

The Role of Women Entrepreneurs in Sustainable Gastronomy: The Case of Sinop

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Abstract

This research, which was conducted to determine the contributions and advantages of women entrepreneurs and women cooperatives to the destination region, aims to emphasize the importance of women entrepreneurs and women cooperatives. It is aimed to determine the role of women cooperatives and women entrepreneurs in ensuring the local economy and sustainable development in the destination branding process. In addition, it is expected that this research will contribute to the clarification of the values that affect the entrepreneurial behavior of women entrepreneurs, to make definite judgments on how women's entrepreneurship perception is shaped, and to the determination of entrepreneurial roles. The study used a quantitative research method and utilized the survey technique. The research data were obtained from the responses to the survey form applied to women entrepreneurs and women's cooperatives operating in Sinop province. In this context, the findings of the study were obtained as a result of interviews conducted with 33 women registered in the Sinop Chamber of Tradesmen and Craftsmen and the Sinop Chamber of Commerce and Industry. As a result of the responses to the survey questions, the added value of women entrepreneurs and women's cooperatives in the formation of the brand image of Sinop province, the added value of women entrepreneurs to the region in terms of the benefits and advantages they provide to regional development were examined. As a result of the answers given to the survey questions, it was concluded that the number of women's cooperatives and women entrepreneurs should be increased in the formation of the brand image of Sinop Province. It is also thought that women's cooperatives should be encouraged more. The fact that women's cooperatives are engaged in gastronomy and GI entrepreneurship provides opportunities for small-scale and local products to be prepared by the enterprises. As a result, it is seen that it makes a great contribution to the field of sustainable gastronomy. In the literature on the subject, there are not many studies directly addressing the impact of women entrepreneurs and women's cooperatives on sustainable gastronomy. However, it is seen that there are some studies on the role of women entrepreneurs and

local people in alternative tourism types. In terms of the benefits and advantages provided to regional development in the formation of the brand image of Sinop Province, the added value of women entrepreneurs to the region was examined and it was concluded that the number of women cooperatives and women entrepreneurs should be increased. It is also thought that women cooperatives should be encouraged more.

Keywords: Women's Cooperatives, Women Entrepreneurs, Destination Image, Brand Value, Sinop.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, entrepreneurship has gained different dimensions and meanings with technological, economic and scientific developments as well as women's participation. Within this dimension, entrepreneurship plays a role in increasing the level of economic and social development and has begun to contribute to the emergence of women's cooperatives through women's entrepreneurship. The ultimate goal of all countries and target regions is to improve economic development and growth through entrepreneurship. Therefore, ensuring the most rational and efficient use of the country's existing resources, geographically marked products, local products and local products is seen as the most basic principle in achieving this goal (Perktaş, 2014). In this context, the active participation of women entrepreneurs and women's cooperatives in target regions has a great impact on economic growth, society, destination image and branding process, employment and welfare. Because women's superior success and patience, entrepreneurial spirit, competitive power, productivity, meticulous and disciplined progress reveal their power to make a difference from product production to supply, packaging and marketing. It is known that sustainable growth and development are among the goals that all countries want to achieve, and that investing in human resources, especially in women with high entrepreneurial spirit, is seen as the most important key point in directing them to business life and production (Çabuk, 2015). In this case, it is seen that women take an active role in women's cooperatives as a means of creating suitable work areas for themselves, showing their labor in the process of highlighting local and regional products in target regions, and providing income for their families. However, although some of the women entrepreneurs want to take part in business life, it is seen that they encounter many difficulties in the process of becoming women entrepreneurs. It is possible to say that as a result of these difficulties and obstacles, the added value to be provided to the country and the local economy will weaken (Arıkan, 2016). The formation process of the brand image of our country's economy and target regions reflects a constantly evolving profile balance. It is anticipated that the increase in the number of women with entrepreneurial and production determination spirit and the establishment of women's cooperatives by existing women entrepreneurs who are successful in their business will contribute to the increase in business areas and regional expansion, a strong social change, the promotion of geographically indicated and local products in the destination region, the more effective formation of the destination brand and image, and therefore the revitalization of the economy (Çabuk, 2015).

2. METHOD

The universe of the study was accepted as Sinop province. The sample of the study consisted of women's cooperatives and entrepreneurs operating in Sinop province. Quantitative research method was used in the study. In this context, a survey was applied to women entrepreneurs and cooperatives in order to collect data. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the relevant literature and previous studies were taken into consideration while determining the questions in the survey form. After determining the questions constituting the survey, a pilot application was conducted with 25 women and 32 entrepreneurs in order to increase the reliability of the answers given to the surveys and to measure the understandability of the questions. As a result of the pilot

application, the questions that were considered to be incomplete and incomprehensible were corrected and the survey form was finalized. The survey form consisted of three sections; the first section included questions on demographic characteristics. The second section included questions on the measurement of the impact of sustainable gastronomy on women's entrepreneurship and women's cooperatives in Sinop province, and the effects of participation according to entrepreneurship type and entrepreneurial expressions. In the third section of the survey form, an open-ended question was included and answers were sought for two questions. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used within the scope of the study. The analysis of the information obtained through data collection tools in the research was carried out in a computer environment using the SPSS 26 package program.

3. RESULTS

Looking at the demographic information table of the participants, it is seen that the majority of the participants (69.7%) are married according to their marital status. According to their age status, it is understood that women entrepreneurs are gathered in the 26-60 age range (81.8%). There are only 2 women entrepreneurs aged 61 and over and the number of young women entrepreneurs is 8. When the answers given by women to the number of children are analyzed, it is seen that 24.2% of them have no children, 63.7% have 1-2 children and 12.1% have 3-4 children. According to their education level, 51.5% of them are undergraduate graduates and 30.3% are high school graduates. It is also noteworthy that there are two women entrepreneurs with postgraduate education. When income status was asked; it was determined that 36.4% of the women entrepreneurs had an income between 50,001-75,000 TL, 33.3% between 25,001-50,000 TL and 27.3% between 0-25,000 TL. The rate of those with an income of 75,001 and above is 3%.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Marital Status	Single	10
	Married	23
Age	18-25 Between Age	4
	26-45 Between Age	17
	45-60 Between Age	10
	61 Age and Above	2
Number of Children	0 (none)	8
	1-2	21
	3-4	4
	5 and above	-
Education Status	Literate	-
	Primary-secondary school	4
	High School	10
	License	17
	Postgraduate	2
Your Income	Gelir yok	-
	0-25.000 TL	9
	25.001-50.000 TL	11
	50.001-75.000 TL	12
	75.001 and above	1
Total		33
		100

To the question “Were you working before becoming an entrepreneur?” 75.8% of the women entrepreneurs answered yes, while 24.2% answered no. To the question “Did you benefit from vocational training opportunities?” 69.7% of the participants answered yes, while 30.3% said no. Entrepreneurs gave different answers to the question “What are your reason(s) for becoming an

entrepreneur?”. 27.3% of the entrepreneurs gave the answers of economic obligations and liking working life, while 24.2% expressed the desire to work independently. When asked who made the decision to become an entrepreneur, the majority (81.8%) answered “myself”. Regarding the question of where they obtained their capital, 54.5% stated that they received credit support from banks, 27.3% stated that they benefited from personal family savings, and 15.2% stated that they created capital by borrowing.

Table 2. According to Entrepreneurship Status

Statements		Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Were you working before you became an entrepreneur?	Yes	25	75,8
	No.	8	24,2
Did you benefit from vocational training opportunities?	Yes	23	69,7
	No.	10	30,3
What are your reason(s) for becoming an entrepreneur?	Economic necessity	9	27,3
	Family encouragement	2	6,1
	Love working life	9	27,3
	Poor conditions of paid work	3	9,1
	Willingness to work independently	8	24,2
	Spouse/family does not allow paid work	1	3,0
	Social prestige	-	-
	Spouse after the death of the husband/father	-	-
	Pioneering women producing at home	1	3,0
Who made the decision to work as an entrepreneur?	Myself	27	81,8
	My wife	4	12,1
	My family	2	6,1
What are the means by which you obtain your capital?	Personal family savings	9	27,3
	Credit support from banks	18	54,5
	Borrowing money	5	15,2
	Heritage	-	-
	Other partner(s)	1	3,0
Total		33	100

When women entrepreneurs were asked about the problems they experienced in the process of establishing their businesses, they generally expressed financial and economic problems. While 23 participants expressed economic and financial problems, 2 participants stated that they did not experience any problems. Other problems are; being a woman, insecurity, inability to find staff, bureaucratic affairs, indifference, inexperience and lack of knowledge. When asked about the advantages of being a woman entrepreneur, 4 participants stated that there were no advantages. The other participants stated that it provides economic freedom, gives the opportunity to work independently, provides convenience in loans and banks, receives government support, gives respect and trust, and provides socialization.

Table 3. Open-ended Responses on Women Entrepreneurs and Cooperatives

Statements	
What are the problems you faced while starting your business?	1. Lack of information
	2. Financial constraints, where to invest
	3. Financial difficulties and lack of respect from people
	4. Financial difficulty, customer creation process
	5. Financial difficulties
	6. Economic problems
	7. None.
	8. Not recognizing working life
	9. Apathy and not being taken seriously
	10. Inadequate facilities, financial difficulties
	11. Inability to find long-term employees and bureaucratic work at the workplace.
	12. Economic and psychological problems. Insecurity

	13. Financial difficulties 14. Customer attraction 15. Lack of experience 16. Capital creation, high costs. 17. I did not experience any problems 18. Of course we faced financial difficulties, support loans for women etc. 19. Economic conditions 20. Financial problems 21. Being a believer only in myself with financial problems 22. State procedure, economic difficulties and lack of employees 23. Economic conditions, inability to find a job 24. Financial difficulties 25. Economic and crises 26. Financial inadequacies due to livelihood problems 27. Economic conditions of the country 28. Financial inadequacies, capital problems 29. Procedures were too many, I did not have sufficient economic means 30. Expensive and unemployment 31. Capital 32. The biggest problem is capital. 33. Being a woman
What are the advantages of being a woman entrepreneur?	1. Economic freedom 2. Government support 3. Being independent, standing on your feet 4. Independence and free work 5. To gain economic freedom for a woman by standing on my own feet and trying to live without depending on anyone. To be an example for my children 6. Economic freedom 7. Provides self-confidence 8. I gained economic freedom 9. Socialize 10. People's respect for you 11. Positive approach of the people and institutions you are in contact with, banks' support in terms of credit 12. Independence and freedom, sense of achievement 13. Loans provided by the government and banks 14. Ability to think more strategically 15. To be loved and respected 16. I don't think there are enough incentive advantages in our country. I didn't see any advantages other than the campaigns in some banks. 17. Standing on my own feet makes me more eager to work 18. I have not personally seen any advantages. 19. Not many advantages. 20. Socialization and freedom 21. Trust 22. Support provided by the government 23. Work independently 24. No advantage, unfortunately 25. No advantage 26. Credit support 27. Women's vision 28. Loans granted by the government 29. There was no difference 30. Entrepreneurship and ease in banking 31. Customer reputation 32. Economic freedom and socialization 33. Insecurity because I am a woman

Regarding the question “Women's entrepreneurship is a good model for improving the quality of life of local people”, a large portion of the participants (84.9%) strongly agreed, while 63.7% of the participants strongly agreed with the question “I am satisfied that women's entrepreneurship is

sensitive to history, culture and environment". "I think that Sinop's local identity will come to the forefront thanks to women entrepreneurship." To the question "Women entrepreneurship is sensitive to nature and the environment within the scope of zero waste", 66.6% of the participants strongly agreed.", 42.5% of the participants strongly agreed. 51.5% of the respondents strongly agree with the question "Women entrepreneurship increases the income level of local people" and 54.6% of the respondents strongly agree with the question "Women entrepreneurship supports the opening of sectors that produce food according to traditional methods." Similarly, 63.7% of the respondents strongly agree with the questions "Women entrepreneurship ensures the continuity/transfer of local products to future generations" and "Women entrepreneurship is directly effective in promoting gastronomy values in the province". While 36.4% strongly agreed with the question "Thanks to women entrepreneurship, Sinop is preferred more by conscious visitors.", 42.4% strongly agreed with the question "Women entrepreneurship plays an important role in the branding of important places." To the question "Women entrepreneurship does not have much effect on the development of places to visit and see in the province", 33.3% of the respondents answered "I am undecided".

Table 4. Entrepreneurship Statements

Statements		Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Women's entrepreneurship is a good model for improving the quality of life of local people.	Strongly disagree	1	3,0
	Disagree	-	-
	Undecided	1	3,0
	I agree.	3	9,1
	Absolutely agree	28	84,9
I'm pleased that women's entrepreneurship is sensitive to history, culture and the environment.	Strongly disagree	-	-
	Disagree	-	-
	Undecided	2	6,0
	I agree.	10	30,3
	Absolutely agree	21	63,7
I think Sinop's local identity will come to the forefront thanks to women entrepreneurship.	Strongly disagree	-	-
	Disagree	1	3,0
	Undecided	5	15,2
	I agree.	5	15,2
	Absolutely agree	22	66,6
Women's entrepreneurship is sensitive to nature and the environment within the scope of zero waste.	Strongly disagree	1	3,0
	Disagree	4	12,1
	Undecided	8	24,2
	I agree.	6	18,2
	Absolutely agree	14	42,5
Women's entrepreneurship increases the income level of local people.	Strongly disagree	-	-
	Disagree	1	3,0
	Undecided	5	15,2
	I agree.	10	30,3
	Absolutely agree	17	51,5
Women's entrepreneurship supports the opening of sectors that produce food according to traditional methods.	Strongly disagree	1	3,0
	Disagree	-	-
	Undecided	4	12,1
	I agree.	10	30,3
	Absolutely agree	18	54,6
Women's entrepreneurship ensures the continuity/transmission of local products to future generations.	Strongly disagree	1	3,0
	Disagree	-	-
	Undecided	1	3,0
	I agree.	10	30,3
	Absolutely agree	21	63,7
Women entrepreneurship has a direct impact on the promotion of gastronomy values in the province.	Strongly disagree	1	3,0
	Disagree	-	-
	Undecided	3	9,1

Thanks to women entrepreneurship, Sinop is more preferred by conscious visitors.	I agree.	8	24,2
	Absolutely agree	21	63,7
	Strongly disagree	1	3,0
	Disagree	2	6,1
	Undecided	7	21,2
Women's entrepreneurship plays an important role in the branding of important places.	I agree.	11	33,3
	Absolutely agree	12	36,4
	Strongly disagree	-	-
	Disagree	2	6,1
	Undecided	9	27,3
Women's entrepreneurship has little impact on the development of sightseeing in the province.	I agree.	8	24,2
	Absolutely agree	14	42,4
	Strongly disagree	7	21,2
	Disagree	5	15,2
	Undecided	11	33,3
	I agree.	3	9,1
	Absolutely agree	7	21,2
Total		33	100

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Developing the identified impact factors and producing effective solutions to the obstacles can help more women engage in entrepreneurial activities in the future, thus contributing to the promotion of local and geographically indicated products in Sinop and our country, the development of sustainable gastronomy, the branding of Sinop products, economic development and the reduction of unemployment rates. In line with the information obtained; in order to encourage women to become entrepreneurs, it is necessary to provide educational opportunities only for women along with financial support and to make policies, practices and regulations that will “reduce the workload of women at home”. It is important to address the problem of access to finance for women entrepreneurs, to create new investment vehicles to increase the funding provided to women entrepreneurs, to develop new financial products for entrepreneurs with family care responsibilities, to expand networks focused on connecting women entrepreneurs and to expand mentoring initiatives to ensure that women entrepreneurs receive the coaching they need to scale. Turkey is one of the countries with the lowest rates of women entrepreneurs. There are many compelling and hindering reasons for women to enter business life in Turkey. These include limited access to capital and technology, inadequate networks and information resources, limited access to information, business ownership and development, legal and policy barriers and business reconciliation, and family issues and concerns. Removing the obstacles to women becoming entrepreneurs requires determined and consistent policies. Considering that the construction of a strong society is possible through the empowerment of women, it is thought that women's participation in markets, access to credit and financial support should be encouraged through mechanisms such as financial support, considering the continuing role of women in the family, coordination should be ensured among institutions that provide support to women, and qualified policies and support rates for women entrepreneurs should be increased. When developing policies to increase women's participation in the workforce, the low level of education should be taken into account and policies that encourage and support women's entrepreneurship should be developed accordingly.

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