



Research Article

**PERSPECTIVES OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS TOWARDS TECHNOLOGY IN THE  
GASTRONOMY INDUSTRY: AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH**

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**Abstract**

The aim of the research is to reveal the approach of entrepreneur women who own small-scale restaurants and cafes in Batman province to technology and digitalisation. For this purpose, data were collected from 12 women entrepreneurs in Batman province by semi-structured interview method. The data of the study were obtained between December 2024 and January 2025. Data obtained from participants were analyzed through MAXQDA. It was concluded that the participants had knowledge about technological approaches. Another result of the research is that women entrepreneurs with high education level and relatively young women entrepreneurs think that technology is effective, while women entrepreneurs with older age and lower education level think that social environment and family culture are effective. Entrepreneurs' innovative development of technologies, long and medium-term planning for smart technologies, and comprehensive and holistic regulations on which basic elements they prioritize or attach importance to can be a road map for entrepreneurs in terms of planning and strategy creation for the future. In the coming years, as technology adapts to our lives every year, training on the use of smart technologies needs to be increased.

**Keywords:** Women Entrepreneurs, Food And Beverage Management, Digital Approach, Gastronomy

**Introduction**

Women play an important role in building a society. Working women, especially women entrepreneurs, contribute to a country's economic growth, job creation, technological perspective, and innovation (Agarwal and Lenka, 2017; Mercier et al., 2018; Ladge et al. 2019; Zeb and İhsan, 2020; Rastogi et al. 2022). There has been an increase in the growth of working women worldwide, especially women entrepreneurs. With women taking strong and correct steps in business life, global business has grown in volume (Staniewski and Awruk, 2019; Chávez-Rivera et al. 2024). Nowadays, it is important to increase entrepreneurial activities, to reveal and encourage entrepreneurial group potentials in every business environment, and to create an economic environment in which active participation can be ensured. In this way, it will be easier to ensure economic balances at the national level (Galindo and Ribeiro, 2012; Fotiadis et al. 2013). In innovation-oriented businesses, digitalisation is seen as a key tool in the realisation of new business ideas and their application to business processes (Zhang et al. 2023; Turhan, 2023). In technology-oriented societies, important issues such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality and metaverse are on the agenda. In order for women entrepreneurs to adapt to the processes, they need to be close to the technology-based approach. Especially in restaurants, technology plays an important role in inventory management, accounting transactions and calculation of other expense items (Pinem, 2019; Arica et al. 2022).

Considering the literature, studies on the technological perspective of women entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector are limited. At this point, it is expected that revealing the technological perspectives of businesses that own restaurants and cafes will fill an important gap in the literature. In Türkiye, entrepreneurial activities are active in every sector. In the food and beverage sector, there are entrepreneurship activities on local dishes and innovative cuisines. There are also public incentives in Türkiye. Financial support can also be received with a project application. Batman Province is located in the Southeastern Anatolia Region of Türkiye. For this reason, it is among the priority cities in regional development. Batman is one of the cities that make a living with agriculture and animal husbandry. Its economy survives in this way. The GAP (Southeastern Anatolia Project) development agency established with public resources in the region provides

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financial and academic support to support women entrepreneurs. In the development plans of the Republic of Türkiye, women entrepreneurs are in demand in order to eliminate inequality between regions.

One of the basic elements of regional development is tourism and we can say that one of the important reasons for the equal distribution of income between regions is tourism entrepreneurship. The fact that women entrepreneurs provide a good income in the region supports the profitability of businesses and employment. The development of food and beverage management, which is one of the subdivisions of tourism, is also important (Ateljevic, 2009; Bernhard & Olsson, 2020). The development of restaurant and cafe management is important for the development of the city and the region. For this reason, the perspectives of restaurant and cafe entrepreneurs in Batman province were revealed.

Women entrepreneurs, who have important potentials in economic development and are prominent in innovation and technology utilisation, are also actively involved in restaurant businesses (Li et al, 2023). While the use of technology offers an important opportunity for women, it also brings an important convenience in restaurants. In this study, it is aimed to conduct qualitative research on the use of technology in restaurants and cafes established by women entrepreneurs in Batman province. It is thought that this study can contribute to the sectoral situation of the region by determining the approaches of women entrepreneurs in Batman province regarding technology, their perspectives on technology, and their ideas about artificial intelligence.

### **Women Entrepreneurship And Digitalisation**

Scientific and technological advances in today's world have radically changed the dynamics of competition along with production systems (Şahin, 2009). These changes have brought a different dimension to the field of entrepreneurship as well as many other fields in tourism science. Entrepreneurship requires different characteristics besides the characteristics that mobilise entrepreneurs. These are personality structure, the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities, being eager to start a business, being determined and ambitious, being creative, having sufficient motivation (Ozkazanc and Pan, 2018). With the changing economic conditions of the world, a world order in which women entrepreneurs have increased has also emerged (Williams et al. 2020).

Women entrepreneurship is a female employee who has a business established individually and for a commercial purpose in an area outside their homes, works alone or with several people or establishes a business with a partner, cooperates with public institutions or the private sector, develops plans and strategies for the current situation and future of her business, has a say in the earnings of her business and takes risks (Sosyal, 2010; Webster and Zhang, 2020). It is understood from the definition that women should be willing to establish, manage and take part in the process as entrepreneurs (Bayram, 2018). The desire to establish a business that generates income outside the home has become a desired situation by women day by day. According to The main factors that lead women to entrepreneurship are listed as follows (Tekin, 2009; Karakaş and Gökmen, 2016).

The aim of women to realise a business idea or a dream idea, Women's need and drive to succeed, having professional knowledge and diplomas revealed the desire to work independently in their own workplace, insufficient income due to one person working in the family, existence of businesses taken over from the family, few paid employment opportunities for women or lack of other options for work, the desire for status, the desire to earn more income.

Women entrepreneurs start their entrepreneurial activities in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. However, they usually carry out their activities in very small enterprises defined as micro enterprises (Sörensson and Ghannad, 2024). Micro enterprises are fixed workplaces with the same owner and manager and generally less than five employees (Olsson and Bernhard, 2019). In micro enterprises, women entrepreneurs have decision-making authority regarding risk and income. Women entrepreneurs tend to employ proportionally more women in their enterprises compared to male entrepreneurs (Serinkli, 2019).

Digitalisation is known to have the potential to change and develop small businesses, enabling growth and making them more competitive and innovative by adopting and integrating it into their business strategies and processes (Barba-Sánchez et al., 2007). Emerging and innovative categories of women entrepreneurs, such as pro-technology and digital platforms, are growing in importance (Olsson and Berhand, 2021). This is related to the concept of digital entrepreneurship, i.e. digital entrepreneurs as entrepreneurs who find new ways of doing business based on digital technology, thus often also involving the transformation from offline to online businesses (Kraus et al. 2019). Especially in recent years, online orders in restaurants and cafes have made women entrepreneurs powerful.

## **Women Entrepreneurs In Food And Beverage Management**

With the development of food and beverage businesses, the need for qualified personnel has arisen. This situation has led especially businesses and countries that want to earn income from tourism to provide tourism education. In terms of entrepreneurship, studies and projects that enable women to become entrepreneurs in a professional sense have come to the fore with the support for women who previously prepared local foods at home and sold them to tourists (Aylan et al., 2019). In Türkiye, the deficiencies of women who are specialised in home cooking and local food, such as lack of capital, lack of ideas and lack of personnel, have been eliminated through projects, supported by public support or angel investors. Today, small and medium-sized entrepreneurial women have become the bosses or managers of businesses such as restaurants and cafeterias (Ozasır Kacar et al. 2023).

The increase in the number of entrepreneurial women in the food and beverage sector has increased competition and brought potential supply to the forefront. The contribution of women entrepreneurs to productive employment (Agarwal et al. 2022) has paved the way for important issues such as financial support (Kaciak and Welsh, 2020) and gaining social status (Huq et al. 2020). It is also expected that tourists will favour the products of women entrepreneurs who try to survive with support at this point. Because these clean and delicious gastronomic products attract attention.

In the national context, the fact that restaurants and cafes have women entrepreneurs, price regulation and decision-making rights paves the way for social equality (Bagheri et al. 2023; Tagmanov and Ulema, 2023). As it is known, gastronomy is an important part of culture (Park et al. 2023; Şeyhanlioğlu et al. 2023; Duman and Avcıkurt, 2023) and women's entrepreneurial activities in the field of gastronomy also find solutions to cultural, social and gendered problems.

## **Research Methodology**

The need for an in-depth examination of the ideas of entrepreneurial women who own small-scale restaurants and cafes in the province of Batman, located in the southeastern Anatolia region of Türkiye, about technology and digitalisation has emerged. The fact that there are few such studies on the subject in the region is an important motivation for the study. Phenomenological research design was selected as the research design. Phenomenological research design is to deal with different phenomena that we are not unfamiliar with or whose meaning we do not fully know, such as events, phenomena, experiences, perceptions and situations that we encounter in daily life (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016; Yalçın, 2022). The aim of the research is to reveal the approach of entrepreneur women who own small-scale restaurants and cafes in Batman province to technology and digitalisation. Purposive random sampling was used in the research. The reason for this is to reach richer data and to increase the credibility of the research. Purpose of purposive random sampling, by reducing scepticism about why certain situations are selected for research, to ensure credibility (Creswell, 2013).

In Batman province, 12 woman entrepreneur who are related to the subject and who can answer the research questions in terms of equipment were identified. Thus, individuals who have a good command of the depth of the research were preferred. Based on this point, data were collected by semi-structured interview method, which is one of the qualitative data collection techniques. While the semi-structured interview technique is used effectively within the time frame determined for the interviewees, it also helps to reveal the questions that come to mind about the subject (Kozak, 2014: 89). Batman is a city with an insufficient number of women entrepreneurs because it is a city that is oriented towards development. For this reason, interviews were conducted with all 12 women entrepreneurs in the city who have knowledge about technology. In the study conducted by Boddy (2016), it was stated that 12 participants may be sufficient if the participants are homogenous. The data of the study were obtained between 05.12.2024 and 05.01.2025. The data were analyzed by means of MAXQDA program. In the data analysis, a word cloud was created based on the frequency table. Content analysis is used to determine the existence of words, themes, concepts, idioms or sentences in the text and to quantify them. After being audio-recorded with verbal communication tools such as interviews and speeches, where there is no text, these recordings are transcribed and analyzed (Kızıltepe, 2017). The interviews conducted within the framework of the research were first transcribed and then analyzed.

A semi-structured interview (question) form consisting of 5 (five) questions determined for the perspective of women entrepreneurs who own restaurants and cafes in Batman was directed. The questions prepared on the basis of research on women entrepreneurs (Bayram, 2018; Turhan, 2023) were arranged by the authors by taking expert opinion.

Batman University ethics committee report was received with the decision number 28 of the meeting number 2024/09 dated 05.12.2024.

**Table 1. Interview Questions**

1. Introduce ourselves as women entrepreneurs?
2. What is the place of digitalisation in women entrepreneurship?
3. What are your digitalisation practices as women entrepreneurs?
4. Do you receive the necessary support in the digitalisation process as women entrepreneurs?
5. Are you interested in artificial intelligence applications as women entrepreneurs?

## Findings

When the demographic characteristics of the stakeholders included in the research are evaluated; it is determined that 7 of them are restaurant operators and 5 of them are cafe operators. The average age of female entrepreneurs is 38.3. five (5) of the female entrepreneurs have bachelor's degree, five (5) high school, one (1) primary school and one (1) secondary school graduates. Women entrepreneurs were interviewed for an average of 19.25 minutes.

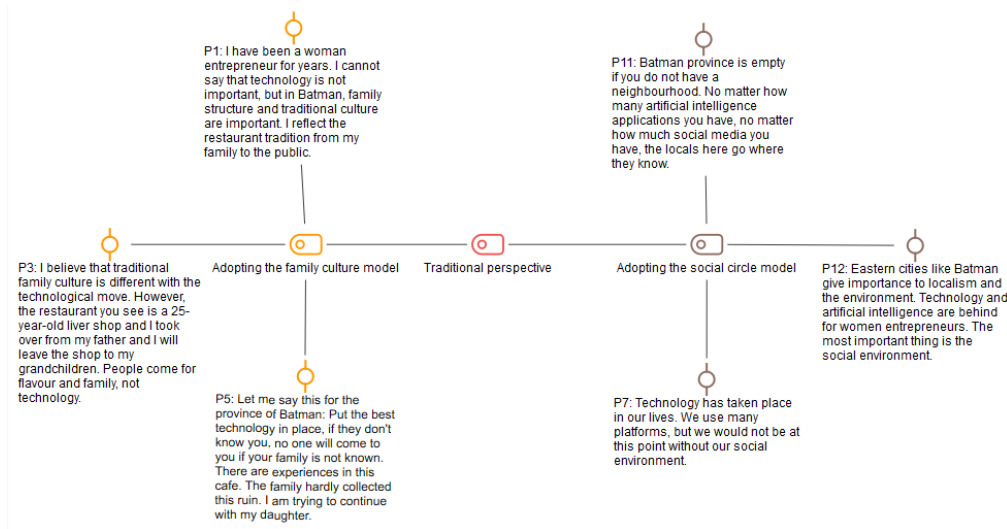
**Table 2. Descriptive Information on Woman Entrepreneurs**

PARTICIPANT CODE	AGE	TASK LINE	EDUCATION STATUS	INTERVIEW TIME (in minutes)
P1	55	Restaurant	High school	25
P2	32	Cafe	High school	20
P3	44	Restaurant	Primary school	20
P4	25	Restaurant	License	21
P5	40	Cafe	Middle school	19
P6	34	Restaurant	License	22
P7	22	Cafe	High school	29
P8	31	Restaurant	License	24
P9	35	Cafe	License	15
P10	42	Restaurant	License	14
P11	49	Cafe	High school	11
P12	51	Restaurant	High school	11

In Figure 1, frequently repeated codes in word cloud analysis are given in large fonts. As the point increases, the frequency of repetition of the word increases. Accordingly; It has been found that words such as digitalisation, artificial, intelligence and media have an intense repetition rate.

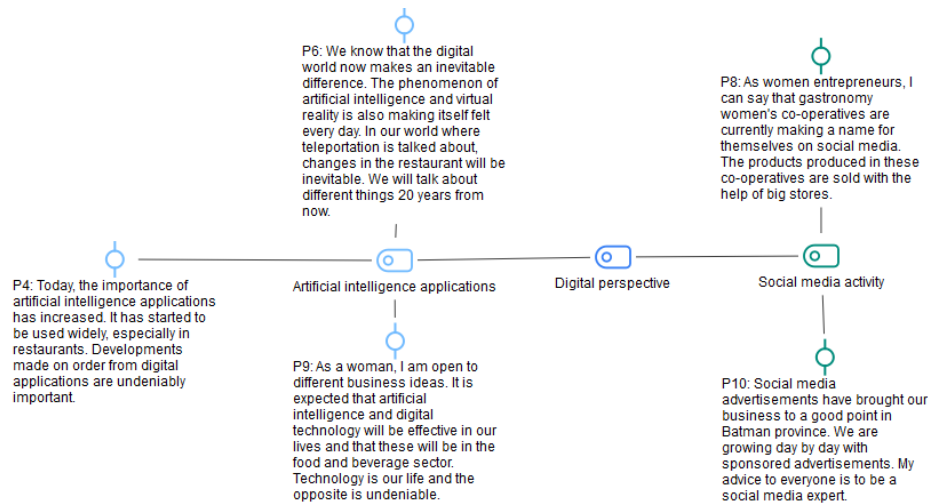


**Figure 2. The Shape Of The Code-Subcode Sections For The Main Theme Of Traditional Perspective**



In Figure 3, the coding process for the main theme of street food expectation in the form of code-sub-code sections was revealed and the participant expressions on the sub-themes were prioritized. The most repeated sub-theme of the main theme of digital perspective (6) was ranked with the sub-theme of artificial intelligence applications (4) and social media activity (2). The opinions of the participants on this issue are presented in the table. Progress has been seen in terms of women entrepreneurs giving importance to artificial intelligence applications and technology and even putting them into practice. It was also suggested that entrepreneurs should progress through social media.

**Figure 3. The Shape Of The Code-Subcode Sections For The Main Theme Of Digital Perspective**



## Conclusions

One of the sectors where women entrepreneurship is at the forefront is food and beverage management. Women who work wonders in the kitchens supply these flavours to the society. The role of women entrepreneurs is undeniable, especially in local food and presentations. It is possible to say that women's co-operatives and women entrepreneurs have been active in the province of Batman in the Southeastern Anatolia region of Türkiye in recent years. In general, revealing the perspective of women who have achieved successful results in enterprises established at micro level and with public support will fill an important gap in the literature and practice.

In the study conducted using qualitative method, the perceptions of women entrepreneurs about digitalisation in entrepreneurship were discussed through their discourses. It is known that the women entrepreneurs participating in the study are from all age groups and are restaurant and café owners. It has been determined that individuals with a young age group and higher education level are more interested in technology, artificial

intelligence, and social media. Female entrepreneurs with high age level and low education level are more interested in technology, family entrepreneurship experience and social environment.

They also stated that the technology-supportive individuals of micro-scale restaurant and café owner women are important in the promotion and marketing of the digital structure. In this context, it was also stated that it is important to keep up with the digital world and that artificial intelligence applications will come to different points. It has been stated that the province of Batman has been suitable for development in recent years and that there is a need for virtual applications with migration.

### ***Theoretical implications***

Restaurants and cafes opened with the support of public institutions are micro-scale institutions that provide income, but the change in management perspective is expected to prevent some businesses from being sustainable in the future. Turhan (2023), keeping up with today's digital age and the success of enterprises to survive in this process; how digitalisation is applied and managed in entrepreneurship affects the sustainability of women entrepreneurs' businesses. At this point, the perspective is similar to the study. Webster et al. (2020), They stated that women entrepreneurs affect economic development and that entrepreneurs related to the kitchen make positive contributions to the society. Pinem (2019) and Yıldırım et al., (2020) It has been discussed that women entrepreneurs' interest in technology positively affects economic development.

Azoury et al., (2010), the view that the family culture is transferred to entrepreneurs and even the business environment is transferred to families has been discussed. This result coincides with the findings of our study. Salloum et al. (2016), data on the progress of family businesses in Lebanon were analysed. It is analysed that progress is more effective in the family environment where the use of technology is less.

Since Batman province is located in the Southeastern Anatolia Region of Türkiye and the city is open to development, it has been seen that evaluating the study in regional development will provide important information about the theoretical gap. In this context, this research, which carries new information about the region regarding the future of cafe and restaurant entrepreneurs, will also be a pioneer in future studies.

### ***Practical implications***

The research results offer important contributions to practitioners. Generally, it has been revealed that the perspective of restaurant and cafe owner entrepreneurs towards technology needs to improve. Entrepreneurs' innovative development of technologies, long and medium-term planning for smart technologies, and comprehensive and holistic regulations on which basic elements they prioritize or attach importance to can be a road map for entrepreneurs in terms of planning and strategy creation for the future.

In the coming years, as technology adapts to our lives every year, training on the use of smart technologies needs to be increased. As it is known, the service sector is labor intensive. This situation is more prevalent in food and beverage businesses. Therefore, it is necessary to use technology and automation to make people's lives easier. Meeting expectations is an important criterion in restaurants and cafe businesses where service speed and customer satisfaction are important.

Batman province is one of the provinces where regional development is given importance. It is expected that in the future, family business management or environment alone will not be sufficient. Ribeiro et al., (2021) argue that in every developing and large city, food and beverage businesses will highlight not only the environment but also the benefits provided by technology in marketing. In this context, if restaurant and cafe entrepreneurs follow technology, it will positively affect their survival in the long term.

### ***Research limitations and future research***

The time constraint of the research, that is, the collection of interviews between certain dates, is an important limitation. In addition, financial problems should not occur in order to carry out the study for each province or region. In this framework, there is a financial constraint. It is also important to conduct the research in different provinces and with different groups.

Future studies may investigate other areas suitable for development in the region. They can also make comparative analyzes between regions. They can create inventories of restaurant and cafe entrepreneurs in the region. In this context, expanded projects can be carried out by resolving financial issues.

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