

# Motivations of women entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector: The case of Türkiye

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## ABSTRACT

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Entrepreneurship,  
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This study aims to reveal the factors that motivate women entrepreneurs to become entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector in Türkiye. Qualitative research approach was adopted to examine these motivations of the women entrepreneurs in depth. Within the scope of the study, interviews were held with 18 participants between December 10, 2023 and January 25, 2024. The research used a semi-structured interview form as a technique for collecting data. As a result of analyzing the data obtained within the scope of the interviews, five dimensions were revealed that motivate women entrepreneurs to become entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector in Türkiye. These dimensions; to own their own business, financial independence, skills' adjustment to the sector, family, friend recommendations and encouragement, and the attraction of the food and beverage sector. In the conclusion phase of the research, assessments were conducted based on the results, and recommendations were developed.

## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship involves using one's entrepreneurial abilities to create riches via new business initiatives. This contributes to society and the national economy by capitalizing on opportunities in a dynamic social, political, legal, and economic landscape (Kumar and Singh, 2021). Entrepreneurship has been a crucial factor in driving economic growth at many levels (national, regional, and local) in both advanced and developing countries throughout history (Hessels and Naudé, 2019; Srimulyani and Hermanto, 2022).

Entrepreneurs are a crucial catalyst for societal improvement. Entrepreneurs have a crucial role in initiating and managing firms, generating jobs, accumulating money, and preserving economic stability (Simpson et al., 2012; Garaika and Margahana 2019). The engagement of both genders is crucial for economic and social progress. The economic and social growth process will be incomplete and uneven if women are primarily absent (Keskin, 2014). Globally, there is a significant surge in women's inclination for entrepreneurship, leading to a higher number of women initiating new company endeavors (Meyer, 2018).

The success of women entrepreneurs in society not only provides economic advantage, their contribution to cultural and social fields is at least as important as their economic benefit and is the most important development hope for countries (Konakhoğlu and Kaleözü, 2023). Promoting

women-owned entrepreneurship is crucial for any society striving for comprehensive development, as it enables women to capitalize on the possibilities it offers for personal advancement and economic prosperity (Ziyae et al., 2021). The global trend of promoting and fostering women's entrepreneurship is also visible in Türkiye. Based on the statistics released in 2023, the percentage of women entrepreneurs in Türkiye was at 17.4%, which exceeds the global average (Kadingirisimci, 2024).

Women entrepreneurs in Türkiye mostly participate in entrepreneurial activities within the tourism industry, specifically on the food and beverage sector (Akça, 2019). The tourism business is widely recognized as one of the industries that provides the greatest support for women's entrepreneurship globally (Lashley and Rowson, 2010). The tourism industry ranks as the third biggest sector in global commerce. The mobility of both domestic and international tourism is continuously growing and evolving, leading to a continuous expansion of the sector's economic contribution and scale. Likewise, this industry demonstrates consistent growth and is at the forefront of women's entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial women in the tourism industry have shown their ability to create chances for themselves and showcase their potential, thanks to the prevalence of small and medium-sized firms and the relatively low obstacles to entry (Figuroa-Domecq et al., 2020). Similarly, women entrepreneurship plays a significant role in driving the tourism industry in Türkiye (Özdemir, 2023).

Understanding the factors that drive people to become entrepreneurs is crucial in the field of entrepreneurship studies (Fatoki, 2010). Moreover, the drive to become an entrepreneur may also propel a person towards achieving success in entrepreneurship (Mahto and McDowell, 2018). Motivation has a crucial role in the performance and long-term viability of an enterprise (Nhemachena and Murimbika, 2018). Therefore, understanding the factors that motivate women to pursue entrepreneurship is crucial in order to foster women entrepreneurship in Türkiye. Studies in the literature generally focus on the problems experienced by women entrepreneurs (Das, 2000; Panda, 2018; Erkol Bayram, 2021). There is no study in the literature on the motivation of women entrepreneurs to become entrepreneurs, especially in the food and beverage sector. The literature on women entrepreneurs in the food and beverage business mostly examines the situational analysis and challenges faced by these women (Kraja and Berberi, 2023; Sutrisno, et al., 2022; Akça, 2019; Gül and Gül, 2018). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the motivations of women entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector in Türkiye to establish their own enterprises. This study is expected to fill the existing gap in the literature regarding the motivations of women entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector.

## 2. Literature Review

### *Women's Entrepreneurship Motivations*

Entrepreneurial motivation is the inclination or drive to efficiently and autonomously organize, lead, and oversee organizations, individuals, or concepts (Johnson, 1990; Solesvik, Iakovleva and Trifilova, 2019). It also encompasses the urge to start one's own firm (Hessels et al., 2008). Prior studies indicate a robust and favorable correlation between entrepreneurial drive and the choice to pursue entrepreneurship (Collins et al., 2004), as well as future entrepreneurial endeavors (Shane et al., 2003). Therefore, having knowledge about the motives of women entrepreneurs is crucial for comprehending the essence of entrepreneurship and providing assistance for women in the field of entrepreneurship.

Women engage as entrepreneurs for same motivations as men: to become entrepreneurs, to own their own business, to fulfill their potential, to have control over their work, to support themselves and their families, to enhance their lives through careers, and to achieve financial independence (Rosti and Chelli, 2005; Hughes, 2006; Rajani and Sarada, 2008; Kirkwood, 2009a; Loscocco and Bird, 2012; Akehurst, Simarro, and Mas-Tur, 2012). Additionally, some women start their own business due to the responsibilities of parenthood and their roles as spouses/partners (Kirkwood, 2009b; Hilbrecht, 2016). Nevertheless, women, particularly in countries with low incomes, exhibit significant differences from men in certain attributes that impact their choices to establish their own firm or pursue entrepreneurship. The variations include age, work situation, educational attainment,

economic level, social connections, cultural norms, family heritage, marriage status, and familial responsibilities. Furthermore, significant societal, economic, and institutional considerations, such as pervasive gender discrimination and public perception, play a crucial role in influencing a woman's choice to embark on an entrepreneurial venture. (Tambunan, 2009).

### *Food and Beverage Sector within the Scope of Entrepreneurship in Türkiye*

The food and beverage sector is a vital component of the tourism economy. An expanding food and beverage industry may have substantial economic impacts on an entire country. (Wang et al., 2011). Moreover, the role of gastronomy, particularly its image and impact on customer satisfaction, has been shown to significantly influence behavioral intentions and destination success, further underscoring the sector's potential for growth and innovation (Onat & Güneren, 2024). The research titled "Dimensions of the Food and Beverage Sector in Türkiye - Gastronomy Economy," issued by the European Education and Scientific Research Foundation of Türkiye in 2021, indicates that the food and beverage sector in Türkiye has an estimated value of over 30 billion dollars (Türkiye-Avrupa Eğitim ve Bilimsel Araştırmalar Vakfı, 2021). Due to this factor, the food and beverage sector in Turkey has significant importance in the country's economy.

The food and beverage sector are a service sector that requires a large amount of labor and is characterized by intense competition. According to research undertaken by the European Education and Scientific Research Foundation of Türkiye, the food and beverage sector in Türkiye employs 1.26 million people, which accounts for 5% of the overall employment in the country (Türkiye-Avrupa Eğitim ve Bilimsel Araştırmalar Vakfı, 2021). It is well recognized that the success of the food and beverage sector, which is a part of the tourist business, depends on its human resources, which may provide a competitive advantage (Baum, 2007).

Due to its large scale and wide range of business sectors, the food and beverage sector is considered an appealing sector for aspiring entrepreneurs. The food and beverage sector are a very promising company with the greatest potential for development in the future. When assessing Türkiye's potential as a tourism destination, the food and beverage sector stands out as an appealing area for entrepreneurship.

## 3. Method and Material

The objective of this research is to determine the main motivations of female entrepreneurs who are involved in the food and beverage sector in Türkiye. The study used a qualitative research technique to thoroughly investigate the motives of women entrepreneurs. Qualitative research methodologies provide researchers a comprehensive understanding of participants' emotions, thoughts, and concepts (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Hence, qualitative case

studies provide abundant empirical findings that researchers might use to draw significant theoretical inferences (Creswell, 2007). The data analysis methodologies used were content analysis.

The data for this study was gathered via interviews, as a component of a qualitative research technique. The formulation of the interview questions began with the review of the relevant literature. An interview form appropriate for the purpose of the research was created by taking support from the studies in the existing literature (Hughes, 2006; Akehurst et al., 2012; Solesvik et al., 2019; Erkol Bayram, 2021). Afterwards, the interview form was sent to five academics who had competence in their respective fields, and their perceptive remarks were acquired. The interview form was modified as per expert recommendations. Following that, preliminary research was conducted with a small sample of four participants to determine the degree to which the questions were prone to being misunderstood. As the participants properly understood the interview questions, there was no need to modify the interview form. As a result, the interview form obtained its final version.

Various viewpoints about sample size in qualitative research may be found in the literature. Dworkin (2012) asserts that a range of five to fifty participants is sufficient for qualitative research, whereas Patton (2002) argues that there is no rigid guideline for determining sample size in qualitative research. Marshall et al. (2013) argues that while establishing sample size in qualitative investigations, it is crucial to consider data saturation and the accessibility of the target population. Consistent with the perspectives presented in the literature, the concept of theoretical saturation was used to ascertain the appropriate number of samples for this investigation. This study used an intentional sampling technique to ensure alignment with the research aims. Purposeful sampling is a commonly used approach in qualitative research (Özdemir, 2010). Purposive sampling is a sampling method frequently used in qualitative research in which the researcher selects individuals or groups with certain characteristics to collect data. In this method, the aim is to conduct sampling on individuals or groups that will provide data in the most appropriate and efficient way for the research question. With purposive sampling, researchers aim to gather in-depth information about the research topic by reaching participants with certain knowledge, experience or perspective (Suri, 2011; Robinson, 2013; Moser and Korstjens, 2017). In order to ensure that the research sample units were suitable for the purpose of the research, female entrepreneurs who own businesses in the food and beverage sector in Turkey were selected as participants.

Data was gathered from a sample of 18 women entrepreneurs who are currently running businesses in the food and beverage sector (Table 1). Participants were surveyed and data was gathered between the period of December 10, 2023, to January 25, 2024. The semi-

structured interviews were carried out via internet platforms. The main reasons for implementing interview forms via digital platforms are to provide easy access to participants, overcome time and space constraints, and make the research more efficient. Especially during and after the pandemic period, online interviews have become more preferred in research. All individuals willingly consented to participate in this study. The interviews with all participants were done in Turkish and then translated into English. The age range of the participants varies between 22 and 64, and the education level of the participants is mainly at high school and university level.

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants**

| Participant | Age | Education Level | Participant | Age | Education Level |
|-------------|-----|-----------------|-------------|-----|-----------------|
| P1          | 44  | Middle school   | P10         | 53  | Primary school  |
| P2          | 64  | Primary school  | P11         | 36  | Middle school   |
| P3          | 40  | High school     | P12         | 47  | Middle school   |
| P4          | 27  | University      | P13         | 50  | Primary school  |
| P5          | 22  | High school     | P14         | 29  | High school     |
| P6          | 29  | University      | P15         | 32  | High school     |
| P7          | 34  | University      | P16         | 34  | University      |
| P8          | 33  | High school     | P17         | 28  | High school     |
| P9          | 42  | Middle school   | P18         | 25  | University      |

*Source. Elaborated by Author*

The authors acknowledged that the data had reached saturation as no more insights were provided by the remaining participants, leading to the termination of the data gathering process. After obtaining the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded in audio format, transcribed accurately, and then converted to Microsoft Word. The time of each interview varied between 10 and 30 minutes.

The study used content analysis as the methodology for examining the data. Content analysis is a methodical and replicable procedure used to categorize a huge quantity of textual phrases into a smaller set of content categories, guided by well-defined coding standards (Stemler, 2000). The data was examined using the content analysis framework defined by Miles and Huberman (1994). This model offers a systematic methodology for researchers to examine, conceive, or develop ideas based on the unprocessed data. Initially, the unprocessed data were organized, and then, the statements provided by the participants were selected based on the study goals. The subsequent phase included thoroughly examining the participants' replies from start to end on many occasions. Subsequently, the themes were recognized and given names.

Researchers using the content analysis methodology must additionally assess the reliability and trustworthiness of the

method. Research in the field of literature suggests that content analysis may be proved via the use of several methodologies (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Elo and Kyngas, 2008). To ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the study, it is crucial to provide a thorough explanation of the research technique and its many stages. This study has endeavored to provide clear and thorough information on the research methodology and techniques. By using this strategy, readers will have a clear understanding of the exact procedures followed in the research and the scrupulous way in which they were carried out utilizing this methodology.

An additional method that demonstrates reliability and trustworthiness is to directly reference passages from the material being analyzed to illustrate the correlation between the facts and the conclusions. Therefore, participant assessments were linked directly to each conclusion in this study by using actual quotes. In order for the content analysis to be considered accurate, it is crucial to have at least two impartial coders participating in the coding process (Hall and Valentin, 2005). Therefore, the author and two proficient coders with specialized knowledge in qualitative research conducted the coding procedure for this study.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

Through content analysis of answers from women entrepreneurs, five main dimensions that impact the motivations of women entrepreneurs in the food and beverage business have been determined. This study uncovered those dimensions; to own their own business, financial independence, skills' adjustment to the sector, family, friend recommendations and encouragement, and the attraction of the food and beverage (see Figure 1). The section that follows presents a comprehensive overview of the research findings pertaining to the determinants that motivate women entrepreneurs into the food and beverage sector.

##### *To own their own business*

The idea of owning their own business is among the main motivations for women entrepreneurs to become entrepreneurs (Rajani and Sarada, 2008; Akehurst, Simarro, and Mas-Tur, 2012). The freedom of owning their own business is an important issue, especially for women entrepreneurs. As a result of the analysis of the data obtained, the findings of this study, to own their own business significantly influence the decision of women entrepreneurs to venture into the food and beverage sector. The majority of participants (n:16) mentioned to own their own business as the primary incentive for their decision to go into entrepreneurship in the food and beverage sector. Regarding this, for instance, P2 states that *"I worked as a worker in the food and beverage sector for years with low wages and poor conditions. I opened my restaurant as soon as I had the financial means to open my own business..."*

*Even though I sometimes do less work, the happiness of being my own boss compensates for the damage... I think owning your own business is the greatest freedom in the world."* and emphasized by P11 *"The most effective thing for me to become an entrepreneur was being my own boss. I have no one to answer to other than myself. Since I run my own business, I come to work every day feeling highly motivated. This makes me very happy."* Another participant P17 stated as, *"During my university years, I had the idea of starting my own business. My dream was to open a small restaurant. After working in the sector for a certain period of time, I realized my dream and started my own business. Although owning your own business gives a great responsibility, this happiness is priceless."*

##### *Financial independence*

The majority of women entrepreneurs (n:13) participating in the study, the second most important factor that motivated them to become entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector was financial independence. It is often emphasized in the literature that this factor affects women entrepreneurs becoming entrepreneurs (Hisrich, 1986). The data obtained in the study are parallel to the literature. Some of relevant answers of participants are given as follows:

*"The most effective factor in becoming an entrepreneur was my desire to earn my own money... The idea of supporting myself and my family financially was effective"* (P4).

*"I can say that the feeling of earning money by doing your own business and spending it freely influenced me to become an entrepreneur."* (P8).

*"At some point, the question of why I don't earn my own money instead of asking my wife for money triggered me to become an entrepreneur."* (P13).

##### *Skills' adjustment to the sector*

One of the most important issues for women entrepreneurs is that their skills match the sector in which they decide to become entrepreneurs. This harmony has the potential to directly affect women entrepreneurs' decisions to become entrepreneurs (Rosti and Chelli, 2005). The findings obtained by analyzing the data obtained within the scope of the research show that the compatibility of skills with the sector is important for the majority of participants (n:10). Below are a few answers on the subject:

*"I think that the match between the sector and my skills was effective in becoming an entrepreneur in the food and beverage sector. I think I am talented in human relations. In this way, I can get along very well with both my employees and my customers. I think this situation made me successful in the sector."* (P6).

*"My cooking ability helped me enter the sector as an entrepreneur. My desire to cook different dishes and*

especially to present different flavors together developed over time and I became a good chef in my field.” (P12).

“I think that my ability to cook beautiful and delicious food and my communication skills were effective in my entry into the sector. I think just making good food for the customers is not enough. Chatting with them, smiling face and sincerity are essential in this sector.” (P13).

**Family, Friend Recommendations and Encouragement**

Another factor that helps entrepreneurs become entrepreneurs in any sector is the advice and encouragement they receive from their family and friends (Krishna, 2013; Field, 2016). Recommendations and encouragement from family and friends are an important driving force for entrepreneurs to enter the sector and overcome the problems they will encounter. Women entrepreneurs (n:7) participating in the study emphasized that family and friend recommendations and encouragement were effective in their becoming entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector. Some of relevant answers of participants are given as follows:

“My family had a great contribution and encouragement in me becoming an entrepreneur. My wife and children told me that I should enter this sector because the food I cook was delicious. During difficult times, my wife and children even washed dishes and cleaned when necessary.” (P1).

“My family and friends were the driving force behind me becoming an entrepreneur in the food and beverage sector. I can still feel their support. They always motivated me in those moments when I wondered.” (P9).

“My friends always said that I cooked good food. They said why don't you open your own restaurant, saying that others should taste these dishes one day. Even though I insisted that I could not do it at first, the financial and moral

support of my friends was the motivation that encouraged me.” (P16).

**The Attraction of the Food and Beverage Sector**

The food and beverage sector is an interesting sector due to its structural features (Riley, 2005). The food and beverage sector, in terms of income, especially the economic advantages of the sector as well as the ease of entry into the sector, increases the interest of entrepreneurs. Below are a few of the participant answers supporting these views:

“In my opinion, the food and beverage sector is one of the sectors where a women entrepreneur will be successful. In recent years, the sector has been preferred especially by women entrepreneurs who are interested in gastronomy.” (P5).

“The food and beverage sector are an extremely attractive sector for women entrepreneurs. There are no strict rules for entering the sector. I also think that the food and beverage sector is adequately supported by the state for women entrepreneurs.” (P13).

“The increasing popularity of the food and beverage sector on social media and television programs also attracts women entrepreneurs to this sector. My entry into the food and beverage sector as an entrepreneur was influenced by the popularity of the sector on social media.” (P18).

**5. Conclusion**

This research aimed to identify the determinants that motivate women entrepreneurs to start enterprises in the food and beverage sector in Türkiye. Through the analysis of data collected from interviews, five dimensions that drive women entrepreneurs to enter the food and beverage sector in Türkiye have been identified. These dimensions; to own their own business, financial independence, skills' adjustment to the sector, family, friend recommendations and encouragement, attraction of the food and beverage sector

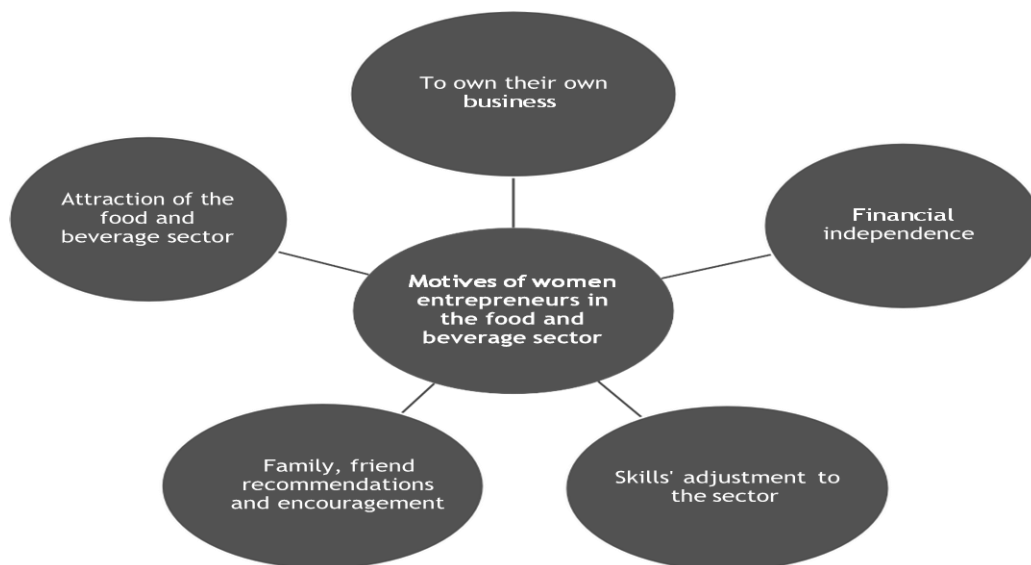


Figure 1. Motives of Women Entrepreneurs in The Food and Beverage Sector

adjustment to the sector, family, friend recommendations and encouragement, and the attraction of the food and beverage sector (Figure 1).

The main motivations for women entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector, as identified in the research, are the desire to own their own business and achieve financial independence. Particularly, participants emphasize the feeling of freedom that comes with owning their own business and financial freedom. Entrepreneurs are often motivated by the desire for financial independence and the opportunity to operate their own firm, as shown in many research studies in the literature. (Hisrich, 1986; Rajani and Sarada, 2008).

Compared to other sectors, the food and beverage sector is seen as reasonably accessible for entrepreneurs (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2020). In this context, the sector is suitable for entrepreneurs who consider themselves sufficient in terms of skills. This situation also emerged within the scope of the study. Participants highlighted that they ventured into the food and beverage sector due to the compatibility of their skills, such as culinary expertise, interpersonal skills, and hospitality, with the sector's requirements. Another important source of motivation that triggered the participants to become entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector was the recommendations and encouragement of family and friends. In this context, the participants emphasized that they realized their potential thanks to the support of their close circle and that they started business life with the support of their close circle.

The food and beverage sector has become a popular sector, especially in recent years, with the increasing interest in gastronomy all over the world. Furthermore, Türkiye's abundant tourism resources and its ability to attract millions of visitors year-round have significantly contributed to its growing popularity. Hence, it is unsurprising that the allure of the food and beverage sector serves as a driving force for individuals to embark on entrepreneurial ventures within this area.

Women entrepreneurs discover avenues to showcase their skills in the food and beverage sector, make meaningful contributions to society, and prioritize principles such as sustainability and creativity in their enterprises. In addition, women entrepreneurs in this sector are striving for more autonomy and equilibrium by establishing their own enterprises. Identifying the motives of women entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector will lead to more representation of women in the sector, greater diversity, and a wider societal viewpoint. Women entrepreneurs in the food and beverage business enhance diversity, broaden market prospects, generate societal influence, and foster innovation. Therefore, it is important that women are more represented and supported in this sector.

This study effectively identified the motivations of women entrepreneurs to become entrepreneurs in the food and

beverage sector in Türkiye. The study findings provide significant insights for future investigations. Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize that this study has some limitations, which might be used as prospects for future investigation. The data was acquired via semi-structured interviews with a sample of 18 women entrepreneurs active in the food and beverage sector in Türkiye. Therefore, the findings cannot be extrapolated to a broader scope. To expand on these findings and provide more universally applicable conclusions, future study might use quantitative methodologies. Furthermore, it may be advantageous to carry out further research in other countries to get a more comprehensive international perspective. In future studies on women entrepreneurs, researchers can conduct studies on topics such as analyzing success stories, examining social and cultural impacts, and evaluating supportive policies and programs.

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**INFO PAGE**

Motivations of women entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector: The case of Türkiye

**Abstract**

*This study aims to reveal the factors that motivate women entrepreneurs to become entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector in Türkiye. Within the scope of the study, interviews were held with 18 participants between December 10, 2023 and January 25, 2024. The research used a semi-structured interview form as a technique for collecting data. As a result of analyzing the data obtained within the scope of the interviews, five dimensions were revealed that motivate women entrepreneurs to become entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector in Türkiye. These dimensions; to own their own business, financial independence, skills' adjustment to the sector, family, friend recommendations and encouragement, and the attraction of the food and beverage sector. In the conclusion phase of the research, assessments were conducted based on the results, and recommendations were developed.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Women entrepreneurs, Food and beverage sector, Türkiye.

**Authors**

| Full Name            | Author contribution roles  | Contribution rate |
|----------------------|--|-------------------|
| <b>Serkan Yiğit:</b> | Conceptualism, Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Resources, Data Curation, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing, Visualization, Supervision | 100%              |

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