

# Women's Entrepreneurship in the context of problems, characteristics and reasons

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## MAKALE BİLGİLERİ

Araştırma Makalesi  
Geliş Tarihi: 18 Mayıs 2022  
Revizyon 10 Haziran 2022  
Kabul tarihi 14 Haziran 2022

## Abstract

In this study, women entrepreneurship is discussed from various perspectives. The reasons that lead women to become entrepreneurs, the problems faced during and after establishing the business, the characteristics of women entrepreneurs, women's thoughts about entrepreneurship and their thoughts on the comparison of male-female entrepreneurship are discussed. This study was conducted with women who are registered with Van Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Problems experienced by entrepreneurial women, the advantages and disadvantages they faced were tried to be revealed through a semi-structured interview form. Unlike other provinces, female participants interviewed within the scope of the research are officially registered with the Chamber of Commerce. After the literature review in the study, what entrepreneur women experience while continuing their business life has been revealed within the framework of Van province. At the end of the study, it was seen that material and moral problems are important in women's entrepreneurship. It has been revealed that self-confidence has an important place in women entrepreneurs. Some women stated that they were better than men in entrepreneurship, while others stated that men were better in this regard.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Woman, Entrepreneurship, Van

## Sorunlar, özellikler ve nedenler bağlamında kadın girişimciliği

## ARTICLE INFO

Research Article  
Received 18 May 2022  
Received in revised form  
10 June 2022  
Accepted 14 June 2022

## Özet

Bu çalışmada kadın girişimciliği çeşitli açılardan ele alınmaktadır. Kadınları girişimci olmaya iten nedenler, iş kurma sırasında ve sonrasında yaşanan sorunlar, kadın girişimcilerin özellikleri, kadınların girişimcilik hakkındaki düşünceleri ve erkek-kadın girişimciliğinin karşılaştırılması konusundaki düşünceleri tartışılmıştır. Bu çalışma Van Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası'na kayıtlı kadınlarla yapılmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu aracılığıyla girişimci kadınların yaşadıkları sorunlar, karşılaştıkları avantaj ve dezavantajlar ortaya konulmaya çalışılmıştır. Araştırma kapsamında görüşülen kadın katılımcılar diğer illerden farklı olarak Ticaret Odası'na resmi olarak kayıtlıdır. Çalışmada literatür taraması yapıldıktan sonra Van ili çerçevesinde girişimci kadınların iş hayatlarını sürdürürken neler yaşadıkları ortaya konulmuştur. Çalışmanın sonunda kadın girişimciliğinde maddi ve manevi sorunların önemli olduğu görülmüştür. Kadın girişimcilerde özgüvenin önemli bir yere sahip olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bazı kadınlar girişimcilik konusunda erkeklerden daha iyi olduklarını belirtirken, bazıları erkeklerin bu konuda daha iyi olduğunu ifade etmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kadın, Girişimcilik, Van

## Introduction

The issue of women entrepreneurship has been recent years topic. Rates of and problems women entrepreneurs face, which are supported and encouraged to attract women to business life, differ according to societies. Women entrepreneurs may encounter several problems due to society's responsibilities on individuals, funding, finding a qualified workforce. These problems can sometimes happen during the starting of the business and sometimes after establishing the workplace recent studies show that women, like men, are engaged in entrepreneurial activities and they think that they can be successful in this regard and that their efforts are in this direction. This study it is aimed to determine the status of women from various perspectives in the context of women entrepreneurship, which is started to be emphasized frequently these days. For this purpose, the research was conducted on women who continue their activities in the textile sector registered with the Van Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the province of Van

## Literature Review

Since entrepreneurship was considered the main source of growth, innovation and economic development, the factors affecting the emergence of new companies have been on the agenda of economists, researchers and politicians in most countries (Banon and Lloret, 2016:10).

Entrepreneurs are individuals who establish businesses or businesses that take financial risks to make a profit. In this way, they contribute to economic growth, productivity, product innovation, and social networks development. There may be various factors underlying the idea of starting an enterprise (Ribes-Ginera, Moya-Clementeb, Cervello- Royob, Perello-Marina, 2018:182).

Entrepreneurship is an important leader of innovation, growth and competitiveness. Small businesses and entrepreneurs play a crucial role in the economies of the European Union as they have a strong influence in sectors such as service and knowledge-based activities (Korres, Kitsos, Hadjidema, 2008: 126). Schumpeter (1921) stated that entrepreneurship is an essential element of a country or a region (Kong, Qin ve Xiang, 2021:320).

Entrepreneurial activity can provide economic development and growth (Berger and Kuckertz, 2016:5163). On the other hand, economic growth depends on individuals' intentions to entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial intent refers to a conscious mood that directs attention, experience, and activity towards a specific goal or goal (Liu et al., 2021: 4). Many women with entrepreneurial intentions in a country can pave the way for more women entrepreneurship activities.

Women entrepreneurship is generally defined as a women entrepreneur who has her workplace, operates in this workplace, makes production and marketing, communicates with other people, and decides to invest (Ecevit, 1993: 19-20; Beduk, 2005: 111; Soysal, 2010: 73-74; Tahtali, 2018:24; Kaygın et al.,

2019:120). Therefore, women entrepreneurship refers to the process carried out by individuals who start from the creating stage of the business and make decisions at each part of the business's life.

Female entrepreneurship refers to the rate of women engaged in entrepreneurial activities in a country (Xie, Wang Xie, Dun, Li, 2021:473) and has attracted great attention in recent years due to its increase in developed and developing countries (Dheera, Lib, Trevino, 2019:1). It is seen that this interest arises from various reasons such as creating new employments, contributing to the family, desire to do business independently, to be an individual who takes a role in society. Because of its importance, world societies make efforts for women to be more involved in business life (Kaygın, Zengin, and Topçuoğlu, 2019:120).

The belief that this activity contributes to social and economic development effectively increases women entrepreneurship (Dheera, Lib and Trevino, 2019:1). Entrepreneurship is generally seen as a male occupation, although women's businesses are rising worldwide. It is seen that the businesses owned by women are smaller, have fewer employees, generate less income and have less access to funding compared to the ones owned by men (Monteith and Camfield, 2019: 112). The support given to solve the problems that women entrepreneurs face in their businesses should be continuous (Kutluay Tutar and Balkaya, 2021:114). Some countries have positive institutional support for women entrepreneurship, while others do not (Xie, Wang Xie, Dun, Li, 2021:470). In former countries, women establish new businesses by using their entrepreneurial skills.

The concept of entrepreneurial capabilities means the ability of an entrepreneur to start and grow a venture, to identify and combine various resources successfully (Liu, Kulturel-Konak and Konak, 2021: 3). Women entrepreneurs are trying to contribute to their country in a competitive environment by using such talents.

When a business starts its activities, access to necessary resources and funding differs between men and women. Godwin et al. (2006) state that women can see this difference when they get the necessary resources. Generally, women entrepreneurs who succeed in business activities are characterized by contradictory characteristics (Banon and Lloret, 2016:11).

The reasons for women entrepreneurship vary depending on countries and cultures (İplik, 2012:46). Entrepreneurship provides women advantages such as being free and independent, acting more comfortably in their businesses and making short or long-term plans for the business they have started. As a result of entrepreneurship, women use resources efficiently, establish business relations, and have the opportunity to transfer their experiences to their work (Tahtali, 2018: 24). Women entrepreneurship activities contribute to improving women's social status, decreasing the rate of unemployment, and increasing the quality of social life. Despite the social and economic development of women entrepreneurship worldwide, women are less engaged in entrepreneurial activities than men (Xie, Wang Xie, Dun, Li, 2021:470). This is because of problems arising from being a woman and arising from work and environmental conditions (Soysal, 2010). To overcome these, women show characteristics like being competitive, dynamic, independent, resourceful, courageous, self-confident and patience (Ballı, 2015:36).

The low rate of starting a business among women may be due to unequal responsibilities between men and women in patriarchal societies. In addition, when a man establishes a business, he wants to maximize his economic benefit, while a woman feels that she gets more satisfaction with activities that include social and environmental ones (Banon and Lloret, 2016:11). A woman can also become an entrepreneur for reasons including the glass ceiling syndrome (Ribes-Ginera, Moya-Clementeb ,Cervello-Royob, Perello-Marina, 2018:183), which expresses the difficulties in her promotion to senior management. It is stated that personal and individual factors related to a woman herself are effective at establishing a business. This group includes psychological and mental and motivation (desire to achieve independence, need for success, individual perception of issues (risk-taking, self-confidence, perceiving the opportunity to start a business). Many investors agree that these aspects play a great role in starting a business. Women's socio-economic characteristics (age, education, income, work experience) are also meaningful (Perez-Perez and Aviles-Hernandez, 2016:26).

In our country, women have engaged in economic activities according to each period's unique conditions and characteristics in history (Çıkmaz, 2017: 34). Entrepreneurial women are innovative and self-confident individuals, cooperate with others, achieve economic independence, establish a work-life balance, and create job opportunities (Keskin, 2013:63). That is why women entrepreneurship is supported and encouraged in the country. Women can contribute to the development of businesses, networks, financial institutions and the reshaping of social-cultural values, and they can play a decisive role in the fight against poverty (Toprakçı Alp and Aksoy, 2018: 220).

## Method

### Purpose and Importance of the Study

One of the determinants of the level of development of countries is businesses. As the number of these businesses increases, the economy also develops. Therefore, it is valuable to increase the number of them, in other words, the number of entrepreneurs. To increase the number of businesses, it is aimed to reach stronger economies by increasing the number of women entrepreneurs today. In order to increase the rate of women entrepreneurship and maintain healthy activities, it is essential to identify problems, discuss and examine similar issues. In this context, it is aimed to solve the problems faced by women who carry on women entrepreneurship activities affiliated to The Chamber of Industry and Commerce in the province of Van to offer solutions and contribute to the literature.

### Data Collection Method of the Study

The interview method was used in the research. Using the semi-structured interview technique, primary data were obtained from women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs were contacted in order to be able to interview. Written notes were taken during the interview. In order to conduct an interview, a literature review was done and questions were formed in this way. The questions were introduced to two experts and their opinions were taken. The questions were finalized according to the experts' opinions and they were had with women in entrepreneurship activities. Qualitative research does not take the researcher to certain conclusions. To understand the essence of an event, evaluations are made within the current environment while the research is being carried out (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

### Data Collections and Scales

The data were collected through the interview form. Primary data were obtained from women entrepreneurs registered with the Chamber of Commerce by using the semi-structured interview technique. Questions created for the interview were created by scanning the resources related to women and entrepreneurship. The questions were revised and finalized in line with the opinions of academics from the relevant field, and interviews were held.

### Example Group of the Study

The universe of the research consists of entrepreneur women registered with the Van Province Chamber of Commerce. Data were obtained by semi-structured interview technique with 13 women entrepreneurs selected from this universe. Interviews were conducted with women entrepreneurs who volunteered to participate in the research between December 2021 and January 2022.

## Findings

This section includes the findings obtained from the interviews with women entrepreneurs. The descriptive results are presented in the table below.

Table1. Findings of Women Entrepreneurs Related to Their Demographics

Participants	Age	Education Status	Marital Status	Children	Age of starting a business	Any other entrepreneurs in the family?	The way of starting a business
P1	44	High School	Married	3	34	None	I founded it myself
P2	48	Primary	Married	3	37	Husband	I founded it myself
P3	49	High School	Married	2	27	None	I founded it myself
P4	32	High School	Single	-	25	Sister/Brother	Family Business
P5	39	Elementary School	Married	4	30	None	I founded it myself
P6	44	Elementary School	Married	2	32	Sister/Brother	I founded it myself
P7	46	High School	Single	-	20	None	I founded it myself
P8	37	Elementary School	Single	-	22	None	I founded it myself
P9	45	University	Married	2	32	None	I founded it myself
P10	46	Elementary School	Married	2	30	None	I founded it myself
P11	33	University	Married	2	24	Sister/Brother	Family Business
P12	36	University	Married	2	28	Sister/Brother	I founded it myself
P13	27	University	Married	1	23	None	I founded it myself

The age of women entrepreneurs is as follows: The youngest participant is 27 years old. The oldest female entrepreneur is 49 years old. The number of people in their 30s is 5. The number of people in their 40s was determined as 7. When the education level is examined, it is seen that the 48-year-old entrepreneur is an elementary school graduate. Female entrepreneurs who graduated from elementary school are 39, 44, 37 and 46 years old, respectively. 4 women are high school graduates. 4 women are university graduates and one of these is the youngest one among the participants. Considering the marital status of women entrepreneurs, it is seen that 10 of them are married and the other 3 are single. One of the married women entrepreneurs has 4 children, 2 of them have 3 children and 6 of them have 2 children. When we look at the age of women entrepreneurs to start entrepreneurship, it is seen that 7 of them started entrepreneurship in their 20s. It is seen that 6 of them are in their 30s. Considering the answers given according to whether there is another entrepreneur in the family or not, it is seen that 8 people answered no. It has been seen that the siblings of the 4 people who answered yes are entrepreneurs.

### Findings Concerning the Reasons Leading Women to Become Entrepreneurs

Considering the answers given by women entrepreneurs to this question, 2 women stated that they were entrepreneurs to continue their family venture. Three people stated that they became entrepreneurs to meet their family needs. 2 women said they became entrepreneurs thanks to their education. P1 entrepreneur, on the other hand, made a statement explaining the importance of entrepreneurship and stated that he was an entrepreneur with the idea of "employment and reproduction are important because it reveals my special talents and sets an example for young people". While some women are entrepreneurs for self-development and ideals, others stated that they are entrepreneurs to meet their families and children's needs. These findings show that education, environment, ideas, desire to be boss and to meet needs are factors leading to entrepreneurship.

### Findings on Choosing Job

Considering the answers given by the participants to the question of "why did you choose the job," 4 women stated that they did it because they liked the job. 4 women expressed that they did because of their needs. Three people said that they did such a job after their related education. P8 replied, "I chose it because it is my dream job". It is seen that education, favorite job and needs affect the chosen job.

### Findings on Problems Encountered While Establishing the Business

Among the women's answers, it is seen that the opinion of "women cannot be managers and women do not work" was expressed by 6 women. Society imposes several responsibilities on individuals and expects them to act in certain ways. In traditional societies, there is an understanding that "women should not work, they should do the work at home". Therefore, it was stated by almost half of the participants that there is such a thought in our society. The economic situation, which is one of the most important problems in entrepreneurship, has also come up in this research. Seven women stated that economic problems were among the problems they faced. Finding qualified personnel and finding a workplace were also among the problems encountered.

#### Findings on Problems Encountered After Establishing the Business

Considering the answers given by women entrepreneurs to the problems they have faced after establishing the business, 4 people said that they experienced economic difficulties. Seven women entrepreneurs stated that they encountered non-economic problems. Some women entrepreneurs listed 2 different problems, of the 3 ones. 2 women entrepreneurs stated they experienced security problems. An entrepreneur stated that he had problems finding a partner. Another entrepreneur stated that they had faced different problems such as "Psychological pressure, environmental, legal problems, moral problems". The economic dimension, which is the necessary factor for entrepreneurship, came out as one of the problems in this study.

#### Findings on Required Characteristics of Women Entrepreneurs

Considering the findings regarding women entrepreneurs' characteristics, 9 people stated self-confidence. Self-confidence, which is one of the characteristics that should be in entrepreneurial individuals, has an important place in the success of individuals and their belief in determining the results of their activities. Values such as patience, determination and honesty are also included in the specified characteristics.

#### Findings on Recommendations for Women to Start a Business

When looking at the advice for women who will start a business, 4 women entrepreneurs stated they should do a job they already knew. In addition, it is suggested that they should be self-confident, receive education, develop themselves, not give in to pressures, and be assertive. There are also suggestions for making decisions in line with their education. Entrepreneurs also recommend effective communication with customers.

#### Findings on Thoughts on Entrepreneurship

Considering the thoughts of women entrepreneurs about entrepreneurship, Six of those stated that their entrepreneurship is difficult. P1 stated that "he saw entrepreneurship as an activity that they should do without any difficulties or despair, believing in what they do and loving it, and never giving up". P5 said, "entrepreneurship is very difficult; I would not do it if I had my current mind". P13, on the other hand, made an important suggestion and said, "Women entrepreneurship is difficult in our society, but it is still in the hands of women to overcome it. For women entrepreneurship to receive more support, our entrepreneurs need to show themselves and develop themselves."

#### Findings on the Differences between Male and Female Entrepreneurship

When women entrepreneurs compared themselves with male entrepreneurs, they expressed their thoughts: Three women entrepreneurs stated that women are more successful than men. Two female entrepreneurs stated that female entrepreneurship is more backward than male entrepreneurship. Two participants stated that men are more independent. Some of the answers given are as follows: P1 stated that "women care more about doing the job in a quality way and women entrepreneurs do their work with meticulousness and devotion". P10 said, "Men are ahead of women because they are more relaxed and freer". P12 "Society's perspective on women and our society's sexist perspective restrict women's business life, as in every other field." P13 "Male entrepreneurs are freer. Women entrepreneurs are dealing with entrepreneurship on one hand and housework on the other, and they are divided into ten parts." Considering the findings, some of the women believe that they make entrepreneurship as successful as men. Others stated that women entrepreneurship activities are not developed as much as men for various reasons. Others stated that a few problems stemming from being a woman reduce their entrepreneurial activities.

#### Discussion

This study deals with the issue of women's entrepreneurship, which is tried to be developed in our country and the subject of women entrepreneurship was discussed from different aspects. The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

In the study, women with different education levels and starting entrepreneurship at different ages. Eleven women stated that they had started their own business. Two people continue the family business. It can be said that because most of them set up their businesses, they contribute to society in terms of making innovations, creating new employment areas and preventing unemployment.

When we look at the reasons that lead women to entrepreneurship, it has been seen that they are entrepreneurs because of meeting their family needs, continuing the family enterprise, being an entrepreneur after the education they have received, revealing their talents and setting an example for young people. Women need to be entrepreneurs for themselves, their families and society. Entrepreneurship will be positively affected when women succeed in their businesses and ensure their sustainability. Culture is of great importance in directing individuals to entrepreneurship. Creating a culture supporting entrepreneurship, especially feeding young people with this culture, can increase the rate of entrepreneurship.

When we look at why women choose the job they do, it is determined that they like that job, do that job for their needs, and choose it because of their education. Many reasons are affecting the choice of profession. Making entrepreneurship with love and supporting it with education can increase the success of this process.

Different problems can be seen in the entrepreneurship process. Social values, economic dimension, finding qualified personnel and partners are among these problems. These are among the expressions of women entrepreneurs. It has been observed that the problems faced after and while starting a business are similar. To be successful, these problems must be eliminated. In order to eliminate the problems, society's perspective on entrepreneurship can be improved positively by highlighting the advantages of entrepreneurship. Economic resources can be diversified and various information can be given on this subject.

There are some qualities that entrepreneurs should have. Considering these characteristics that came out in the research, it was seen that there were concepts such as self-confidence, patience, being ambitious, and honesty. It can be said that these features are important features in every sector and entrepreneurs also experience these features. For an individual to be successful in his/her job, he/she needs to know enough about the job. In addition, the participants recommend features such as self-confidence, education, assertiveness and communication to women who will start a business. It can be said that women who have been in business and competed for a certain time recommend these features to women due to their experience and knowledge.

When the emerging ideas about entrepreneurship are examined, it is seen that entrepreneurs stated that it is difficult. Some entrepreneurs expressed that they needed to overcome this difficulty and refresh themselves. It can be said that entrepreneurs are determined about entrepreneurship and desire success.

Looking at the comparison of women and men's entrepreneurship, it was seen that some women believed that they were more successful than men. Some entrepreneurs stated that men are more successful in entrepreneurship. It can be said that this comparison was answered by considering both believe that women will be successful in entrepreneurship and some problems arising from being a woman.

In addition to the support and incentives given to increase women entrepreneurship and reach the desired stage, it is necessary to carry out studies that deal with women entrepreneurship from various aspects and increase the studies. For this reason, the topic should be handled in different dimensions and areas within both qualitative and quantitative studies. Finally, it was suggested that the women who will start a business should do the job they know the best and their success is shown paralleled with doing the job with their vision.

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