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RESEARCH ARTICLE

## A Qualitative Look into Gendered Entrepreneurship in Turkey

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### Abstract

People have started to question mainstream, supposedly gender-neutral, entrepreneurship definitions and perceptions with the confrontations of feminist perspective. Considering entrepreneurship as a gendered concept, in this study we handled gender as a lens in entrepreneurship. The purpose of this study is to portray gender specific characteristics and perceptions of entrepreneurship in Turkey. With this objective, we analyzed interviews with entrepreneurs in two Turkish entrepreneurship-focused business magazines and one popular business blog consisting of valuable startup and women entrepreneurs' stories and interviews. We performed qualitative analysis on the content of these interviews to understand the perspectives of female and male entrepreneurs, and the differences between them as to their statements. We analyzed the choice of words and interviewees' discourses. As to the findings, the most referred element of gendered entrepreneurship is family embeddedness based on stereotypical beliefs and norm systems. In addition, this finding shows how culturally embedded beliefs deeply effect women's expectations/projections, barriers and needs concerning entrepreneurship. In Turkey, there is only a handful of studies concerning women entrepreneurship from the perspective of gender as a lens. Therefore, in this article, gender specific perceptions of entrepreneurship in Turkey as a developing and a masculine country were revealed.

### Keywords

Gendered entrepreneurship • Women • Qualitative research • Content analysis • Gender in Turkey

### A Qualitative Look into Gendered Entrepreneurship in Turkey

Following a Schumpeterian perspective, mainstream entrepreneurship studies associate entrepreneurship with innovation and its reflection on development and growth, where new job opportunities are generally accepted as significant indicators. However, not all entrepreneurial efforts are expected

to be the same in terms of their economic contribution to the country. As to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (hereafter GEM), entrepreneurial activities are the result of necessity in several countries. Therefore, a great number of enterprises around the world are not even ambitious to grow at all (Amoros and Bosma, 2013, p.16). Nowadays, entrepreneurship is discussed in a range, where the traditionally accepted risk-profit match

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point of view is just a part of the whole picture, and different types of entrepreneurship and their related motivations have started to be accepted.

Women entrepreneurship evolved in literature by adapting feminist theories to entrepreneurship literature. Ahl and Nelson (2010), Ahl and Marlow (2012) and Jennings and Brush (2013) pointed out that entrepreneurship is a gendered concept not a generic one as launched traditionally and indicated the necessity of discussing women-specific characteristics of entrepreneurship.

In Turkey, despite an equal stance by legislative regulations, the gap between women and men (especially in political, social and labor market arenas) is apparent. Kelly *et al.* (2015) recognizes that geography, culture and societal attitudes also influence entrepreneurship rate and nature as well as a country's economic development. In parallel to world trends, especially after periods of crisis in Turkey as well, women entrepreneurship was focused on increasing employment ratios or reducing poverty rather than tackling structural problems against women entrepreneurship such as cultural resistance, prejudice, discrimination and barriers in accessing financial resources (Gul and Altindal, 2016). Considering entrepreneurship as a gendered concept and associating gender with cultural settings, the aim of this study is to broaden the understanding of entrepreneurship in Turkey as a masculine country. More specifically, the results address fields of operation in business, previous works, reasons for being an entrepreneur, ways to

finance their startups, challenges, and future projections for women and men entrepreneurs using their own words and descriptions.

### **Gendered Entrepreneurship**

Women entrepreneurship literature followed mainstream entrepreneurship literature and in doing so, as a parallel to mainstream efforts, concentrated on performance and growth issues (Ahl, Berglund, Pettersson and Tillmar, 2016). For quite a long and still continuing period, sex has been taken as a binary variable, and why women become entrepreneurs, what triggers them, what are the obstacles they face, how they access financial resources and what are the differences between men and women entrepreneurs are typical of the questions that have been in focus. Such research results identify these differences as gaps which women should fill in if they want to be as successful as their male counterparts. However, the utilized success norms of those studies were specified in men-focused studies. In this vein, entrepreneurship was considered as a gender-neutral concept (that was defined in men's terms) and women-specific characteristics of entrepreneurship were generally ignored until the 1990s.

Therefore, until the 1990s, gender was taken as a "variable" in entrepreneurship studies, and then gender became a "lens" in studies with a feminist perspective (Foss, 2010). Hurley (1999) asserts that entrepreneurship theories were developed by men conducting research on men-sampling, forming measurements applied to men, case

studies were composed capturing male-owned businesses while women were ignored from the outset of all these processes of. Depending on cultural perceptions, entrepreneurship is seen as a man's job, supporting that entrepreneurial career is also gendered (Shinnar, Giacomini and Janssen, 2012). The study by Ahl (2006), confronted the image of mainstream entrepreneurship studies that represent entrepreneurship as a gender-neutral phenomenon. Moreover, the gendered face of entrepreneurship as a male dominated concept was also pictured. Stevenson (1990) asserts that because of male dominated mainstream entrepreneurship theories and the scales used based on male norms, the profiles of underperforming or less qualified women entrepreneurs are not surprising. Therefore, generalizations such as "women entrepreneurs are worse performers, less ambitious and less successful" are just the result of misunderstandings or miscalculations based on measurement errors. A gendered structure of entrepreneurship also highlights a gendered division of labor (Ahl, 2004, p.59). That is, entrepreneurship requires time, effort, and commitment, as well as a strong will, determined, persistent, brave, independent and egocentric personal characteristics, and proposes little time for childcare, cooking, cleaning or other household chores. Thus, when men are ascribed as the entrepreneurs, the remaining unpaid and supportive jobs are automatically left to women. Supporting this situation, men are found dominant in starting ventures compared with women around the world (GEM, 2013), acknowledging women's child and elderly care re-

lated responsibilities arising from supposed household chores (Kelly, Brush, Greene and Litovsky, 2013, p.6).

As to the gender-neutral assumption of entrepreneurs, there is no women specific trait indicating successful women entrepreneurs. Women traits were all given in comparison with their male counterparts as they were presumed to set the norms. Female entrepreneurs are expressed as taking less risk, less energetic and less autonomous (Sexton and Bowman-Upton, 1990) and their businesses are less profitable and smaller in size (Matsa and Miller, 2014; Robb and Watson, 2012; Korunka et al., 2011). Unless they are widowed or divorced, not being the primary breadwinner, money is not considered as a success criterion or a motivator for women entrepreneurs (DeMartino and Barbato, 2003). Gender as a socially constructed phenomena being in the spotlight, shadows the generally accepted normative face of entrepreneurship. Ahl and Marlow (2012) highlight in particular two critical presumptions limiting the popular representation of entrepreneurship. The first one is masculine discourse providing universal depictions of who can be an entrepreneur, and the other is what is required fixing those who try but do not fit into those depictions.

Cromie (1987) indicates that men and women entrepreneurs are similar based on personality traits but differ in motive. Even in developed economies like Germany, women seem to be mostly motivated by push factors (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011). Men's motivation is making more

money, whereas women are dissatisfied with their previous jobs and careers and are seeking ways to balance their motherhood and work roles. Especially for women with dependent children, a propensity to start their own business as well as motivations to meet family obligations are found in the highest ranks (DeMartino and Barbato, 2003). Similarly, women entrepreneurship is portrayed with lower growth intentions, home-based and part-time ventures depending on the surrounding socio-economic structure (Marlow, Hart, Levie and Shamsul, 2012). Shmailan (2016) show that male entrepreneurs are more motivated by financial success than their female counterparts. The EUROSTAT report “the profile of the successful entrepreneur” shows that the leading three motivations (being one’s own boss, making more money, seeking a new challenge), are similar for both sexes (Schrör, 2006). However, women, who are implied as “successful” based on male-dominant criteria, differ in the following motivations: avoiding unemployment, combining work and private life, and age of children.

Feminist literature in management accepts the differences between men and women because of socialization and in return the differing perspectives on viewing the world. Therefore, women are seen different but not inferior, rather equally important (Calas and Smircich, 1989). Different socialization processes and societal expectations can be put as one of the explanations on different entrepreneurial motivations (Cromie, 1987). The vast literature and mainstream perspective is to help them fit into the male-domi-

nated business world, and make them learn how things need to be done in the accepted traditional way (Hurley, 1999). Therefore, instead of considering ‘sex’ as a variable, ‘gender’ as the relational and socially constructed concept needs to be in focus (Ahl *et al.*, 2016). Correspondingly, it is documented that gendered lens studies especially between 2003 and 2012 highlighted family embeddedness and gendered nature of entrepreneurship (Henry, Foss and Ahl, 2016). Therefore, the aim of women entrepreneurship studies needs not be to “fix” the women who do not match those male norms, but to reveal theories that accommodate women-specific characteristics and gender relations into their considerations.

There are important challenges that broaden the entrepreneurship literature. Mainstream entrepreneurship literature mainly explains “venture creation” using three basic constructs 3M: money, market, management. Considering the socially embedded characteristics of entrepreneurship, Brush *et al.* (2009) offers to expand 3M to 5M including “motherhood” and “meso/macro environment” to better understand women entrepreneurship. Therefore, the feminist viewpoint challenged the mainstream entrepreneurship image and extended the entrepreneurship research by showing the gendered nature of the concept, which is rooted deeply in families. Jennings and Brush (2013) stated that not all entrepreneurs seek profit, emphasizing the importance of other goals beyond economic motives. In addition, post-structuralist feminist perspective draws attention to

the function of language (and discourse in return) in producing and reproducing the inferior positioning of women (Ahl and Marlow, 2012). Rather, it implies how discourse sets boundaries on entrepreneurial mentality shaping the idealized image of the entrepreneur (Garcia, 2017; Orlandi, 2017; Smith, 2014; Stead, 2017). Thus, building on such challenges, women entrepreneurship studies are expanding in new directions.

In Turkey, women entrepreneurship started in the 1990s, and was seen as a way of providing economic freedom to women. However, starting in the second half of the 1990s it became a means of decreasing high unemployment figures and a political response mechanism to ameliorate poverty among the poor families in cities. Thus, the subject of women entrepreneurship transformed into households rather than the women themselves (Ecevit, 2007, p.47). Correlated with economic benefits to the country and an increased focus on women entrepreneurs, gave rise to academic publications from 1990s to date. In almost all studies conducted in Turkey, gender as a “variable” perspective is dominant in a gender-neutral entrepreneurship mind (e.g. Cetindamar, Gupta, Karadeniz and Eğrican, 2012; Yılmaz, Özdemir and Oraman, 2012; Sonmez and Toksoy, 2014).

### **Method: A Gender-Based Qualitative Research**

Fischer, Reuber and Dyke (1993) criticized some of the studies for not including male respondents, and thereby women’s relative disadvantage cannot be displayed. As

a result, these studies may not provide such concrete inferences. Therefore, to see the whole picture, this study addresses fields of operation in business, previous works, reasons for being an entrepreneur, ways to finance their startups, challenges, and future plans comparatively by including interviews with both sexes. Therefore, the aim of this study is to broaden the understanding of entrepreneurship and to portray gender specific characteristics of entrepreneurship in Turkey in terms of gender. To reach a deeper understanding about the differences between female and male Turkish entrepreneurs, qualitative content analysis was preferred.

### **Sample**

To understand the different aspects of females and males, the content of interviews with male/female entrepreneurs in two Turkish entrepreneurship-focused business magazines and in one blog consisting of valuable startup and women entrepreneurs’ stories and interviews were analyzed. Secondary data from the entrepreneur interviews of two Turkish entrepreneurship magazines were used: Step and Startup. Step, established in April 2013, had six issues in total. These, along with five downloadable issues were collated to examine. Only three out of 21 interviewees were women. Startup, established in April 2014, had four issues and 20 interviews were collated from the website. Since some interviews included a partner, it comprised the ideas of 23 entrepreneurs of whom six were women. Since only 20% of all samples were women, and the number of women in the sample was insufficient

to compare male and female counterparts, “women entrepreneurship stories” were added from the blogger’s website (muraterdor.com), someone who is a recognized freelancer business consultant in Turkey and especially interested in start-ups, women entrepreneurs, and their stories. There were 19 interviews held between 2012-2016 covering the stories of 22 women entrepreneurs. The final sample consisted of 66 entrepreneurs of which 31 were women.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The themes were decided beforehand, including their fields of operation in business, previous works, reasons for being an entrepreneur, ways to finance their startups, challenges, and future plans. The responses of the interviewees were coded in the related categories in the MAXQDA, qualitative analysis program. Subsequently, considering the content of these responses, codes were classified into subthemes to capture gender differences between entrepreneurs. Although mostly qualitative content was considered, some basic quantitative analyses were also performed.

### Findings

On the matter of age, 45% of the interviewees were between 25 and 35, and 36% of them were between 35 and 45. There were four interviewees over the age of 45 all of whom were women. The distributions of other groups were similar. Out of the 47 who reported education level, nearly all the entrepreneurs had a bachelor’s degree (93.6%), and a considerable amount of them

had graduate degrees (31.9%). 37% of the sample had graduated abroad, mostly from the USA, of whom 65% were men.

Having looked at the enterprise sector distribution, most entrepreneurs (82%) had established businesses in e-commerce, information technology (IT), education and counseling, and food and beverages. Men dominated IT, while women dominated education and counseling. 13 out of 14 were men operating in IT, whereas seven of the nine education and counseling services were operated by women, with these services mostly focused on marketing and management. Although e-commerce was mostly preferred by men, women also had some interest, especially when it came to child-related product/services. All the child-centered e-commerce ideas, such as second-hand infants’ wear and childcare products, were offered by women. Moreover, women preferred design related creative jobs such as photography, outfits, and women-focused products such as jewelry and skin care.

Although not mentioned in all interviews, most entrepreneurs had past job experiences (82.5%) before establishing their own businesses and at least had 55% worked in corporate firms. Of those who had started their careers as entrepreneurs from the beginning, most indicated that their business ideas were formulated at either undergraduate or graduate levels. None of these were woman.

Both pull and push factors influenced becoming an entrepreneur: finding needs in the market (28.33%), entrepreneurialism (25%),

familial breakthroughs (23.33%), freedom (10%), personal satisfaction (8.33%), and unemployment (5%). 88.24% of those who recognized an opportunity in the market were men. Among the remaining, 76.92% were who men stated that their entrepreneurial soul was the reason behind starting their own businesses. Therefore, men most-

ly select entrepreneurship because they have valuable and profitable ideas and entrepreneurialism in their spirit. On the other hand, personal satisfaction (100%), familial breakthroughs (83.33%) which mostly revolved around having a child, and freedom (60%) were more influential for women. Most salient themes are exemplified in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Reasons behind becoming an entrepreneur*

| Women   | Men  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Familial breakthroughs</b></p>  | <p><b>Finding needs</b></p>  |
| <p><i>After my first daughter was born, I left my job in 1996. In 1997, I established my first company. Everything started with my son. When I got pregnant, many people started to give advice. (Don't) Eat this; (don't) use this... after a while I became paranoid. In search of organic products, the problem grew. Considering time and money constraints, the reliability of products became important as well. My struggle in this process resulted in www.safkoy.com, showing that there are other mothers with the same problems.</i></p>   | <p><i>In my past, I was in the game sector. There was an environment where little teams could develop nice game projects, especially after improvements in mobile technology. We saw an opportunity in this field. Before developing my business idea, I closely examined the present sector and products, and I tried to understand why other solutions did not work and what their weak points were. When I looked at this globally, I realized this opportunity is universal.</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Personal satisfaction</b></p>   | <p><i>We thought that the internet would steer the job market because it is fast and cheap. Then, recruitment processes were starting to slip concerning the internet environment. When it started to slowly spread in Turkey, I decided to establish Secretcv.com and enter into this market.</i></p>   |
| <p><i>I'd opened a clinic when my children got into university. However, since my satisfaction was not only getting money out of my job, I closed my clinic and went to America. I came back to Turkey when I completed my research. I was already making my own creams at home. We thought why not create a cosmetics brand from Turkey? I'd been to many sectors as a professional. However, I couldn't see any future in any of them, there was always something missing.</i></p>  | <p><b>Entrepreneurialism</b></p> <p><i>We started to talk about how it would be, if we established an enterprise. Being students, we thought it would be a good experience to master the accounting, legal and commercial sides of the business. Then, we build our partnership even when there was no work at all. We were trying to come up with a business idea for every problem we faced. Finally, we identified difficulties when buying a bus ticket, and decided to establish OBilet.</i></p>                              |
| <p><b>Freedom</b></p>   | <p><i>Through my journey to America, I had ideas in my mind: "I have to establish my own company; I have to do something." 4-5 months later, we established a company. I mean when we were still students, well even technically before we started school, after one semester we had a company.</i></p>  |
| <p><i>After having a child, time management becomes one of the most important subjects for women. Being responsible for the home, work, the children and ourselves is not something you can handle with a timetable that others set. When you conduct your own business, maybe you wouldn't work the day your child becomes ill, but you can make things right the day after by working 12 hours. This is something that really liberates you.</i></p> <p><i>After my daughters were born, I didn't want to go back to my old job that had dense office hours. Even until my pregnancy leave finished, I started to perform freelance graphic jobs. In addition, I started in photography, in which I had previously trained. I participated in workshops abroad on newborn photography and gradually started to work myself on special day photography and graphic design.</i></p> | <p><i>Since childhood, I've always wanted to do my own job. Actually, I was interested in the dot.com sector when I first stepped into business life. Not having a concrete business idea, lead me to work in Unilever as a brand manager. I listened to my father's advice and developed myself, and learned a lot about marketing. After my military service, we established Brand It by accepting the insistent offer of my two beloved friends to present world brands from Turkey and to serve 360 degrees marketing.</i></p> |

Regardless of gender (70%), they mostly funded their enterprises with their own capital through either bank credits or own/family savings. Gender differences diverged in the source of funding supports. While men's parents financed their sons' enterprises, women found support from their husbands in the first place. For instance, one woman stated *"I asked my husband's advice while I was considering it. After all he became the one who supported me and financed my company at first"*, while a man stated, *"With my brother, we decided to become partners of Karhoo. Our parents backed us up."*

While some men were found eligible for funds by external investors, even for the huge amounts, this was not the case with women. That men were perceived as more trusted by investors can be interpreted from the interviews. For instance, one man stated, *"When you do a solid job, it's not hard to find funds. We attracted one foreign-based venture capitalist and two angel investors, and we got 2.5 million."*

Only two women were able to access government funds in addition to their own capital. One of the women founded a business promoting hair growth, which started as a huge worldwide success and has an industrial value. Even now she is still in search of investors to grow her business faster: *"It would be good, if we continued with an investor from now on. We are open to investors, continuing our meetings. With an investor, we can put forth a giant from Turkey."*

Distinguished challenges faced by entrepreneurs can be categorized as publicity & building trust (16%), forming their team (14%), financial (13%) and managerial (14%) problems. Women experienced more problems in the first three categories. Gaining the trust of customers and suppliers, advertising and publicity (especially if the line of business was e-commerce), finding members fitting the team, and handling bureaucracy were major challenges for entrepreneurs, regardless of gender. However, in addition to these, women were exposed to more serious concerns as well. For instance:

*The biggest obstructions are environmental conditions and capital. Everybody says you cannot do something...family/friends tell you what a risky business you are trying to get into, you will neglect your children and family, and you cannot be successful. As for capital, since the saving comes from the family, to regain the money is expected. Therefore, I suggest developing a discourse to persuade them along with a proper business plan to make them believe in your idea.*

*Women face more negative criticism than positive ones. "You can't, you can't handle it..."*

*...Especially in the first years, I was a young woman and I was exposed to nonsense attitudes of suppliers; they were not taking me seriously and wanting someone older and/or a man to deal with...*

On the men's side, some complained about the work-family tradeoff, based on spending long hours at work:

*At first, we accepted that dedication to the establishment brought us success. Nevertheless, it had a payoff. Then we learned to balance work and private life.*



*Working so hard meant you barely saw your friends/wife/kid. They also must make sacrifices as well. ...my wife's pregnancy, or my partner's two children. Without their support, none of these would have been possible.*

A huge discrepancy occurs in future projections among sexes. Men aspire to establish new startups, burst sales, and become a global leader, while women are cautious and set incremental goals. Even though some women expressed their aim as becoming sector leaders or expanding business abroad, none of them rivaled men in dreaming about the future. Some women also aimed to support other women or comfort mothers. Some sample statements can be seen in the Table 2.

“Women entrepreneurship stories” has a section in the interviews that asks if there are any difficulties being women in business life. Most women emphasized that working in corporate firms outweighed being one’s own boss, because of making less money for equal work and putting in extra effort to prove themselves as equivalents. Leaving sick child(ren) at home was one of the hardest things for them since they had to go to work. Moreover, they were also expected to take care of housework and children at home independent of their jobs. One interviewee said “*A woman’s job is always “secondary” to a man’s job or a woman’s other caring responsibilities*”. Due to increased responsibilities attributed to women by giving birth to

Table 2  
*Future projections and goals of entrepreneurs*

| <b>Women</b>   | <b>Men</b>   |
|--|--|
| <b>Pinpoint targets</b>  | <b>Being a global leader</b>   |
| <i>Goal is to build a company that makes profit.</i>   | <i>My aim is to;</i>   |
| <i>I have a goal of expanding our business and get into a more institutional structure in the next period.</i>   | <i>-place Monument as a world leader with regard to content management</i>   |
| <i>For the future, we desire to expand our product range and enlarge the target market. There are projects we work on to make difference. We want to realize them one-by-one. We'll see.</i> | <i>-make Medianova a world's giant, if god pleases.</i>  |
| <b>Being a leader in Turkey</b>  | <i>-be number one in the world.</i>  |
| <i>We aim to become the most preferred brand in Turkey especially in dancing costumes.</i>   | <b>Bursting sales</b>  |
| <i>We are strong right now, and we want to protect our leadership. Our aim is to be the first brand that comes to people's minds when it comes to service.</i>                               | <i>We aim to double our financial turnover.</i>  |
| <b>Expanding abroad</b>  | <i>We spent the last years investing in growth. This year, we have already exceeded 550 employees. Our aim is to close the year with more than 700 employees and a turnover of over 50 million TL.</i> |
| <i>Our goal is to make the company global by working with different brands so that we will serve more.</i>   | <b>New startups</b>  |
| <i>My goal is to reach more countries by extending our education counseling companies to different countries and open up branches of our language school.</i>                                | <i>My objective is to be a serial entrepreneur. Establish a startup, extend it, make it successful, and sell it or go public.</i>  |
|  | <i>I have a brand-new enterprise. I think it's very interesting and it will solve an important problem all around the world.</i>   |

a child, building a career becomes extremely tough and means that family support become essential. In this frame, entrepreneurship is considered a chance to manage time, and to balance work and home responsibilities more easily. For instance, one woman said, “*Although I work very hard, I think I fulfill my responsibilities better.*” Women also did not see any disadvantage of being a woman in their current jobs; rather it was an advantage.

Throughout the interviews, word frequencies of female and male interviewees were also calculated. Differences on the usage of words are presented in Figure 1. Both sexes use the following words more: All, before, big, com, continue, different, do, entrepreneur, first, himself/herself, important, investment, job, more, new, place, product, social, some, time, Turkey, www, and year. Men’s most frequently used words include technology, successful, and million; while women’s frequency list shows words women, decision, support, and job. Although the most frequently used words were somewhat

similar within these samples, the frequency of specific words differed. The most salient words men used were big, first, important, new, our, time, Turkey, year, successful, and investment. While women’s words were herself, women, decision, job, do, information, support, need, and time remarkably more.

### Discussion

Acknowledging entrepreneurship as a gendered concept and handling research and policies in this direction is important. Despite the good faith, government support, entrepreneurship programs, and strategy and action plans would only function to decrease unemployment rates and poverty in the short-run, if the causes and determinants of inequality are overlooked. They will not serve to decrease the actual gender gap, inequalities and structural problems that may affect long-run sustainable solutions. Although all the necessary legislative regulations regarding the equality of women and men have been made, women are still underrepresented in the labor market in Turkey (Metin and Kariman, 2013). The World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index Report (2018) reveals that Turkey is in 130<sup>th</sup> place out of 149 countries with a score of 0.628 where the female/male parity is 1.00. In this direction, to reveal the existing situation clearly in a gendered perspective, the aim of this study was to depict gender specific characteristics of entrepreneurship in Turkey. It focused on the fields of operation, previous jobs, financial support, and reasons for becoming an entrepreneur, challenges and future projections based on (online) published interviews of men and women entrepreneurs in the



Figure 1. Word frequencies of men and women entrepreneurs

years 2012-2016. A discrepancy was found between women and men, especially in their fields of operation, goals and motivations behind entrepreneurship. A clearer picture of divergence can be seen in Figures<sup>1</sup> 2a and 2b.

The representation of female and male entrepreneurs in the magazines was a finding itself. Only one fifth of all interviews were with women. They could not achieve as much space in the magazines as their

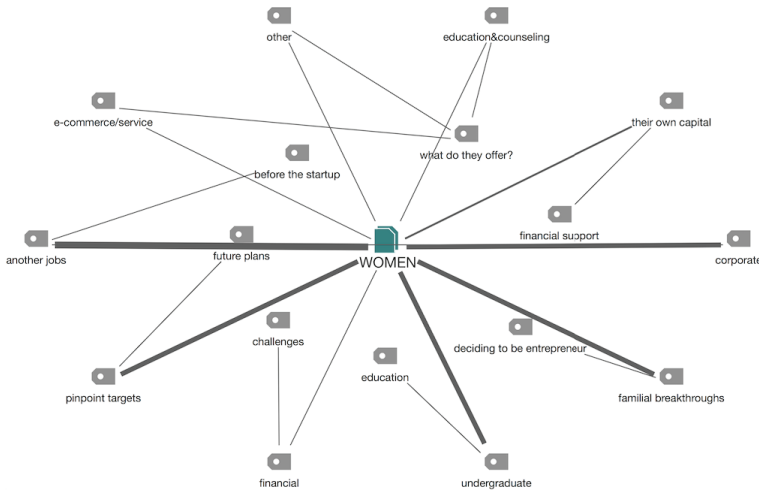


Figure 2a. Highlights of women entrepreneurs

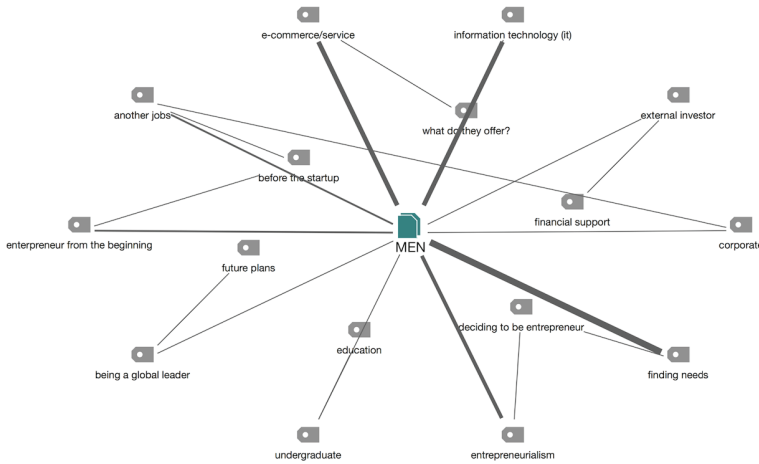


Figure 2b. Highlights of men entrepreneurs

<sup>1</sup> In reading Figure 2a and 2b, consider these points: 1- The bold lines are more frequently repeated and dominant characteristics of related group-men or women. 2- follow the points from the end points. For instances; in 2a, one of the dominant characteristics of women entrepreneurs is “family breakthroughs” as “deciding to be entrepreneur”. As another example, in 2b, for men’s, “deciding to be entrepreneur” depends mostly on “entrepreneurialism” and “finding needs”. However, “finding needs” is most prominent (because its line is bolder than “entrepreneurialism’s”).

male counterparts could. One reason of this underrepresentation is men's numerical domination in entrepreneurship. The TÜİK (2018) entrepreneurship bulletin showed that women entrepreneurs constitute only 9% of all entrepreneurs. Moreover, there is just a slight increase since 2010 while the official number is only 6.9% then (TÜİK, 2013). Furthermore, a GEM Women's Special Report indicated that the gender gap in early-stage entrepreneurship activity is greatest in Turkey among the participating 83 economies: three females for every 10 male entrepreneurs (Kelly *et al.*, 2015, p.7). According to the findings, more men were educated abroad, especially in the US; which is well known for its intense entrepreneurial activities around the world. Their decision to become entrepreneurs might be affected by experiencing such an environment. Secondly, since success is equated with money and publicity, where the findings point out the smaller scale businesses with pinpoint future targets of women owned enterprises, magazine editors might consider men's stories more attractive to the readers.

The differences between men and women are the results of experiences and social conditions and positions from the moment they born during the socialization processes that both sexes are subject to (Calas and Smirch, 1989, Fischer *et al.*, 1993, Hurley, 1999). Therefore, the socialization process women faced discourages them from doing/trying something (Fischer *et al.*, 1993) that is associated with the men's world. One of the female entrepreneurs said, "*We entered into business life too late, and we started to play*

*over the rules they (men) have set.*" Therefore, men arrange the rules and norms of doing business, and criticize women for not doing enough regarding their own perspectives.

Our findings show that women were exposed to serious criticism and reprimanded when they presented their business idea. They faced suggestions that they would not be successful and that they would neglect children and household chores. Men participants experienced none of these pressures. None of the women entered business life as an entrepreneur, even some women stated that they have always wanted to do their own jobs; they all had prior job experiences. Many actual or prospective women entrepreneurs may fear the possibility of being unsuccessful (Santos, Silva, Rodrigues, Marques and Leal, 2017; Simmons, Wiklund, Levie, Bradley and Suny, 2018) after all the "you cannot do it/ you will not succeed" statements. Probably, some prospective were dissuaded from furthering their business idea (Sperber and Linder, 2018). Therefore, the necessary social support for entrepreneurs is also not applicable to most (prospective) women entrepreneurs.

In Turkey, technology related, and engineering jobs are associated with men; those are men's job. Parallel to cultural beliefs, the results show men's domination in information technology (IT) related jobs and e-commerce. In contrast, overlapping with culture, women mostly involve themselves in child-care, education and design related fields. As highlighted in the study of Maden (2015) "male domination in certain sectors in Turkey" (Maden, 2015) is problematic for

women entrepreneurs, while the appearance of women entrepreneurs in certain sectors are unusual even in developed countries like UK and Australia (Martin, Wright, Beaven and Matlay, 2015; Ayre, Mills and Gill, 2011; Mills, 2011).

In the interviews, in response to a question dealing with disadvantages in business life, some women stated the advantageous faces of working in the fields matched with women. First, feeling comfortable in certain areas could be the result of consistency between business offerings and the socially accepted division of labor. Secondly, as Ekinsmyth (2013) states, being a mother could be advantageous instead of considering it disadvantageous in business life. As per her study, places such as day care centers, schoolyards, playgrounds and swimming pools that exclude non-mothers, can provide new business ideas that may come from their own or other parents' experiences, job opportunities, partners, suppliers, customers, and network opportunities. Therefore, some women could possibly benefit from business fields that are assigned to women. On the other hand, men may even see such business areas as women's work and avoid getting into the distaff zone and leave them to women utterly. In the end, however, social division of labor and social norms are being constantly replicated.

The reason for choosing entrepreneurship portrayed another sharp difference between men and women. Men became entrepreneurs because their entrepreneurial souls help them realize opportunities that market need with a great market value. Conversely, women's

reasons are mostly family related - having babies and/or personal satisfaction. Women quitting their careers to move for their husbands' new job/position is consuetudinary, likewise is being reluctant to go back to work after maternity leave. They always needed longer hours to spend with their children and take care of household chores. While entrepreneurship is ascribed as a way creating more time to look after children by women, men complained about not seeing their families much with the new ventures.

Social, cultural and institutional structures of a region/country also affect how women see their own businesses and how others see women's business (Brush *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, the cautious and incremental growth orientation of women in contrast to men's desire of being global leaders also needs to be considered in accordance with attached gender roles. Findings indicating women set pinpoint targets such as employing more people, increasing product range, and extending the production facility. Rarely, some reported their desires of being a prominent brand in Turkey and expanding abroad, albeit cautiously. They added that such expansions would happen very slowly. Conversely, men aimed at becoming world leaders, doubling their sales, and establishing new startups since they enjoyed the success. Therefore, (in)directly imposing on women that they could not succeed or even in the case of success (e.g. business survival), "growth is just a dream for you" kind of expressions are all discouraging.

The choice and frequency of words also yielded some supportive information to iden-

tify Turkey's entrepreneurship climate. Men's most frequent words are technology, successful and million with an underlying story: Men dominate technology related areas and by their success acquiring millions. Women used the words decision, support, job, women, need and time many more times than men did. The underlying story is that building a business is an important decision in life that requires husbands or extended families' support to realize it (Jabeen, Katsioloudes and Das, 2015; Mehtap, Ozmenekse and Caputa, 2019). In fact, they just needed a job, but corporate structures did not allow them to spend enough time with their kids. The results of Turkish Statistical Institute's (TÜİK) "time use research" employed in 2015 revealed an important insight into why women choose entrepreneurship and feel the need for flexibility at work: Women quitting their jobs because of carrying both the work and domestic responsibilities overwhelmed them. In that study, the time spent on daily housework was determined in terms of sex. On average, men spend 53 minutes and women spend 4 hours 35 minutes a day on household chores. The time spent for working men is 46 minutes and working women is 3 hours 31 minutes a day on average (TÜİK, 2015).

After all, men perceive entrepreneurship as an alternative, a way to make more money and follow their dreams. Women see it as a necessity, a more convenient job to balance work and life (Poggesi, Mari and DeVita, 2016; Rehman and Roomi, 2015), where life means taking care of their children and housework in accordance with division of labor imposed by social norms. One of the

interviewees said, "...I'm very busy with courses, lessons and purchase orders, and on top of that since I'm a housewife..." Therefore, women's career choice is mostly shaped by their responsibilities at home and their jobs are always considered secondary (Bogenhold and Klinglmair, 2015; Mehtap *et al.*, 2019). TÜİK 2015 data also showed that 57.3% of women, who are not involved in labor force, indicated "household chores" as the reason for not being a job seeker. Another nationwide study showed that 63.4% of participants believe that a woman's priority is to start a family and have children; 42% of them perpetuate the stereotypical belief of men's breadwinning and women's care-giving roles; 55% of them state that a woman should never work in case of having fewer children (Carkoglu and Kalaycioglu, 2012). As Baxter (1997) pointed out, this is a clear indication of the reflection of the inequality in both labor markets and domestic division of labor.

The present study demonstrates some conspicuous similarities with the previous studies held in Turkey, even the 1995 study of Directorate for Women's Status. Women's income is still secondary or additional if married; they still have the primary responsibility to do the household chores and take care of the children; they still fear failure at work in business life before starting their own jobs; the main motivation behind entrepreneurship is still the flexible working hours for women and income generation and being their own boss for men. Women do not want to enlarge their business, because they are already spending much of their time

on their families and children (Ecevit and Yuksel-Kaptanoglu, 2015). Becoming an entrepreneur does not change the domestic responsibilities of women, and thus even working flexibly makes them stressful (Ufuk and Ozgen, 2001). It points to the cultural and structural problems endemic in Turkey.

One of the most prominent topics related to women-themed social policies in Turkey is to enhance women's employment opportunities via women entrepreneurship (Metin and Kariman, 2013, p.102). Nevertheless, women employment levels and entrepreneurship has not yet risen to the desired levels. One deficiency is the efforts focusing only on attracting prospective women, excluding those who have reached certain points and who require different support. Secondly, policies and support programs stem from treating all women as a homogenous group (Ecevit, 2007, p.51-53).

Additionally, in line with US-based neo-liberal economic tenets, social and political token efforts are just a part of the reforms necessary for EU accession because women's entrepreneurship is seen only as a solution to employment problems by the long-standing government (Ozkazanc-Pan, 2015). The ministry of Turkey has launched an Entrepreneurship Strategy and Action Plan of Turkey 2015-2018, and the government accepts it. In the report, "women entrepreneurship" is categorized as a "thematic entrepreneurship" with social, youth, global, eco-entrepreneurship (p.5), not as primary as male entrepreneurship showing the state-based perception on gender inequality. Only this report itself shows the general percep-

tion of government on women's inferior position in reference to superior men-dominated areas. Even NGOs supporting entrepreneurship are divided by the political tenets in Turkey (Ozkazanc-Pan, 2015): For instance, CATOM, which is known for its fondness of the existing government, approaches women entrepreneurship as a means to solve unemployment issues from an Islamic feminist perspective. In contrast, a private secular foundation, KAGIDER approaches women entrepreneurship as a path to career advancement and gender equality. Therefore, entrepreneurship needs to be conceptualized as a socially constructed phenomena rather than market-based individual entrepreneurs in order to successfully promote gender equality in a society instead of short-term fixes in employment statistics (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013; Ozkazanc-Pan, 2015). Socially constructed gender roles are the most important challenge women entrepreneurs experienced in Turkey (Tuzun and Takay, 2017).

This study could contribute to literature in couple of ways. Firstly, In Turkey, there is only a handful of studies concerning women entrepreneurship from the perspective of gender as a lens and acknowledges the concept as a way to reduce gender gap. Additionally, almost all "gender as a lens" perspective studies are conceptual where the remaining applied studies and reports only examined/sampled women. Secondly, therefore, no study has been conducted in Turkey comparing men and women entrepreneurs' discourses on the bases of this perspective. Thirdly, gender specific perceptions on en-

trepreneurship in Turkey as a developing and a masculine country were revealed. Thus, those findings of such a patriarchal country could provide comparisons with different country samples.

The study is not without limits. Since magazines give space to success stories, the views, perceptions and reasons for failures of supposedly unsuccessful entrepreneurs could be overlooked. Moreover, the criteria “successful” is also set by existing cultural patriarchal norms. Thus, the selected interviewees could also reflect bias. Even so, the difference between perspectives of women and men is still significant. The findings of Kabasakal, Aycan, Baskurt, Varnali and Erdogan (2016) also support differing success definitions of men and women in Turkey: women define success as reaching targets, innovativeness and being different; while men focus more on making money and achieving status. Secondly, because the content analysis is based on secondary data, our findings are also constrained with the interview questions on hand. Additionally, not all interviews consisted of the same questions, which makes impossible to compare all existing data. Therefore, an in-depth interview with a structured form would provide a wide perspective and a detailed view on the subject for prospective studies on gendered entrepreneurship.

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