study. As for Akehurst et al. (2012, p. 2489), gender creates differences in economic social and business opportunities.

Turkey's historical heritage, which has a great historical history and accumulation, has made significant contributions to entrepreneurship, as well as many other subjects, that's why the evaluation of entrepreneurship is evaluated together as a whole of the values such as the Ahilik Organization and the Guild Organizations, as well as what was done on the road from the proclamation of the republic to the present day.

Therefore, in this part of the study, the Ahilik Organization, which is known as a Turkish-specific structure and has a strong structure in the time of the Anatolian Seljuks, will be mentioned in the last period of the Ottoman Empire by taking the name guild and continuing its way. Then, from the Republic period to the present day, the concept of entrepreneurship will be looked at. Finally, women's entrepreneurship will be mentioned in Turkey from all entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship activities.

Turks who came to Anatolia from Central Asia have been active in the fields of trade and craftsmanship after they settled. Ahilik Organization, founded by Ahi Evren Şeyn Nasirüddin Mahmut as a Turkish-specific organization, continued its way by taking the name "Guild" in the last period of the Ottoman Empire, which had a strong structure during the Anatolian Seljuks. In the last period of the Ottoman Empire when the second constitutional era was announced in 1908, the women's movement began in the field of trade and industry, with the proclamation of the republic progress was made using the reforms of the Atatürk era. Nowadays, it can be said that this structure is replaced by "Chamber of Trades and Chambers of Commerce" (Çağatay, 1952, p. 58-68; Gödek, 1994, p. 20; Gökakın, 2000, p. 109; Karasoy, 2004, p. 14-17).

From Turkey's point of view, the participation of women in the non-agricultural workforce began to happen after the 1950s, when urbanization increased, in other words, migration from rural areas to the city. After the changes and developments, women's responsibilities increased, and the women's movement emerged in the 1980s. These developments happened in western countries and in Turkey with the adaptation of liberal economy and entrepreneurial culture women's entrepreneurship gained importance with small business entrepreneurship in those years (Soysal, 2010, p. 88).

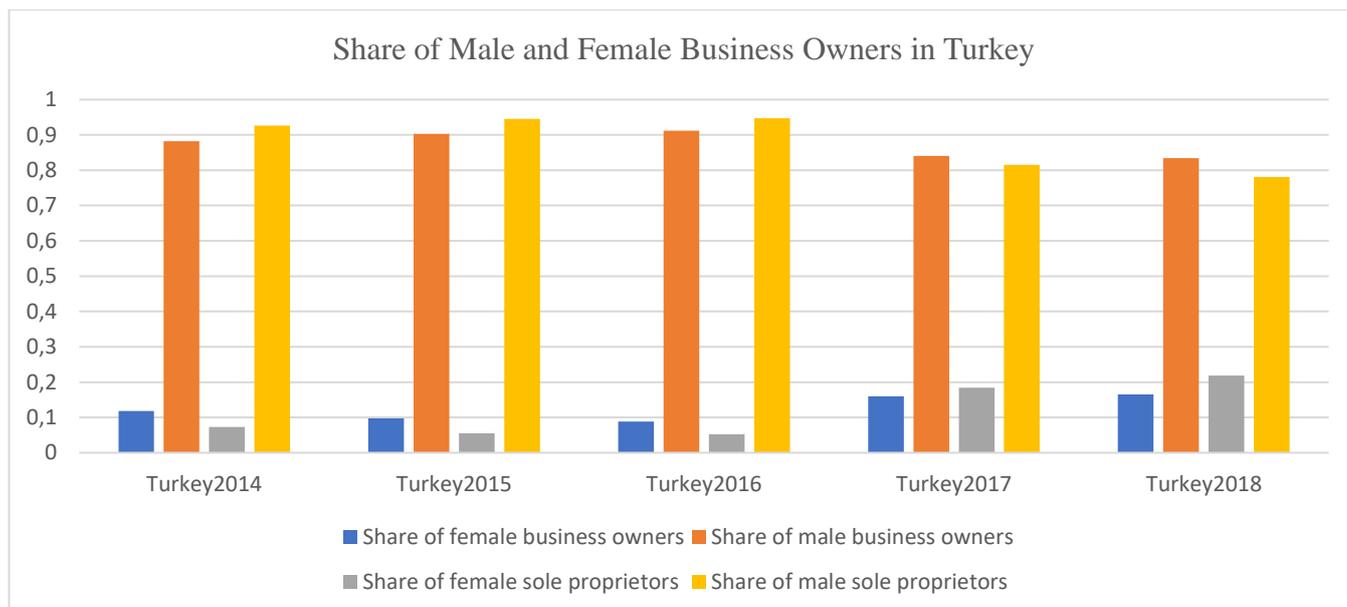
In order to understand women's entrepreneurship more easily, it would be useful to look at the concept of entrepreneurship within some of the periods from the Republic period to the present day. According to Çalışır (2016, p. 93) and İrmış, Durak, Özdemir (2010) in their study in the process of the proclamation of the republic they indicate the steps and phases taken by Turkey towards entrepreneurship as follows.

- The years 1923-1929 were a period in which private entrepreneurship was encouraged.
- In the period 1930-1946, there were traces of the principle of Statism in entrepreneurship activities.

- In 1946-1960, by moving away from the entrepreneurial spirit of the state by transitioning to the liberal economy, rentier activities gained importance and an ideal entrepreneur's profile could not be created.
- In the 1960s-1980s, planned economic trials were carried out and entrepreneurs began organizing during this period and in 1971 the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen's Association was established.
- From 1980 to the present day, it was a period dominated by an outwardly liberal economy. It is stated that the first beginning of the privatization process in 1986 was the establishment of Public Economic Enterprises (PEEs). With the increase of capital, there has been a significant increase in the number of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs).
- Although it is not at the desired level with the 2000s, it is stated that acceleration is observed in research and development (R&D) activities.

The Turkish Republic made an effort to create a group of entrepreneurs to maintain its independence that is gained by The War of Independence in the economic area as well and held İzmir Economic Congress before the proclamation of the republic between February 17th to March 4th, 1923. In this congress, the principal decision was made to create merchants and businessmen from Turkish Muslim people. In the 2nd İzmir Economic Congress that was held in November 1981, important decisions were made such as supporting individual enterprise, facilitating the conditions of the free market, and strengthening the investments of infrastructure. Turkey progressed in the private sector regarding the dynamism and increased its ability to adapt internal and external factors economically by joining the Customs Union in 1995. Turkish entrepreneurs gained the ability to compete in international markets and made great progress to survive and compete thereby led to the development of a new entrepreneur type (Aşkın, Nehir & Vural, 2011, p. 69; Cansız, 2013, p. 36; Marangoz, 2013, p. 23; Müftüoğlu & Durukan, 2004, p. 11; Öztürk, 2016, p. 7-10; Sönmez & Şimşek, 2011, p. 97). Along with the processes mentioned above, the contribution of innovative and creative thinking to the essence of entrepreneurship is very valuable. Regarding entrepreneurship, in Turkey, it can be said that there is a certain progress with increasing speed.

In the study of Eser and Yıldız (2015, p. 100-102), it is cited that the allowed doctoral theses in the area of entrepreneurship within the national databases of Council of Higher Education (YÖK) and over the last decade in the national databases of ULAKBİM (Turkey National Academic Network and Information Center) of TÜBİTAK (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) the magazines and declarations of the Congress of National Management and Organization are analyzed. In the study above, it is noted that 10,1% of the statement of "women entrepreneur" stated as a subject in the title; 2,51% of the statement "the barriers against woman entrepreneurship" stated as a keyword; 0,5% of the statement "the barriers against woman entrepreneurship" stated; and lastly, 0,5% of the statement "the opportunities of woman entrepreneurship" stated.

**Figure 1.** Share of male and female business owners in Turkey

**Source:** The World Bank Data <https://www.doingbusiness.org/en/data/exploretopics/entrepreneurship/gender>

According to the 2017 Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) data; while the labor force participation rate of women in rural areas between 1995-2005 had decreased from 49,3% to 33,7%, the rate increased from 17,1% to 19,3% in cities (TÜİK, 2017, p. 12-13). Çalışır (2016, p. 93) states in his study that although the term entrepreneurship is generally seen as a job for men in the society there are a lot of examples can be found which show women are how eager and determined for this purpose. However, the ratio of the number of women entrepreneurs compared to men is quite low, as it can be seen in Figure 1.

Women have not benefited enough from the benefits of development in our country, where half the population is female. Therefore, it is very important to ensure that women are more involved in the workforce which will be beneficial for both the rapid growth of Turkey and the improvement in the socio-economic situation of women (Göküş, Özdemiray & Göksel, 2013, p. 91).

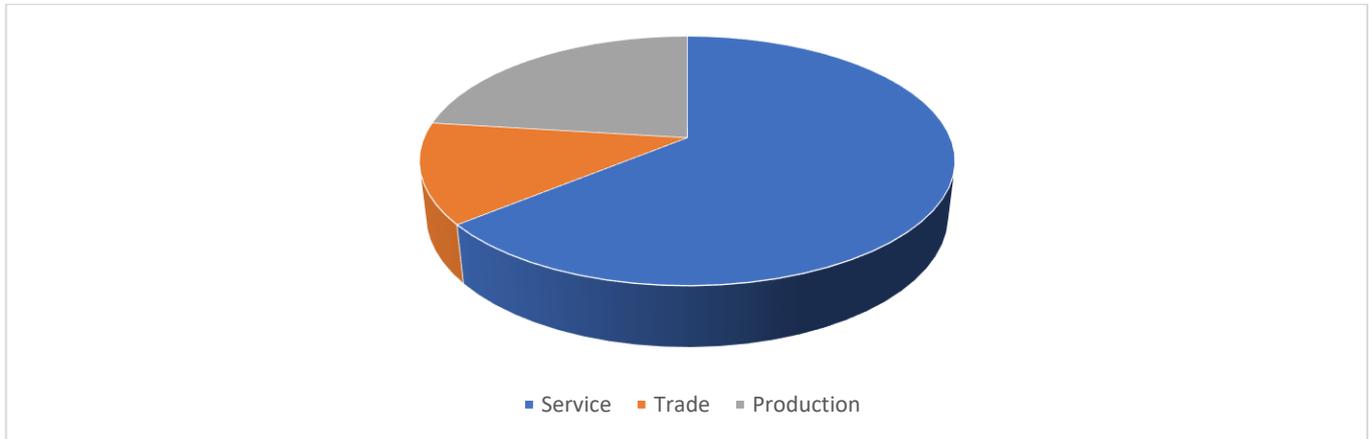
### Women's Entrepreneurship in Turkey Tourism

Despite working heavily in the tourism sector, the employment of women in the tourism sector is not adequate and not in proper conditions in Turkey (İstanbullu Dinçer et al., 2016). In the context of improving this situation, women's entrepreneurship activities in the field of tourism are important. Since tourism industry has the largest share among the sectors that entrepreneurs plan to start a business (see in Figure 2), women can take advantage of this industry. The structural feature of the tourism sector (product diversity, emerging new types of tourism, fast-growing sector) also offers a variety of possibilities to female entrepreneurs. The number of female entrepreneurs taking advantage of these opportunities is increasing day by day. However, the number of scientific studies on women's entrepreneurship in tourism in Turkey is quite small. A total of 20 studies (articles, thesis, and papers) were conducted on the subject in Turkey between 1988 and 2019 (Işık et al., 2019).

Businesses mostly operate in the tourism sector on a small and medium scale (Jafaar et al., 2010). The role of small, family-run tourism enterprises is important in the evaluation of entrepreneurial ideas (Shaw & Williams, 2004). These businesses make significant contributions to the development of the local economy. Although tourism

entrepreneurs play a crucial role in the development of the local economy, the factors they are motivated by are beyond economic gains (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000). However, this is seen as one of the reasons why tourism entrepreneurs are not successful. According to Getz and Carlsen (2000), among the problems experienced by entrepreneurs is viewing tourism as a lifestyle rather than economic motives. Tourism entrepreneurs' problems include lack of knowledge, financial problems, and limited business management capabilities, etc.

**Figure 2.** Sectors That Entrepreneurs Plan to Start Business



Source: Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), 2017

There is a male-dominated structure within the sector, and women are less in management positions compared to men. Female entrepreneurs in the tourism industry face many risks, such as gender-related harassment (Altındal & Gül, 2016). Women's responsibilities such as housework and childcare make it difficult for women to take part in business and pursue careers (Davras & Davras, 2015). Women entrepreneurs in tourism reported that they do not want to have children, or they postpone having a child as they cannot balance work and childcare (Altındal & Gül, 2016).

The reasons that push women into entrepreneurship in the tourism industry vary. Some of them are as follows; working with the family, earning additional income, owning your own business, evaluating leisure time, take business opportunities, having economic independence, maintaining lifestyle, and better-quality family life (Jaafar et al., 2011; Lashley & Rowson, 2010; Morrison et al., 2008). Women entrepreneurs in Turkey have diverse ways of getting motivated. Karakas and Gökmen's (2016) study of female entrepreneurs in 2 tourism cities in Turkey revealed that women's entrepreneurship is mainly to benefit others.

Women who live in rural areas are more motivated to join the workforce and gain their economic independence than women living in the cities (Sayın & Ergin, 2018). Women living in rural areas are conscious of their entrepreneurial abilities in the context of rural tourism. Women already work in household chores and fields and do not receive any money in return for their work. Women will continue to do the work that they already do with entrepreneurship activities in rural tourism and will also be able to accommodate incoming tourists. This way they can earn money. Therefore, rural tourism is one of the types of tourism that can hold an important place in women's entrepreneurship. The related studies indicated that women have high motivation for rural tourism entrepreneurship, and with this initiative, women feel stronger. Moreover, they start to trust themselves in making money and develop themselves socially and economically (Hacı, 2018). Women's entrepreneurial activities in the context of rural

tourism sorted as; home pension, restaurant management, farm tourism-based farms, and souvenir shops. The study by Bayram (2019) reveals that among the reasons driving women to entrepreneurship in the tourism sector are the desire for making contribution to the home economy and providing themselves psychological relief by helping their kids and their husbands via being busy with a job.

Women face some difficulties at the beginning of their initiatives and the initiative process. These include recognition in the market, extreme fatigue, and the stagnation of the market. Some of the women have the problem of not being able to spend much time with their families because of their initiatives (Karakas & Gökmen; 2016). Turkey has a patriarchal social structure; therefore, women's attempts to make any tourism initiatives can get a reaction by society. Women may not be taken seriously at the beginning of the initiative and when the initiative carried out (Özmen, Bilgin & Ubbelohde, 2018). According to Bayram's (2019) study, although some of the women get support from their family and closed ones on their entrepreneurship the others did not get the same support. In the same study, it was found that most female entrepreneurs were not aware of the state's financial support for female entrepreneurs. Özdemir's (2009) study also found that the proportion of those who expressed negative opinions about women having a social and commercial relationship with tourists was quite low.

There are various risks that female entrepreneurs perceive in tourism. These can be sorted as; economic, political, and social risks. Studies have shown that the most perceived risk type is an economic risk (Altındal & Gül, 2016). The fact that tourism is a seasonal sector in Turkey, difficulties in providing credit and the difficulties of being a small business are the main reasons behind it. The economic and political instability of the country is also one of the risks that women face.

The number of female entrepreneurs in the tourism sector is lower than male participants due to the role of women in society and the family in Turkey (Avcikurt, 2003; Kale, 2016). KOSGEB (Small and medium enterprises development organization) and ISKUR (Turkish employment agency) are doing various studies to increase women's employment and female entrepreneurship in tourism. Turkey have started the projects for the support of small and medium-sized enterprises in 1973. In 1978, General Directorate of Industrial Education and Development Center (SEGEM) started its operations. In 1983, General Directorate of Small Industry Development Organization (KÜSGET) started its operations. The purpose of these directorates was to increase the working skills of university or college graduates in the industry with their in-factory, on-the-job training programs and to prepare them for higher positions in the organizations they work for. These services, which SEGEM and KÜSGET were trying to realize within the framework of project agreements, were valid within a particular period and could not meet the needs at the country level. Thus, with the Law No. 3624, "Small and Medium Scale Industrial Development and Support Administration (KOSGEB) was established in 1990 with the aim of uniting the two organizations under one roof to provide a more comprehensive, continuous and widespread service throughout the country. Until 2009, KOSGEB has provided services and supports only to manufacturing industry SMEs. However, the increase in the potential of generating economic value added and employment in sectors other than the manufacturing industry in our country and demands from SMEs in sectors other than manufacturing industry have raised the need to expand the target audience of KOSGEB to cover all SMEs. Sectorial and regional priorities have been determined for the enterprises that will benefit from the services and supports to be provided by KOSGEB in 2009. As of 2019, it provides support and services to small and medium-sized enterprises across the country with 92 KOSGEB Directorates in 81

provinces. In addition, there are KOSGEB Representation Offices established within the scope of cooperation protocols with institutions / organizations to carry out information and guidance activities in order to enable the target audience to benefit from KOSGEB services and supports more effectively. As of 2019, 96 Representative Offices have been operating in Turkey. As the main policy, women, young entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneurship have been prioritized in addition to criteria such as innovation, productivity and employment increase, growth, and joint work in providing Entrepreneurship and SME supports. It is planned to continue to implement policies aimed at increasing the labor force participation and employment rates of disadvantaged groups, especially women and disabled individuals. KOSGEB gives various awards to successful entrepreneurs every year. These awards include the female entrepreneur of the year (KOSGEB Strategic Plan, 2019).

KOSGEB supports entrepreneurs in the tourism sector in accommodation and food service activities. There are hotels and similar accommodation, accommodation activities, restaurants and food service activities, catering activities etc. In 2018, entrepreneurs who were female, disabled, veteran and first-degree relatives of martyrs made a great demand for Applied Entrepreneurship Training. In this context, it is considered that positive discrimination provided to women, veteran, first degree relatives of martyrs or disabled entrepreneurs positively affects the demand for Applied Entrepreneurship Trainings and New Entrepreneur Support. KOSGEB contributed to the preparation of a brochure on women's entrepreneurship and women's incentives, which was printed and distributed by the Turkey Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. KOSGEB participated in the Empowerment of Women's Cooperatives carried out by the Ministry of Commerce and contributed to the areas of "Strengthening the economic position of women" and "Improving women's entrepreneurship" in the preparation of the Women's Empowerment Strategy Document and Action Plan prepared by the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services.

According to the Women's Empowerment Strategy Document and Action Plan of Turkey (Eylem Raporu, 2018);

- Information activities will be held and printed. Also, visual materials will be prepared and disseminated in order to share the responsibilities of women and men about the harmonization of business and family life and to announce current developments on the subject.

- In order to reduce the care obligations on women, efforts will be made to diversify support and incentives for child, disabled, and elderly care.

- In areas where there is a lack of collection and / or publication within the scope of women's employment (number of women benefiting from services such as KOSGEB, İŞKUR etc., amount of support provided, maternity leave, use of parental leave etc.), a database will be established in cooperation with Turkish Statistical Institute and related institutions.

- For agricultural development cooperatives established by women entrepreneurs and production and operational cooperatives. Supports in areas such as education, entrepreneurship and consultancy will be further expanded.

- Cooperation efforts will be carried out to market the products produced, especially with local governments.

- Prime Ministry Circular No. 2011/2 on "Prevention of Psychological Harassment (Mobbing) at Workplaces will be updated and the Circular measures will be implemented. Printed and visual materials will be prepared to increase the awareness of the workers and employers on the subject; activities for workers and employers will be organized in regions with high female employment.

- A research report will be prepared, in which the problems experienced in the home services sector, where women mostly work informally, will be investigated and there will be model suggestions including solutions. Awareness raising activities will be carried out to improve registered female employment, especially the agricultural sector.

- The effectiveness of the birth permits granted under the Labor Law No. 4857 will be measured. Projects of the private sector aimed at empowering women in the labor market will be supported.

- Studies will be initiated on the development and implementation of a certification system for identification of the sensitivities of the private sector in the labor market regarding women's empowerment in Turkey.

- Women and their daughters will be provided to share experiences and recommendations of role models that stand out in the private sector in order to raise awareness about strengthening women's economic and social status and to ensure that women benefit from qualified employment, education, counseling, incentives and micro-credit and similar resources.

- An effective system will be established to provide consultancy and guidance services to women entrepreneurs in their business development processes. Awareness raising activities will be carried out to improve entrepreneurship culture among women. A system will be created to facilitate the access of women entrepreneurs to government grants.

- It will be ensured that Regional Development Agencies give priority to programs and projects that support women's entrepreneurship.

- Women, who work in the agricultural sector, will be provided with empowerment in the agricultural field by developing their knowledge, skills and opportunities for entrepreneurship by making the use of technological developments.

- Vocational training courses will be opened to train women in the tourism sector. The European Union also cares about the addition of women into the tourism sector and aims to ensure more effective participation of women in the field of tourism through support services such as credit and education (Ferguson, 2010).

A woman working in the tourism industry has some superior sides compared to men. Women's ability to empathize, the ability to produce quick solutions, and persuasion are higher than male managers. However, women's emotional structures make them vulnerable to their employees (Özmen, Bilgin & Ubbelohde, 2018). There are successful examples of women's entrepreneurship in Turkey. In the study conducted in Sinop province, it was stated that women are satisfied with the entrepreneurship activity in the field of tourism but need support in terms of promotion and retention (Bayram, 2018). In the study conducted in Edirne Province on women's entrepreneurship in the context of agro-tourism, it was observed that women were able to earn their income through herbal and animal production and traditional home products production. It has been revealed that women have been freed from their position as free family workers with the payment they get by the labor they have done (Serinikli, 2019). In this study, it was stated that tourism is seasonal, due to being only intense during summer tourism activities, sales in the summer months are dominant and women cannot sell the products they produce during the winter months. To ensure the continuity of product sales, cooperatives are offered as solutions. A good example of female entrepreneurship in the context of rural tourism in Turkey is also carried out in the village of Lavender in Isparta province. Isparta province is famous for its lavender gardens. The demand for tourism to the villages has increased with successful promotional efforts in the villages. With this increasing tourism demand, tourism has been added to livelihoods based on

agriculture and livestock. Women's entrepreneurship activities began with the establishment of the 'Lavender Smelling Village Women's Initiatives Cooperative'. In the village, women play an important role in providing accommodation, food and beverage, souvenirs, and local products to visitors. In this way, poverty reduction in rural areas, reducing migration from village to city and strengthening women in the economic, cultural, and social area were provided (Sarı Gök, 2019).

In the study with female tourism entrepreneurs (Altındal & Gül, 2016) in the Aegean Region, one of the most touristic regions in Turkey, it was suggested that growing up in the tourist region and the family engaged in tourism allow women driven to tourism entrepreneurship at an early age. In this study, it was stated that the education levels of female entrepreneurs in a tourist resort are low and this is caused by fathers not allowing girls to be educated and patriarchal family structure.

## **Conclusion**

In Turkey, which is among the developing countries, women work mainly in the service sector. They are employed in most tourism areas within the service sector. In the context of tourism entrepreneurship in Turkey, the proportion of women is attempted to increase with the support of the government despite some problems.

In the tourism sector, female entrepreneurship can be mainly seen in the context of rural tourism. Women are engaged in entrepreneurship activities in tourism such as accommodation, food and beverage, souvenir, production, and presentation of local products. As it is similar with some areas in the world (Horton, 2009). The lack of scientific studies for women's entrepreneurship in the field of tourism in Turkey is one of the highlights. In Turkey, as a country caring about the empowerment of women in the economic, cultural, and social area, scientific studies on the subject should be increased and various solutions should be presented by revealing the current problems. To support women's entrepreneurship, projects must be developed and increased which is a crucial subject.

Women are experiencing some difficulties in the process of starting entrepreneurship in the field of tourism and after the initiative has taken place in Turkey. As it is the same with the other countries in the world (Dhameja, 2002; Okpara et al., 2011; Schindehutte et al., 2003; Yordanova, 2011). Although women entrepreneurship in the field of tourism are supported by the government (tangible /loans, providing education), studies in the literature have shown that these supports are not sufficient. The seasonality of tourism in Turkey causes female entrepreneurs to experience some difficulties in the sale of the products they produce. To overcome these difficulties, women need to become cooperative. Also, the efforts on the spread of tourism throughout the year, which is a part of Turkish tourism policies, needs to be empowered. Political instability, economic fluctuations, and developments in foreign policy in the country affect the tourism sector, which raises the risk perceptions of female tourism entrepreneurs. Another problem experienced by female entrepreneurs in tourism is social pressures. In Turkey, as a country which has a patriarchal structure, women do not receive support from their families and their social circles in their initiatives. After the initiative is carried out, not being taken seriously by the men around the business and even harassment can be faced. Also, women work under more challenging conditions than men due to their responsibilities such as housework and childcare. This may cause some female entrepreneurs to consider not having children or to postpone having a child.

It is observed that relevant authorities are aware of the problems experienced by women entrepreneurs mentioned in the literature and various strategies and action plans are created in this context. Relevant ministries of the country

are working on the subject. Various incentives are given to eliminate the problems experienced by women entrepreneurs and to support them through the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services. In this context, consultancy, and guidance service for women entrepreneurs in business development processes, and awareness raising activities for the purpose of developing entrepreneurship culture among women are among those planned. Efforts are also made to ensure that women entrepreneurs have easier access to government grants.

Information activities are also included in the country's action plans for sharing the responsibilities of women and men about the harmonization of work and family life and for the announcement of the current developments regarding the issue. The country's efforts to diversify support and incentives for child, disability, and elderly care to reduce care obligations on women will positively reflect on women's entrepreneurship.

Keeping statistics about female entrepreneurs (such as the number of women benefiting from the incentives, amount of support given, maternity leave, and use of parental leave, etc.) benefiting from various incentives will contribute to determining the level of realization of the action plans and improving the plans.

One of the biggest problems experienced by women entrepreneurs in tourism is the fact that tourism is seasonal and therefore does not provide product sales for 12 months of the year. One of the most effective tools for solving this problem is agricultural development cooperatives. In this context, for the agricultural development cooperatives established and production and operational cooperatives; cooperation efforts to further extend the support provided in areas such as education, entrepreneurship, and consultancy and to market the products produced especially with local governments will contribute to the problems of women entrepreneurs.

Preparing printed and visual materials to increase the awareness of the workers and employers on Prevention of Psychological Harassment (Mobbing) of Women at Workplaces and planning activities for workers and employers in regions with high female employment will play an effective role in solving one of the most important problems women entrepreneurs face in the industry. Enabling the role models that stand out in the private sector to share their experiences and recommendations will also be effective in increasing the number of women entrepreneurs.

There are women's tourism initiatives in Turkey that can be accepted as good examples. These initiatives have been executed, especially with projects supported by government and private funds. Regional Development Agencies giving priority to programs and projects that support women's entrepreneurship are important in increasing female entrepreneurship in tourism.

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