

Women Entrepreneurship in Handicrafts: The Case of Kocaeli Province

El Sanatları Alanında Kadın Girişimciliği Kocaeli Örneği

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Abstract

Women's entrepreneurship is closely related to many social institutions. Family, culture, economy and arts are some of these social institutions. Proposing projects and policies linked to these social institutions to support women's entrepreneurship, especially at the local level, is very important for developing permanent solutions. Entrepreneurship is a good way for women's participation and empowerment in economic life. Supporting women's entrepreneurial activities not only contributes to economic development, but also to the development of institutions that are the building blocks of society such as culture, arts and family. Governments take many steps to support women's entrepreneurship, but generalized policies that do not consider local practices may have a positive impact on women's entrepreneurship in the short term, but do not serve the purpose of creating lasting solutions in the long term. In order to increase women's entrepreneurship motivation at the local level, there is a need for local government-supported policies that tackle structural problems, take into account local practices, improve women's knowledge and capacities, and provide them with new skills to adapt to the new era. In this study, the potential of developing handicrafts to promote women entrepreneurship in Kocaeli province will be discussed and the challenges, personality traits and needs of potential women entrepreneurs engaged in handicrafts in Kocaeli province will be conveyed through semi-structured in-depth interviews with 7 potential women entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurship, Kocaeli, Handicrafts, Social Institutions, Digitalization.

Öz

Kadın girişimciliği pek çok toplumsal kurumla yakından ilişkilidir. Aile, kültür, ekonomi ve sanat bu toplumsal kurumlardan bir kaçıdır. Özellikle yerelde kadın girişimciliğinin desteklenmesi için sözü geçen toplumsal kurumlarla bağlantılı proje ve politikaların önerilmesi kalıcı çözümler geliştirilmesi için oldukça önemlidir. Kadınların ekonomik hayata katılımı ve güçlenmesi için girişimcilik iyi bir yoldur. Kadınların girişimcilik faaliyetlerinin desteklenmesi bir yandan ekonomik kalkınmaya katkı sağlarken bir yandan da kültür, sanat, aile gibi toplumun yapıtaşı olan kurumların da gelişmesine yardımcı olmaktadır. Hükümetler kadın girişimciliğini desteklemek için pek çok adım atmakta ancak yerel pratiklerin göz önüne alınmadığı genellemeci politikalar kısa vadede kadın girişimciliği üzerinde olumlu etki yapsa da uzun vadede kalıcı çözümler yaratma amacına hizmet edememektedir. Kadınların girişimcilik motivasyonlarının yerel düzeyde artırılması için yapısal sorunlarla mücadele eden, yerel pratiklerin göz önüne alındığı, kadınların bilgi ve kapasitelerini geliştiren ve yeni çağa uyum sağlamaları için onlara yeni beceriler kazandıran yerel yönetim destekli politikalara ihtiyaç vardır. Bu çalışmada, Kocaeli ilinde kadın girişimciliğini teşvik etmek için el sanatlarını geliştirme potansiyeli tartışılacak ve Kocaeli ilinde el sanatlarıyla uğraşan potansiyel kadın girişimcilerin karşılaştıkları zorluklar, kişilik özellikleri ve ihtiyaçları 7 potansiyel kadın girişimciyle yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşmeler yoluyla aktarılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın Girişimciliği, Kocaeli, El Sanatları, Toplumsal Kurumlar, Dijitalleşme.

1. Introduction

The contemporary era represents a laboratory for the study of digital and green transformation phenomena, which are collectively referred to as the “twin transformation.” As observers and interpreters of both transformations, social scientists are attempting to establish the connections between these phenomena and social life and social institutions, as well as to predict or reveal the potential consequences of these transformations. The concept of entrepreneurship is similarly beneficial in this context. The concept of entrepreneurship, which has existed throughout human history in terms of both meaning and content, is also a highly useful tool for tracking the various social transformations that have occurred over time. Since the 18th century, numerous social transformations have affected the content and meaning of the concept of entrepreneurship. In this context, it is evident that entrepreneurship, which is a concept that is highly dynamic in nature, will inevitably undergo changes and transformations in accordance with the ongoing social transformations that are taking place in the present era.

Entrepreneurship is a multidimensional concept and is evaluated from different perspectives as it is the subject of interdisciplinary studies. Women’s entrepreneurship is closely related to many different social institutions and is located at the intersection of social institutions such as family, economy, culture, art and education. Therefore, it is possible to observe quite significant changes in social life by encouraging women entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship provides many different contributions to women’s participation in economic life and empowerment. Economic independence, contribution to the family budget, realization of labor, integration into social life, strengthening cultural transmission, and improving communication skills are just a few of them.

In light of the twin transformations, the promotion of women’s entrepreneurship and the increase of women’s participation in economic and social life have become increasingly crucial. The digital transformation may further disadvantage women, who are already at a disadvantage in the digital age. This could result in women being pushed out of the labor market due to their low qualifications if the principle of working with less manpower is adopted in conjunction with the impact of the green transformation. In light of these considerations, it is imperative that efforts be made to promote women’s entrepreneurship and to ensure the long-term viability of women’s entrepreneurial skills.

This study will first present a brief conceptual framework on the concept of entrepreneurship and then introduce the specific characteristics of women entrepreneurship. The relationship between handicrafts and women’s entrepreneurship will then be examined and potential threats and solutions for the promotion of women’s entrepreneurship at the local level will be presented through semi-structured in-depth interviews, taking into account site-specificities.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Schumpeter’s Entrepreneur

Schumpeter’s creative destruction is mentioned in all studies on entrepreneurship. It would not be wrong to say that in many studies in the relevant literature, the entrepreneur is also included with Schumpeter’s definitions. Indeed, the concept of entrepreneurship has a long history, dating back to ancient times, particularly in the 18th century, when it was used to describe the inventors of the period. However, the first definition that is appropriate for its use in the present day was provided by R. Cantillon. In

Cantillon, while defining entrepreneurship in accordance with the contemporary usage of the term, he defined the entrepreneur as an individual who assumes the risk. In Cantillon’s economic analysis, while capitalists are considered landowners, there are also entrepreneurs who act as intermediaries between workers and capitalists in the context of the factors of production. In this way, the entrepreneur may be seen as a qualified labor force. Furthermore, Cantillon’s analysis of entrepreneurship sheds light on the principal challenges that contemporary entrepreneurs are confronted with. The most significant challenge that

entrepreneurs encounter, both in Cantillon's analysis and in the present era, is the inherent uncertainty of the market and the risk that it entails. In contrast to Cantillon, J. B. Say situates entrepreneurship at the core of economic activity, underscoring its interconnection with management and characterizing entrepreneurs as risk-taking wage workers (Praag, 1999). Although Say's definition, which is quite similar to the contemporary definition of the entrepreneur, is also utilized as a foundation in numerous studies, Schumpeter's contribution to this field is considerably more substantial.

At the core of Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneurship, which is endorsed by numerous scholars, is the notion of "creative destruction." Schumpeter (1942) posits that economic development necessitates a process of creative destruction, whereby continuous innovation and the dissolution of existing structures are mutually reinforcing. Entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in the process of creative destruction, spearheading the development of novel products, production methods, markets, and organizational structures. Such innovations result in the obsolescence of existing structures and technologies, which are then replaced with more efficient and effective alternatives. Schumpeter (1934) defines the role of the entrepreneur as that of an individual with the capacity to make new combinations. These new combinations encompass five fundamental categories of innovation: the introduction of a novel product, the development of an innovative production method, the establishment of a new market, the identification of a previously untapped source of raw materials or semi-finished products, and the restructuring of industrial organization.

According to Schumpeter, the entrepreneur is the main actor in the economic system that carries out innovative activities. Entrepreneurs bring about economic change and development by taking risks and dealing with uncertainty (Schumpeter, 1934). One of the main characteristics of entrepreneurs is their ability to take risks and deal with uncertainty. Schumpeter states that thanks to these characteristics, the entrepreneur can create new opportunities and transform the economic system. Schumpeter (1934) argues that the motivation of the entrepreneur goes beyond making profit. Entrepreneurs are driven by intrinsic motivations such as a sense of achievement, the desire to start and manage their own business, and the desire to innovate. These motivations enable entrepreneurs to constantly seek new opportunities and transform the economic system in innovative ways.

Moreover, in the process of economic development, Schumpeter emphasizes the importance of innovative activities of the entrepreneur. Innovations are not only limited to technological developments, but also lead to significant changes in organizational and market structures (Schumpeter, 1934). These changes enable the economic system to become more efficient and competitive.

Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneurship is still relevant today. Especially in technology-oriented entrepreneurship and start-up ecosystems, Schumpeter's concept of creative destruction is frequently referenced. Innovative ventures contribute significantly to economic development by transforming existing markets and industries.

Although Schumpeter did not make a specific analysis of women entrepreneurs, empirical studies in the relevant literature in Turkey suggest that women are close to Schumpeter's definition of entrepreneurship. For example, semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted by Araz Takay and Kalemci Tüzün (2015) with 41 women entrepreneurs in Ankara and its neighboring districts showed that these women entrepreneurs have the personality traits and motivation sources described by Schumpeter. Women entrepreneurs emerge as creative and courageous individuals, as Schumpeter saw in his entrepreneurs. Their main motivators include the desire for success and the desire to start their own business. While Schumpeter's analyses do not explicitly address the issue of gender equality, it is possible to suggest that the participation of women in economic and social life will contribute to a more inclusive framework when his views on entrepreneurship are considered in conjunction with a gender analysis. Ensuring gender equality will enable Schumpeter's concepts of innovation and economic development to be addressed from a broader perspective. Supporting women entrepreneurs can contribute to a more innovative and sustainable economic system (Brush, de Bruin, & Welter, 2009).

2.2 Women Entrepreneurship at the Local Level: Supports and Barriers

Women's entrepreneurship has received considerable attention over the past few decades due to its potential to support economic growth and promote gender equality. Women's entrepreneurship is crucial for economic development and social inclusion. It contributes to job creation, innovation and economic diversification. According to Brush et al. (2006), women entrepreneurs bring unique perspectives and solutions to business challenges, fostering

a more inclusive and innovative entrepreneurial ecosystem. Entrepreneurship, which promotes women's social and economic empowerment, is also closely linked to social institutions such as family, education and culture.

The development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem will support economically empowered female figures and change the division of labor in the family based on traditional gender norms in favor of women. Thus, more gender-balanced families can be established and entrepreneurial culture can be passed on to new generations through this mechanism. On the other hand, as women entrepreneurship becomes more widespread, especially at the local level, the importance of education will increase, children will be introduced to pre-school education at an early age, and thus the young generation will be raised with a responsible and innovative perspective.

Despite its many positive impacts, women's entrepreneurship in developing countries such as Turkey has still not reached the expected level. The challenges faced by women entrepreneurs are much deeper than their male counterparts. These challenges include limited access to finance, balancing work and family responsibilities, and societal attitudes towards gender roles. As noted by Marlow and Patton (2005), financial institutions often exhibit a gender bias, making it difficult for women to secure financing for their enterprises:

- Access to finance: Access to finance remains one of the most significant barriers for women entrepreneurs. Women are often perceived as higher-risk borrowers, which can limit their ability to obtain loans and investments. This financial gap hinders the growth of women-led businesses and their potential to benefit from economies of scale. Research by Coleman and Robb (2009) shows that women are less likely than men to receive venture capital funding, exacerbating the problem.

- Balancing Work and Family: The dual role of women as entrepreneurs and primary caregivers poses another significant challenge. Women often struggle to balance family responsibilities with the demands of running a business. This challenge is more pronounced in cultures where traditional gender roles are strong. Eddleston and Powell (2008) emphasize that women entrepreneurs often experience higher levels of work-family conflict, which can affect their business performance and personal well-being.

- Social Attitudes and Gender Roles: Societal attitudes towards gender roles can significantly influence women's

entrepreneurial activities. In many societies, entrepreneurship is still perceived as a male-dominated field, which may discourage women from engaging in entrepreneurial ventures. Ahl (2006) argues that gender-based expectations and stereotypes often limit women's entrepreneurial aspirations and opportunities.

On the other hand, there are mechanisms that support and motivate women entrepreneurs. The first of these is support systems and networks. Support systems and networks play a critical role in promoting women's entrepreneurship. Mentoring, access to professional networks and supportive policies can help women overcome the barriers they face. McGregor and Tweed's (2002) study emphasizes the importance of social networks and mentoring in the success of women entrepreneurs.

Another support mechanism is government policies and institutional support. Government policies and institutional support are vital for promoting women's entrepreneurship. Initiatives such as microfinance, training programs and grants specifically targeting women can help close the gender gap in entrepreneurship. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report highlights that countries with supportive policies have higher rates of female entrepreneurship.

Women's entrepreneurship is a dynamic and evolving field with significant potential for economic and social progress. Despite many challenges, women entrepreneurs continue to make significant contributions to the global economy. Addressing the barriers they face and providing targeted support can unlock this potential and lead to more inclusive and equitable economic growth. For this reason, it is particularly important to inform women entrepreneurs locally about support and training programs, and to create networks to provide them with access to micro-credit and grant schemes that they can use to overcome financial challenges.

3. Research Methodology and Sampling

3.1. Design and Participants

This research was conducted using a semi-structured in-depth interview method to determine the potential of women interested in handicrafts in Kocaeli to become entrepreneurs and to reveal the forces they face, the support they receive and their needs.

The semi-structured in-depth interview technique is a qualitative research method that takes into account the social,

cultural and economic contexts of the participants and is used to decipher information that is not apparent in the first place. The information obtained in the interviews conducted with the interviewees on predetermined topics is evaluated within the framework of the environment in which the participants live and the experiences they have (Roulston, 2010). In-depth interview data is usually analyzed through thematic analysis. In this process, the data are coded, and the main themes are revealed. Identifying themes means classifying and relating data in a systematic way (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In analyzing interview data, participants' perspectives and what they say are respected. The researcher tries to accurately represent the experiences of the participants by avoiding their own biases (Seidman, 2013). Since the study was designed for a specific region and aimed to examine the specific problems of this region, it was deemed appropriate to use this technique, which is also frequently used in women's studies, to collect and analyze the data.

The reason for choosing Kocaeli province in the study is that handicrafts are seen as an important cultural value by women living in this province and constitute an important source for entrepreneurship by having the potential to be passed down from generation to generation. Handicrafts are kept alive in Kocaeli as a historical and cultural heritage. Especially products such as Hereke carpet, Kandıra cloth and Karamürsel basket stand out. Hereke carpets have been produced since the Ottoman period and are known worldwide. These carpets are woven on hand looms using high quality silk and wool (Akgül, 2023). Kandıra cloth is produced with yarns obtained from flax fields in the region and is preferred for summer clothes (Yıldız, 2021). The Karamürsel basket is woven from the branches of chestnut trees and is long-lasting (Çelik, 2022). In addition, the findings of the study conducted by Günsel (2024) in Kocaeli reveal significant gender differences in entrepreneurial tendencies, indicating that women exhibit higher levels of risk-taking and innovativeness compared to men.

In the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 7 potential entrepreneur women who received training in the field of handicrafts from vocational training courses (KO-MEK) operating within Kocaeli Municipality. All interviewees are women, aged between 42 and 52, and all are not currently entrepreneurs but are willing to be part of a handicraft enterprise. Interviews were conducted in June-July 2024. The shortest interview lasted 22 minutes and the longest 45 minutes. Interviews were recorded. Before the recording, daily conversations were held so that the interviewees could express themselves more comfortably, and the interviews were recorded after these daily conversations were over and the interviewees started to feel comfortable. 7 interviewees were considered sufficient. The rationale for this was based on two bases from the relevant literature. The first one is the saturation approach. Saturation is "the criterion for deciding when to stop sampling different groups belonging to a category. It means that the researcher finds no additional data on which to develop the category properties. When similar examples are seen repeatedly, the researcher is empirically sure that the categories are saturated" (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Low (2019) stated that saturation can be declared early in a small study with modest claims. Another basis is Guest et al. (2006), which shows that saturation can be reached early, especially in homogeneous groups. In this study, it was emphasized that for studies with a high level of homogeneity among the population, "6 interviews may be sufficient to ensure the development of meaningful opinions and useful interpretations".

3.2. Findings

Interviews containing the data to be used in the study were recorded and then these recordings were transcribed to form the basis of the study. First of all, demographic information of the participants was compiled and illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Interviewee Information

	Marital Status	Number of Children	Age
<i>Interviewer1</i>	Married	2	46
<i>Interviewer2</i>	Single	2	44
<i>Interviewer3</i>	Married	4	46
<i>Interviewer4</i>	Married	2	48
<i>Interviewer5</i>	Married	2	43
<i>Interviewer6</i>	Married	3	42
<i>Interviewer7</i>	Married	3	52

As can be seen in Table 1, the interviewees are women between the ages of 42-52 who have children. 6 interviewees stated that they were married, while 1 interviewee stated that she was divorced and single. All of the interviewees reside in Kocaeli city center and its districts.

The interviewees were first asked about the limitations and difficulties specific to the field of handicrafts and what motivated them to engage in handicrafts. They were then

asked about their desire and potential to turn their handicrafts into an income-generating venture. Finally, the interviews were concluded by discussing the basic needs of women interested in handicrafts. Based on these interviews, a total of 23 codes and 4 themes were created. The themes are presented in separate tables, and the tables also include the interviewees' own statements under the relevant code and theme for the convenience of the reader. The first theme prepared in this context is presented below in Table 2.

Table 2. Challenges of Being a Woman Engaged in Handicrafts

	Financial Challenges	Challenges Specific to the Field of Handicrafts	Challenges related to Work-Family Life Balance	Challenges related to social norms
Interviewer1	"The customer covers the cost, I put my hand labor on it."	"Manual labor takes a long time. When we ask for a higher price than the machine-made ones, the customer often finds it high".	"I fulfill my family responsibilities first, and I have to do so. Thinking otherwise makes me unhappy. I sacrifice my rest time and spend time on handicrafts."	"Cooking, cleaning, housework are women's duties. My husband supports me from time to time, but mostly I do these chores. I started my career so that I could at least sew my own clothes. My family encouraged me. When I think about it now, I have no regrets."
Interviewer2	"In the beginning, I was covering all the costs myself. I was buying my materials with my pocket money. Then, as I did piecework, I made more profit. I know all the material suppliers now. I can buy materials cheaply, partly due to this effect."	"New products come out every month. Costs are constantly changing. Therefore, it is necessary to keep both models and prices constantly updated."	"I attend courses during the day, pick up the children from school, cook and wash dishes, and start working at night. I sleep very little. Doing handicrafts gives me a lot of rest. It's good for me psychologically. I just balance it out."	"Doing handicrafts makes me happy. I don't think about who will say what."
Interviewer3	"I buy all my own stuff."	"The products you make are not always liked by everyone. It is also very difficult to work according to the customer's taste."	"My priority is my children, the organization of my home and the service of my husband. I do handicrafts in the rest of the time. If I don't prioritize my family, they cannot be successful."	"I've heard a lot from people around me, "How can you do handicrafts like this in this day and age?" But this never deterred me. I never paid any attention."
Interviewer4	"I buy my own material, my wife supports me a lot, financially and morally. But the prices are very high. When I go a month later, the prices double."	"It's a labor of love. But not everyone knows its value. The product you produce is not appreciated".	"I have no problems. My children are grown up. It feels like therapy to me. It does not harm my family life as it is psychologically good for me."	"Not everyone appreciates this work. They see it as empty work. But we produce unbelievably beautiful products by spending a lot of effort."
Interviewer5	"I don't face any financial difficulties. I'm well off. I don't expect much anyway."	"I am very interested in art. My family is like me. I like being interested in it even if it is difficult. I think there is no big difficulty. I already lived in Germany for a while. I know what patience is. This job also requires patience."	"I work on weekends, but it's like therapy. It doesn't affect my family life."	"I get a lot of support from my friends. Everyone appreciates it. They like it. I even lived in Germany for a while, where there was a lot of interest in handicrafts. More than in Turkey."

Interviewer 6	"I've always covered all the costs. I also tried to sell them, but the products were left in my hands. I got a little frustrated."	"I would love to have my own workshop. That's my biggest dream. If you want to do this job, you have to take risks. You will be determined. You need to be open to innovations."	"I work in the cool of the evening in hot weather. I make creative products for home decoration. It feels like therapy when I am very angry and overwhelmed. It contributes to my family life. I feel good and I am much more useful to my family."	"My husband is incredibly supportive of me. He supports every product I make. He says they have artistic value. It makes me so happy. I also became a teacher for the women around me. I finished high school from outside, just to do this job more professionally. I want to be a knitting teacher."
Interviewer 7	"When I was going to the course, I made many dowry sets, I bought the materials with my own money. Then I sold them and gave pocket money to my daughters. I saved money. But if you have money, you can do it, if you don't have money, the production is difficult."	"I first started as a hobby. Then I socialized, I learned something. But when I got into it, I also saw the difficulties. Each field is a different world. You think it won't spoil if you make it and put it aside, but the model gets old, and the color turns yellow."	"I tell my daughter, you have a diploma, go and work, get a salary. I couldn't go to school; I wanted her to go and work. It may be difficult to combine family and work life, but it can be done. I want to do this job."	"It's great to work together. Other friends always ask me for ideas. I'm very happy, I say I've been useful. I take someone a gift from the products I've made."

The findings presented in Table 2 are direct quotes from the interviewees' own words. Among the 4 codes identified here, "financial difficulties" clearly shows that women who are interested in handicrafts mostly do it with their own capital or by using advance payments for piecework. It can be inferred that this situation hampers the potential of handicrafts to turn into an enterprise to some extent. Another code, challenges specific to the field of handicrafts, shows that women who are interested in handicrafts enjoy doing this work, but they know that it requires a lot of time and attention. In order to carry out this labor-intensive and

patient work, women often sacrifice their free time in order to maintain their work-family balance. This finding reveals the results of the third code. In terms of challenges related to social norms, we can infer that women involved in handicrafts often have independent characters. It seems possible to infer that some of the women who are interested in handicrafts have to prioritize their families and domestic responsibilities due to gender norms. On the other hand, it should be noted that the women interviewed did not complain about this.

Table 3. Supports Provided to Potential Entrepreneurial Women Engaged in Handicrafts

	State Support	Municipal support	Family Support
Interviewer1		"We receive support from our organization here in the municipality. They respond when we request new trainings."	"My husband supports me from time to time."
Interviewer2	"I have a disability pension. If that counts as support, I have this."	"I attend the courses. I'm happy."	"My parents support me financially and morally."
Interviewer3		"I continue to take courses from the institution and that is enough for me."	
Interviewer4	"I have no information about state support."	"There are courses. I don't have any other information"	"My husband is my biggest support."
Interviewer5		"I attend courses."	"My only supporter is my husband."
Interviewer6		"I attend courses offered by the municipality."	"My husband supports me a lot."

	State Support	Municipal support	Family Support
Interviewer7		"The municipality actually has facilities. You can make a deal with the teacher and do the work. But you have to deliver it at the time they say".	"My husband is very supportive. He takes care of the grandchild one day so that I can go to a course and learn something."

Table 3 presents the supports that potential entrepreneur women currently have in order to carry out their handicraft activities in the interviewees' own words. A total of 3 codes were used to create this theme. Almost all of the interviewee women stated that they did not receive any state support, or even that they were not aware of any state support in this

field. In terms of family support, what is pleasing is that almost all of the interviewees see their husbands as their biggest supporters. All of the interviewees in Kocaeli province spoke positively about the support provided by the municipality in this field and stated that the courses opened made a great contribution to supporting handicrafts.

Table 4. Needs of Potential Entrepreneur Women Engaged in Handicrafts

	Knowledge-Skills	Social	State	Municipality
Interviewer1	"Currently, we have the chance to promote and market our products thanks to "KO-MEK SEPETİ" Platform within the municipality. So I don't need to acquire digital or technical skills."	"It would be good to have a platform where we can exchange information and cultural exchanges."	"Central government support is needed for information and trainings for new ideas."	"Information meetings and training seminars on grants, loans and projects can be organized."
Interviewer2	"Small products, products with low costs are sold in "KO-MEK SEPETİ". It is difficult to sell products with high costs. I would love to have a workshop. I have both skills and knowledge."	"I'm not very good with technology. My daughter sometimes supports me, but it would be good if someone who knows these things could support me."	"There is great support for women producers. But a little more support would be good."	"There are courses, information is provided. It would definitely be good if there were more seminars."
Interviewer3	"I do not need any additional skills."	"We do it to socialize, but I like to work alone. I think it's an individual job."	"It would be good to provide more information about government supports."	
Interviewer4	"I wish there was more training. Social media training can be useful."		I am not very aware of government support.	
Interviewer5	"I would like to improve what I lack. I enroll in new courses every year."	"I like to work alone."	"If I had a little more interest, I would like to go and research what government supports are, what I can do. But then I give up when I think about it."	"I have participated in all the courses organized by the municipality, and if the municipality organizes a new course, I will also participate in it. It is very good for us. It is like therapy."
Interviewer6	"I want to move forward rather than stand still. I'll make up for my shortcomings."	"I wish there was such a joint workshop. Let's come together, teach and learn. Municipality courses are good in this respect, but I feel like they are not enough."	"There is a need for training seminars."	"If only the municipality could show us a place where we could both produce and sell. Maybe there is."
Interviewer7	"I want to improve more from now on."	"I want my work to be liked. I want to be appreciated."		

In Table 4, a theme consisting of a total of 4 codes was created. In this table, the needs of potential entrepreneurial women engaged in handicrafts are grouped in terms of knowledge-skills, social, state and municipality. While most of the women interviewed did not see a major deficiency in terms of knowledge and skills, some emphasized that they wanted to improve their digital skills and institutionalize continuous learning. On the other hand, socially, many interviewees stated that they need a social platform where they can interact, so that they can develop each other and increase their motivation for self-learning. Again, many of the interviewees stated that they need to be informed about government support and training seminars, and they request more seminars, information meetings and a workshop where they can carry out handicraft activities from the municipality.

In addition to the difficulties faced by entrepreneurial women, the supports and needs they have, which are presented in the tables above, implicit questions were also used to find out whether the interviewees have personality traits that would reveal their entrepreneurial potential. In this framework, the data obtained from the interviews were interpreted and three main personality traits of each interviewee were identified. Based on these personality traits, a total of 12 codes were created. The frequency distribution and percentage shares of these codes are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Personality Characteristics of Interviewee Women with Entrepreneurial Potential

Personality Traits	Frequency	Percentage %
<i>Productive</i>	5	23,8
<i>Openness to Innovation</i>	2	9,5
<i>Patient</i>	2	9,5
<i>Willing to Learn</i>	2	9,5
<i>Altruist</i>	1	4,8
<i>Success Oriented</i>	1	4,8
<i>Confident</i>	1	4,8
<i>Determined</i>	1	4,8
<i>Compatible</i>	1	4,8
<i>Independent</i>	1	4,8
<i>Ambitious</i>	1	4,8
<i>Result Oriented</i>	1	4,8
Total	21	100

As can be seen in Table 5, most of the personality traits of the interviewee women are among the characteristics of the entrepreneur in Schumpeter's definition of entrepreneurship mentioned in the theoretical framework. In particular, productivity and openness to innovation, together with the willingness to learn, have a very important place among the desired characteristics of entrepreneurial women.

4. Result

Handicrafts are an important cultural value for the province of Kocaeli. The fact that the majority of the people operating in this field are women also makes this field a suitable ground for women entrepreneurs. The researcher's findings - especially Table 5 - show that women interested in handicrafts in Kocaeli province have the potential to become entrepreneurs. Increasing the number of seminars that will direct women towards entrepreneurship, further expanding the vocational courses (KO-MEK) operating within the Municipality, and providing more information about loan and grant programs, especially to overcome financial

difficulties, can be listed as steps that can be taken to turn women interested in handicrafts in Kocaeli province into successful entrepreneurs. In addition, improving women's digital skills will encourage them to adapt to the new age. Mainstreaming handicrafts, which are environmentally sensitive by nature, and including women in this field in economic life will make a significant contribution to the economy in Kocaeli province in particular, in all neighboring provinces in general, and in Turkey at the macro level by setting a good example.

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