



Microfinance as A Strategy for Alleviating Women's Poverty in Turkey: An Analytical Study Focused on Eskisehir



Funda Râna Adaçay*^{ID}, Gökçe Yıldız^{ID}

Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Anadolu University, 26470 Eskişehir, Turkey

* Correspondence: Funda Râna Adaçay (frozbey@anadolu.edu.tr)

Received: 11-18-2023

Revised: 12-20-2023

Accepted: 12-25-2023

Citation: Adaçay, F. R. & Yıldız, G. (2023). Microfinance as a strategy for alleviating women's poverty in Turkey: An analytical study focused on Eskisehir. *J. Corp. Gov. Insur. Risk Manag.*, 10(2), 140-158. <https://doi.org/10.56578/jcgirm100204>.



© 2023 by the authors. Published by Acadlore Publishing Services Limited, Hong Kong. This article is available for free download and can be reused and cited, provided that the original published version is credited, under the CC BY 4.0 license.

Abstract: Currently, the primary focus of the poverty discourse is around the concept of "the feminization of poverty". Similar to other countries, a significant factor contributing to women's poverty in Turkey is the limited availability of employment alternatives that enable women to generate income. Given the escalating prevalence of women's impoverishment, it is evident that the anti-poverty measures implemented by governments often fall short of being enough. Various institutions and groups are introducing alternative financial services in this particular setting. An effective approach to address women's poverty in Turkey is the implementation of the "micro credit" program. Microcredit offers modest financial resources that enable economically disadvantaged women to independently participate in income-generating endeavors. The concept of "microfinance" is crucial in recognizing the significance of capital in combating poverty. Hence, the United Nations designated 2005 as the year of "Microcredit." Microfinance is regarded as a crucial instrument in attaining the Millennium Development Goals of alleviating poverty worldwide by 2015. The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of Microcredit provided by the Turkish Grameen Microfinance Program (TGMP) on the empowerment of women in their efforts to combat poverty, specifically in relation to women's entrepreneurship and their socio-economic well-being. The study was done using surveys administered to a sample of 250 women who utilized microcredit in the Eskişehir province as part of the TGMP program. The data collected were subjected to analysis using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and the one-way ANOVA approach, which is a parametric testing procedure. The second phase of the analysis involved the utilization of the semi-structured survey methodology, which is a qualitative research method. This approach was administered to a sample of 50 women participating in the study. During the interview, the questions from the initial survey were discussed and further explored, along with the underlying reasoning behind them. The findings indicate that the effects of microcredit on women's entrepreneurship and socio-economic status following microcredit utilization differ based on factors such as women's educational attainment, the nature of the business founded, the extent of income growth, the loan amount, and the number of times the loan is utilized. Conversely, every participant expresses support for microcredit; the majority perceive them as beneficial and motivating. The prevailing opinion among them is that universal benefits should be extended to all individuals. According to their statement, the rise in income resulting from the enterprises they created and expanded using microcredit had a significant role in their family's finances (80%), enabling them to spend more comfortably (20%). Most of them stated that they possess a budget that prioritizes both savings and revenue growth.

Keywords: Women's entrepreneurship; Women's poverty; Microcredit; Economic development; Micro Finance

1. Introduction

The most urgent development issues have been widespread poverty, a low standard of life, and the consequences of depopulation in rural areas. According to a report by the UN Development Programme in 2022, in 16 countries, while the percentage of individuals living in poverty had declined, the overall number of people living in poverty had risen due to population increase (<http://populationmatters.org>). As per the research titled "The Survival of the Richest" by the Oxfam International (2023), the wealthiest 1% globally had acquired about two-thirds of the \$42

trillion in newly generated wealth since 2020. This quantity is nearly double the quantity possessed by the remaining 99% of the global population. Amidst the continuous economic difficulties and the worldwide outbreak of the coronavirus, the wealthiest 1% of the population accumulated a staggering \$26 trillion (63%) of the total new wealth created. In contrast, the remaining \$16 trillion (37%) was distributed among the remainder of the global population. This information was reported by the TGMP in November 2023. The 2022 Poverty & Shared Welfare (2022) Report from the World Bank also emphasizes the anticipated biggest surge in worldwide inequality and poverty since the Second World War. A joint analysis conducted by the Fight Inequality Alliance et al. (2023) proposes the implementation of an annual wealth tax of up to 5% on global multi-millionaires and billionaires. An annual revenue of 1.7 trillion dollars can be created. This sum of money has the potential to alleviate poverty for 2 billion individuals, fulfill existing humanitarian needs, eradicate hunger within a decade, aid impoverished nations impacted by climate change, and guarantee access to healthcare and social protection for all residents of low- and low-middle-income countries.

Due to global gender inequality, women and girls bear the brunt of the impacts of the climate crisis and resource depletion. For example, 80% of people displaced by worsening climate conditions are female, women are disproportionately impacted by hunger and malnutrition, and gender-based violence and injustices, such as forced prostitution and child marriage, increase under environmental pressures and threats (Poverty Populationmatters, 2022).

Children account for 44% of the global extreme poor, and poverty rates are highest among children, particularly among girls. There are 105 girls for every 100 boys living in extreme poor households, across all ages. As boys and girls get older, the gender gap in poverty widens further. 122 women between the ages of 25 and 34 live in poor households for every 100 men in the same age group. This coincides with the peak productive and reproductive ages of men and women and likely reflects that as young women become wives and mothers, they often stop working in order to care for their husbands and children. This is not uniform across regions, however. Europe and Central Asia, the region with the lowest extreme poverty rate, also have the smallest gender poverty gap, while Sub-Saharan Africa, home to most of the global extreme poor, has the largest gender poverty gap. Gender differences in poverty rates exist even between the ages of 40 and 65 but emerge again in the elderly years in reverse. The share of men over the age of 65 living in poor households is higher than that of women (7.3 percent compared to 6.7 percent, respectively) (Paramo & Boudet, 2018).

The World Benchmarking Alliance et al. (2023) (WBA) has analyzed 1,006 companies across ten industries and 80+ countries, providing a comprehensive view of gender equality efforts in the private sector. Companies in the Gender Benchmark are assessed across the six measurement areas: governance and strategy, representation, compensation and benefits, health and well-being, violence and harassment, and marketplace and community. The findings reveal an average score of 17%, the highest only just over 50%, and 12% scoring zero. Despite poor overall performance, top companies committing to gender equality and addressing unpaid care stand out. The report emphasizes that more action is needed, especially in addressing violence and harassment at work and power imbalances in supply chains, urging collective efforts to overcome gender inequalities. Creating a workplace where women are set up for success also means ensuring that the workplace is safe. However, more than one in five people experience violence and harassment at work (Gender Insights Report, 2023). In this context, the empowerment and liberation of women are as important as the laws and policies that protect them. The fact that women encounter the problem of poverty more quickly than men and the increase in the relative number of women in poverty have led to the emergence of the expression "feminization of poverty." For this reason, increasing income-generating activities and the support provided in this process, such as microcredits, are gaining increasing attention.

The feminization of poverty as a concept was first used by Diane Pearce in 1978. She used it to draw attention to the fact that 2/3 of the poor in America were women in the years in question, and despite the increase in the rate of women's participation in the workforce over time, the economic position of women gradually worsened between 1950 and 1970. On the other hand, although it took the 1990s for a concrete understanding to emerge and a series of action plans and targets were put forward in these years, it was only in 2000 that the UN General Assembly governments put women's poverty on their agenda in a relatively more comprehensive manner (Düzkan, 2022). Although it is stated in the Millennium Goals announced in the same year that poverty should be addressed as a human rights problem beyond the development problem and that states can deal with this problem by eliminating gender inequality, no real solution is proposed beyond a series of improvements with various reforms (Özar et al., 2022). It is a known fact that women in Third World countries experience poverty more severely than women in First World countries, but current data show that the situation of women living in Western societies is not encouraging either. According to 2019 data, the average poverty rate is 12.3% and 10.9% for women and men, respectively. While experiencing women's poverty as a global phenomenon points to the systemic and structural dimension of the issue, international institutions such as the UN ignore the structural character of women's poverty and imply that poverty can be eliminated with "projects to support women".

The main reasons for women's impoverishment are the general position of women in the family, inequalities of opportunity in education, unequal resource distribution, inadequate protection of women's rights by law, gender

stereotypes, etc., which can be grouped under general headings. According to the International Fund for Agriculture Development, women spend 12-13 hours in different daily activities, but they remain unpaid.

By any standard, wealth inequality is high in all countries and exceptionally high in some (see Note [1]). As a rough guide, typical values would be 35% for the share of the top 1% and 65% for the share of the top 10%. A Gini value of 70 would be relatively low, and a Gini value above 80 would be relatively high. These values are much higher than the corresponding values for income inequality or any other standard welfare indicator (Global Wealth Report, 2021). For example: With a population of 86 million, the Republic of Turkey is the world's 17th most populated country. However, according to "Income Distribution Statistics, 2022," published by TURKSTAT, the Gini coefficient (see Notes [2]) in Turkey has reached its highest level since 2006. The Gini coefficient in Turkey increased to 0.415. According to OECD data for 2021, Turkey is among the three worst countries in terms of the Gini coefficient. The countries with worse Gini coefficients than Turkey are Costa Rica and Mexico. In terms of women's participation in the workforce, employment, and unemployment rates, it is once again seen that Turkey is at an extremely bad point in terms of women's employment when compared to the world in general and various regions. It can be seen in Figure 1. Labor force statistics for August 2022 are included in the news bulletin published by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK, 2022) on October 10, 2022. While the seasonally adjusted employment rate was 47.9% in August 2022, the rate for women was 30.8%. The number of employed people increased by 366 thousand people in August 2022 compared to the previous month, reaching 31 million, 14 thousand people, and the employment rate reached 47.9% with an increase of 0.5 points. Even if there is a half-point increase, the increase in female employment is still not sufficient within this increase rate.

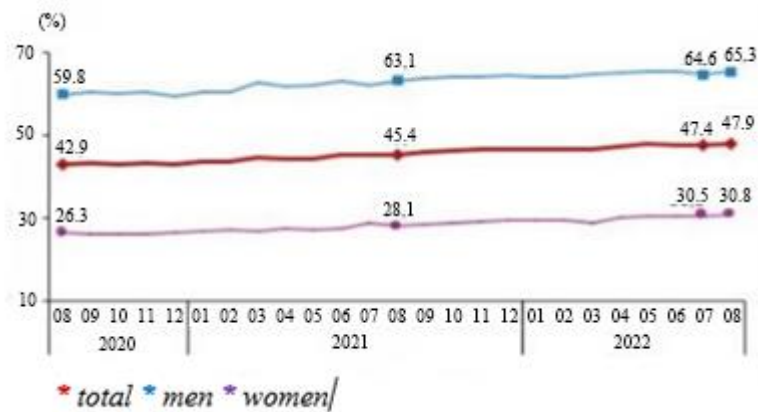


Figure 1. Employment rates August 2020-2022
Source: TÜİK, 2022

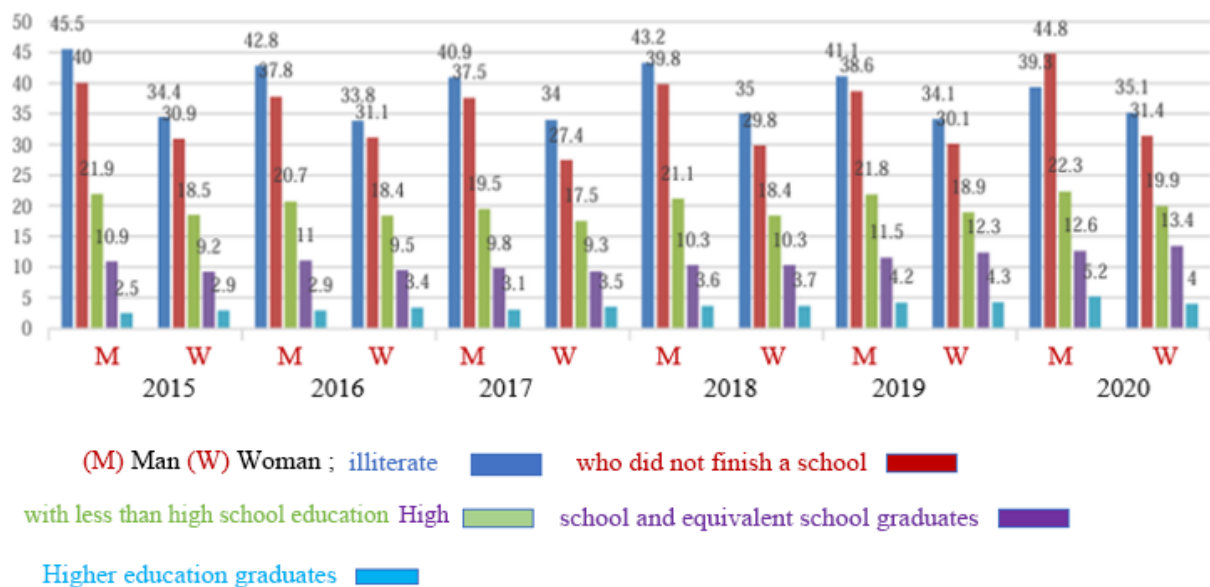


Figure 2. Poverty rates by gender, educational status of household members, 2015-2020, 15 years and above
Source: TURKSTAT, Income and Living Conditions Research, 2012-2020

As another example, Figure 2 shows poverty data by education level for men and women over the age of 15. Among all education levels, poverty rates are highest among illiterate men and women. In terms of men, the poverty rate of those who did not graduate from school has always been higher than that of women. In 2018, the poverty rates of high school and equivalent school graduates for women were equal to those for men (10.3%), and in 2019 and 2020, the poverty rates (12.3 and 13.4) exceeded those for men.

Although women are employed, they cannot take part in management positions, especially due to their excessive responsibilities at home and their motherhood roles. Supportive conditions are not sufficient in these matters. In addition, the majority of women are deprived of social security, cannot access financial resources, do not have money, and do not have measurable income. Additionally, they do not have a say in the money earned by the family. Another problem is migration to cities and women's lack of employment opportunities in the city or their involvement in the informal economy (Özdemir, 2009). Although the education of girls is not given sufficient importance within the family, more importance is given to boys, and they are always given priority in responsibilities outside the home as well. While girls are surrounded by responsibilities within the family, such as helping the mother and the family and doing housework, boys are given the responsibility to continue their education or engage in work outside the home if they wish. Thus, gender inequalities that begin within the household are internalized by women, starting from childhood (Topgül, 2013). Women who cannot benefit from adequate educational opportunities are often forced to work in informal sectors and in jobs that do not require qualifications, have no social security, and are low-paid. Therefore, poverty is rapidly and permanently feminized (Adaçay, 2021).

There is a direct relationship between women's inability to participate in decision-making mechanisms and their inability to receive an equal share of public resources and services. The fact that managers and decision-makers are mostly men causes resource allocation and public policies to be gender blind. For this reason, steps have not been taken to prevent gender inequality, and women receive a lower share of the general and local budgets. Women have less access to education, health, justice, culture, and sports services; results such as the social security system cover women less (Ulutaş, 2009). According to the principle of social exclusion, poverty and social exclusion always exist together. Women in poverty often cannot afford to participate in community, social, and political activities. Additionally, poverty reinforces women's tendency towards social exclusion and has a negative impact on one's self-confidence. Therefore, the consequences of social exclusion not only affect the well-being of poor women but also diminish their hope of escaping poverty. In addition to understanding the causes of women's poverty, it is extremely important to investigate ways to increase women's employment. Due to the roles imposed on them by society, women face many difficulties both while entering business and after entering business. This situation is clearly seen in the data. Because in the current situation, while women make up 32% of total employment, men make up about 70%. Especially because of the "glass ceiling syndrome," which can be defined as the whole of the factors that cause working women to stop progressing in their careers, it is not as easy for women to rise in their professional lives as men. For example, considering the academic career, the share of women in professorship, which is the highest cadre in Turkey, is 32%; when the private sector is examined, while men have a share of more than 80% in managerial positions, the rate of women cannot reach even 20%. Of course, this is not the only problem in women's careers. There are also differences in gender pay inequality. In general, there is a 20% difference between men and women doing the same job in the country. According to the statistics of the female labor force participation rate, it is Germany at 79.6%, Japan at 76.9%, France at 75.8%, the US at 71.8%, South Korea at 65%, and Turkey at 30.6%, respectively (EMAR & GENEL İŞ Emek Araştırma Dairesi, 2022). According to report of DİSK-AR (2021), only one in every four women in Turkey is working. Not being paid equal wages for equivalent work and working in insecure and unregistered jobs deepens women's poverty. According to the February 2022 research of the General-İŞ Labor Research Department, women became poorer than men in a year (4.4% and 3.8% respectively).

Increasing women's participation in the workforce is considered an important policy tool in order to ensure Turkey's economic growth and development. According to estimations for 2025, it is stated that if the labor force participation rate of women in Turkey rises to 63%, which is the OECD average, the country's GDP may increase by 20%, that is, around 200-250 billion dollars on average (Sağlamyürek Taşdemir, 2021).

Today, the fight against poverty has become a state policy in order to produce lasting solutions. States are not alone in the fight against poverty. They receive support from both local and international institutions and organizations. Some international organizations are doing important work to combat poverty around the world. Examples of these are the World Bank, the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The leading institutions in the fight against poverty in Turkey are the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, the General Directorate of Foundations, and the Ministry of National Education. With Decree Law No. 633, some institutions and organizations operating in the field of social assistance and social services were combined under one roof in 2011, and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies was established. There are six basic service units under this ministry, including five general directorates and the Department of Martyrs' Relatives and Veterans (İncedal, 2013).

After the concept of feminization of poverty was adopted by the world, issues such as preventing women's

poverty, bringing women into business life, and encouraging women's entrepreneurship began to come to the fore. In order to achieve these, the urgency of providing financial resources to poor women has come to the fore. Microfinance is also one of the leading financial services provided to poor individuals. "Microfinance (MF) is the provision of financial services, primarily savings and loans, for poor households that do not have access to formal financial institutions" (McGuire & Conroy, 2000). According to another more detailed definition, microfinance is the provision of small amounts of loans through institutions such as banks, official institutions, and credit cooperatives to provide finance to these people and encourage them to produce, instead of financial support to people under a certain status (Kangeldiev, 2010). Microfinance (MF) is the provision of small amounts of loans to people under a certain status through institutions such as banks, official institutions, and credit cooperatives. The aim is to encourage these people to produce (Kangeldiev, 2010).

The research was conducted to evaluate the impact of microcredits given by the TGMP to empower women in the fight against poverty on women's entrepreneurship and the socio-economic lives of women entrepreneurs. The research aims to determine whether microcredits are effective in integrating women into the economy and women's entrepreneurship. It is important to show whether loans change women's lives in socio-economic terms. The study investigated whether microcredit, defined as a policy supporting women's entrepreneurship and preventing poverty, is a solution to poverty in practice. Unlike most studies in the literature, this study also investigated the effect of microcredits on women's entrepreneurship.

2. Micro Finance Approach and Microcredit

The Micro Finance Approach was developed by Bangladeshi economist Professor Dr., a Nobel Peace Prize winner and the founder and pioneer of microcredit in the world. It was developed by Muhammed Yunus. The system established by Yunus in his own country has become world-renowned, and the "Grameen Bank Model," named after the bank he founded, has begun to be used in the literature as the "Grameen Bank Approach." The system essentially provides startup capital support to those who do not have enough capital to start a business. The Grameen Bank Model has been a pioneering model because it reaches large masses. However, there are other microfinance methods other than the Grameen Bank Model in practice. In the microfinance system, social development is aimed at enabling individuals to produce, being included in the financial system, and accordingly increasing the individual's welfare level.

We can list the 10 leading microfinance institutions in the world as follows: 1. MBK Ventura (Indonesia) 2. SDBL (Sri Lanka) 3. Shakti (Bangladesh) 4. GF SPL (India) 5. CARD Bank (Philippines) 6. BURO Bangladesh (Bangladesh) 7. SKS (India) 8. Spandana (India) 9. Grameen Bank (Bangladesh) 10. Lead Foundation (Egypt). These listed institutions are essentially financial institutions, or, in other words, profit-making commercial banks. However, there are also non-profit organizations among them that provide loans to low-income people. Apart from the 10 organizations mentioned, there are also some large non-profit microfinance providers. Accion and Kiva are two of them (Credit Summit, 2022).

Just as there are various microfinance institutions around the world, the methods by which these institutions provide financial resources also vary. Although there are different microfinance organization models in the literature, the most frequently used classification is the one made by Hari Srinivas, one of the coordinators of the Global Development Research Center Virtual Library on Micro Credit. In this classification, there are: union model, guarantor institution model, community pressure model, cooperative model, credit unions, grameen model, group model, individual model, brokerage model, non-governmental organization model, group pressure model, revolving savings and credit union model, and small business. Its model is the Village Banking Model. There are 14 microfinance organization models in the classification (Srinivas, 2015).

Microcredit is a very small amount of loan service offered to poor people, mostly uneducated, who have low income, no income, or starting capital and who cannot provide guarantors or collateral, to whom traditional commercial banks avoid giving loans (Şahpaz, 2017). Microcredit is a loan given to people with low income who cannot provide guarantors or collateral, to whom traditional commercial banks avoid giving loans. It is also a very small loan service offered to poor people, often uneducated, without income or start-up capital (Şahpaz, 2017).

The purpose of microcredit is for people who cannot get a loan through traditional means (bank loans). It is to meet the capital needs that will contribute to economic and social development. It is to carry out an income-generating activity for the family and the borrower in a way that will reduce poverty, injustice in income distribution, and unemployment (TGMP, 2023). Grameen Bank was quickly adopted by many non-governmental organizations in South Asia, especially in Pakistan, India, Nepal, and Indonesia, which are similar to Bangladesh in terms of economic and social structure, and many non-governmental organizations started micro-credit applications (Şahpaz, 2017). China launched Grameen-like programs in 1997, and microcredit began to be implemented in four regions through the China Rural Development Institute, which is affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Şengür, 2011). Despite the inadequacy of the microfinance sector in Spain, there are a few organizations that have managed to maintain microcredit programs, such as Colonya Caixa de Pollença (Mallorca) and CP'AC (Barcelona). Likewise, the industry has received great support from La Caixa's public bank,

Mikrobank, since 2007 and continues to do so (González, 2013). Microcredit is defined as individual loans given to risky groups that are not financially and socially accepted in Spain. Mention can also be made of MiBanco, a successful Microfinance Institution (MFI) for Peru. MiBanco is a microfinance institution that uses technology to improve its performance. It has 35 branches within its network and ATMs in many places (Dündar, 2007).

3. Turkish Grameen Micro Finance Program

On June 11, 2003, the Turkish Grameen Micro Finance Program (TGMP) was launched in Diyarbakır by the Turkish Waste Prevention Foundation (TİSVA) to provide microcredit and support to women (TGMP, 2023). Less than 9% of entrepreneurs in Turkey are female. One of the goals of the TGMP is to increase the number of microentrepreneurs among low-income women in a way that accelerates this rate. Women can benefit from the loan provided by TGMP within the scope of fighting against poverty. Initially, five types of loan services were provided in TGMP branches: Basic Loan, Entrepreneur Loan, Livestock Loan, Social Development Loan and Communication Loan.

Basic Loan is a loan given to low-income women who want to get a micro loan with a maximum amount of 1,500 TL in the first year. Entrepreneur Loan is a loan given to women who have high commercial potential, are successful, and have taken important steps towards becoming businesswomen, and have proven this among the Basic loan recipients. After the first year, it is increased by a maximum of 1,000 TL every year. Livestock Loan is a loan of up to 2,000 TL to women who want to engage in animal breeding. It is repaid in 26 weeks. Social Development Loan is a loan given to women who use microcredit to help them earn additional income. Women can trade 15 types of products, from cleaning to cosmetics. It is repaid in 46 weeks. Communication Loan is an additional loan given to women using microcredit to benefit from technological developments. Thanks to this loan, women who receive microloans can own smartphones. It is repaid in 46 weeks. However, the number of women applying for microcredit is increasing day by day due to reasons such as increasingly difficult living conditions, an increasing need for microcredit, and women becoming more encouraged in entrepreneurship. TGMP has updated the loan amounts and types it provides in 2023 to meet increasing demands. The lower limit of the Basic Loan and Entrepreneur Loan is determined to be 1,000 TL, and the upper limit is 10,000 TL. The type of loan given as Direct Livestock Loan is no longer used. The name of the communication credit has been changed to the technology credit. Unlike the loans given before, Startup Loan, Activity Loan, Development Loan, Growth / Hepitalist Loan has started to be given. Startup Loan is a loan given to low-income women who are introduced to the microcredit system for the first time and have the idea of starting a business to help them get used to the microcredit system more quickly. The lower limit of the Startup Loan is 1,000 TL, and the upper limit is 3,000 TL. It is repaid in 33 weeks. Activity Loan is a type of loan with a lower limit of 1,000 TL and an upper limit of 7,000 TL. It is repaid in 40 weeks. Development Loan is a loan given to microentrepreneurs who use loans regularly for five years or more and contribute to the family and country economies by engaging in income-generating activities. The lower limit of the loan is 7,000 TL, and the upper limit is 10,000 TL. It is repaid in 46 weeks. Growth / Hepitalist Loan is a loan given to microentrepreneurs who use loans regularly for five years or more and contribute to the family and country economies by engaging in income-generating activities. The lower limit of the loan is 7,000 TL, and the upper limit is 10,000 TL. It is paid back in 46 weeks (TGMP, 2023).

Apart from loans, TGMP also provides microinsurance, microhome insurance, and voluntary savings services. Depending on the loan type, repayments take between 26 and 46 weeks. In the microcredit system, TGMP is not just a financial aid provider; in other words, it is a lender. It is also the party that collects the loan, and which is responsible for the full and timely repayment of loans. Therefore, TGMP monitors refunds closely. Microfinance branches are established with donations from individuals or organizations and funds provided within the framework of the Special Provincial Administration Law. A significant part of the resource comes from donors. Every new donation means support for a new woman.

GMP cooperates strongly with various institutions, such as governorships, provincial and special administrations, local and international non-governmental organizations, and humanitarian aid organizations, in order to eliminate poverty and inequality. CARE International, German Sparkassenstiftung for International Cooperation (Deutsche Sparkassenstiftung Für Internationale Kooperation -DSIK) and Kiva are the institutions it cooperates with. Within the scope of the cooperation between TGMP and DSIK, as of December 31, 2021, a total of 2311 low-income microentrepreneurs, 1603 of whom are Syrian and 708 Turkish, have been reached. Kiva is a non-profit organization headquartered in San Francisco, California, that enables low-income entrepreneurs in more than 80 countries to obtain loans online using the "Crowd-Funding Model". The cooperation protocol between TGMP and Kiva was signed in 2021. The Kiva Investment Committee provided loans to TGMP to carry out microcredit activities for refugees and communities that cannot access financial resources. Within the scope of the project, everyone in Turkey can benefit from Kiva microcredit without any provincial or branch restrictions. Within the scope of the project, a total of 361 low-income microentrepreneurs were reached, 19 of whom were Syrian and 342 of whom were Turkish (TGMP, 2023). TGMP, which served with 2 branches in 2003, increased the number of branches to 110 in 2014. 2014 is the year with the highest number of branches. TGMP has touched

the lives of more than 210,000 financially challenged women with more than TRY 1,655,000,000 in microcredit. TGMP currently has a national network of 100 operating microfinance branches in 69 cities in Turkey, with a high concentration in rural areas. The repayment ratio for microcredits is 100% without guarantee or bail. We can say that the increase in the number of branches over the years has provided the opportunity to reach more women entrepreneurs and encouraged new entrepreneurs to apply. Figure 3 shows the number of people receiving and waiting for microloans as of April 2022. As can be seen in Figure 4, TGMP’s Annual Audit Reports (TGMP, 2023) show that the number of micro-entrepreneurs who received microcredit was 28,553, and the number of micro-entrepreneurs waiting to receive microcredit was 12,160. The total active number of micro-entrepreneurs is 40,713. Total microcredit disbursement had reached TRY 1,654,198,886.44 by November 2023 (TGMP, 2023).



Figure 3. Total microcredit disbursement (Since 2003)

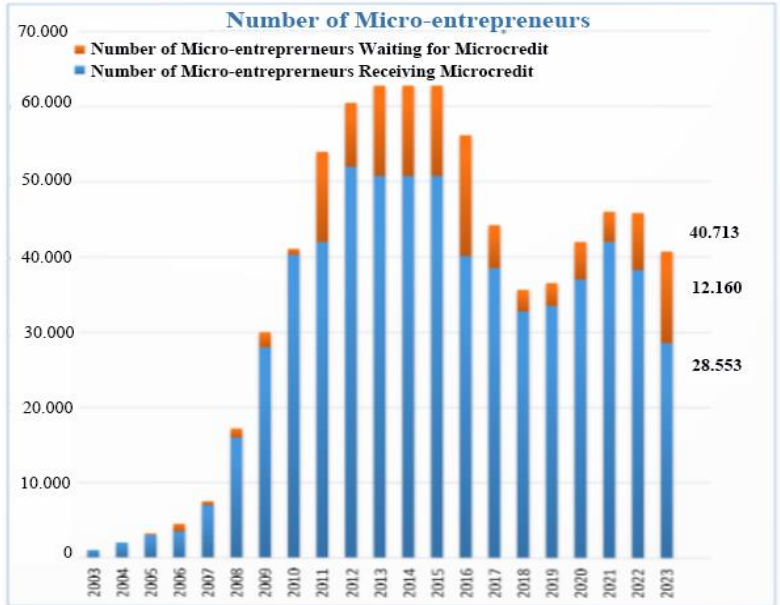


Figure 4. Number of micro-entrepreneurs (2003-2023)

TGMP is being audited by Binder Dijker Otte (BDO) on a yearly basis. According to BDO, TGMP does not pay any salaries or other benefits to the chairman, members of the board of directors, or the board of trustees. TGMP has conducted a social impact analysis to measure the social value of the microcredit activities that have been conducted and the social return on investment. Based on social impact analysis, it has been found out that the TGMP creates a social impact of TRY 4.05 for every TRY 1 that is provided to microentrepreneurs by microcredit activities that have been going on for 20 years. Hence, a social impact equal to TRY 581,937,084 has been reached by disbursing TRY 143,688,169 of microcredit to 36,799 microentrepreneurs in 2020.

TGMP will conduct a social impact analysis in 2021. The analysis evaluates TGMP’s impact on shareholders, which includes TGMP’s microentrepreneurs, partners, and municipalities that TGMP has partnerships with. In

order to identify the well-defined outcome, all stakeholders were asked what the initial outcome had changed in their lives. Seven positive well-defined variables are identified.

1. Social Network: Experienced by 78% of stakeholders
2. Increase in purchasing power: Experienced by 79% of stakeholders
3. Improvement of family relations: Experienced by 60% of stakeholders
4. Being respected by others: Experienced by 67% of stakeholders
5. Increase in self-confidence
 - Increase in financial literacy: Experienced by 83% of stakeholders
 - Increase in emotional wellbeing: Experienced by 85% of stakeholders
 - Increase in vocational wellbeing: Experienced by 76% of stakeholders
6. Increase in quality of social life: Experienced by 49% of stakeholders
7. Being able to cope with financial problems: Experienced by 72% of stakeholders

Kahramanmaraş Application of TGMP that was conducted together with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Professor Muhammed Yunus on December 2nd, 2008, received the “European Union Prize” among 600 other projects that were submitted to the European Council. Microcredit activities carried out in 175 countries, including Turkey, have been deemed worthy of many awards by many different organizations and institutions.

It is understood that microcredits have an important role in fighting poverty and supporting women's entrepreneurship. Reasons such as banks' high interest rates, not giving loans to people with low income, and requiring surety, guarantees, and mortgages when giving loans lead women microentrepreneurs to use microloans instead of commercial banks.

The highlights of the research conducted by Ipsos Türkiye, "Standing Strong Against the Crisis: Women's Experience in Disaster Times," revealed that 58% of society thought that women were not treated equally. The most striking finding of the research is that during disaster and chaos, women are at the top of the list of reasons for being socially affected. It was stated that there were violent incidents such as human trafficking, harassment, and rape, with a culture of obligatory compliance with social norms (TGMP, 2023). Despite all the negativities, working women who do not struggle with poverty continue to exist in business life in order to gain economic independence and be a part of employment. Women who oppose the sexist impositions of businesses are establishing their own businesses thanks to the microloans provided to them. Those who cannot establish their own businesses try to stand on their own two feet by producing at home. Those who start their own businesses can benefit from entrepreneur microcredit, and those who produce at home can benefit from basic microcredit. Entrepreneurial women who establish their own businesses set an example for other female entrepreneurs around them. Women with increased self-confidence and respect have a say both in their environment and in their families. The number of women who see examples of successful entrepreneurship is increasing day by day, and the rate of applying for microcredit for women's entrepreneurship is also increasing.

The question of "whether microcredit, defined as a policy supporting women's entrepreneurship and preventing poverty," is a solution to poverty in practice forms the basis of this research. Because poverty and unemployment continue to be important problems for Turkey, as everywhere and always, women will be the most affected by this situation. According to OECD data, Turkey's purchasing power parity rate is around 2.8%. The minimum expenditure basket (MEB) is 1,083 TL per person per month as of September 2022, corresponding to a 73% increase from 626 TL in September 2021. In this context, this research is carried out to evaluate the impact of microloans given by the "TGMP" to empower women in the fight against poverty on women's entrepreneurship and the socio-economic lives of women entrepreneurs.

4. Literature

Gökyay (2008) examined microcredit practices in Turkey and investigated their effects on employment. As a result of the study, it was seen that poor people got a job thanks to the financial support provided, but from a broader perspective, it was stated that there are doubts that the dissemination of such practices is the most basic practice in increasing social welfare.

Karapınar (2010) reached 104 women, the oldest microcredit users in Bursa, and created their personal, family, and economic profiles. In-depth interviews with 11 women yielded more detailed findings, from their life stories to their thoughts on microcredit and poverty. In-depth interviews constituted the qualitative part of the study. When the data obtained is evaluated, the family income of almost all women who benefit from microcredit services has increased "somewhat" or "a lot". They "never" or "rarely" have difficulty repaying their loans. The most important reason for them to choose microcredit is that the microfinance system does not resort to criminal proceedings and does not use high loan interest. For this reason, it has been determined that 85% of women want to use microcredit again.

Akkul (2011) investigated whether microcredit was a solution to gender income inequality. A survey was conducted on 250 of 691 women using microcredit in Bilecik province. According to the survey results, the lives of these women, who started new businesses or financed their existing businesses with small-scale loans, are

divided into two categories: before and after microcredit. The biggest benefit from microcredit is that it has eliminated the income gap between men and women. Women who gained financial freedom or increased their current income had a say in household expenditures. In other words, women got rid of the patriarchal hierarchical order in their relationships within the household and transitioned to a more democratic order. In addition, these women, whose socialization opportunities increased, recommended other women use microcredit.

Sancak Baktır (2014) examined the changes in the socio-economic levels of microcredit users in Turkey as a result of microcredit use. In order to measure the socio-economic effects of microcredit on users, surveys were sent to 80 microcredit branches in 60 provinces. According to the survey results, microcredit users used the microcredit they received mostly for trade purposes (45.8%) and then for manufacturing purposes (41%). It is seen that after receiving microcredit, the majority of the participants (48.6%) moved to the upper middle-income group, and their income increased. Participants stated that microcredit was used for minimum living and basic expenses (such as kitchen or health expenses). In addition, they stated that their prestige increased and that there was an increase in the time spent with the family and socialization.

Bossoutrot (2005) found that microfinance helps reduce poverty in villages with its positive spillover effect. Microcredit applications have been very important in solving the increasingly important financing problems for small-scale entrepreneurship that emerged after the collapse of state ownership and unemployment in Russia in the early 1990s.

Şahin (2010) examined the developments in the world regarding entrepreneurship, women's entrepreneurship, and microcredit and the reflections of these developments in Turkey. Apart from theory-oriented studies, he conducted research in Sakarya using the interview method. In this context, a total of 81 micro-credit-user entrepreneur women were interviewed in Sakarya. The success of the system in developing entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial reasons, the use of credit and what it is used for, marketing, and its benefits for employment were evaluated. 650 people received loans from this program in five years. A total of 2,500 separate loans were given to women entrepreneurs. Approximately one-third of the 650 people who received loans are Roma women entrepreneurs. The reason why Roma women entrepreneurs show so much interest in microcredit is that no one has done any work on them. According to the research results, it is noteworthy that the main reason why women want to become entrepreneurs is "family tradition". Most of the participants used microcredit for "the purchase of goods".

Şengür (2011) examined the relationship between income, welfare, status, socialization, etc., between the lives of microcredit users in Eskişehir before and after using the loan. The study also investigated whether there was a change in these aspects. The proportion of women credit customers who had an income that could be considered poor before the loan decreased after the loan was used. It has been observed that the majority of women loan customers use the loan to do handicrafts, start their own businesses, or expand their existing businesses. It has been determined that women's entry into these lines of business directly or indirectly contributes to employment. It was stated that 68% of the women who participated in the survey experienced an increase in self-confidence with the use of credit.

Ledgerwood (2013) includes information on the process of SMEs accessing financial services. Four types of microfinance loans (MFK) that meet the financial needs of microentrepreneurs were mentioned. These types are explained as commercial banks, specialized non-governmental organizations such as MFK, membership-based institutions such as provincial and credit cooperatives, and state funds. It has been stated that banks do not work very effectively in the field of microfinance, credit cooperatives are based on solidarity and are effective in rural areas, and it is difficult for non-governmental organizations to start businesses due to legal regulations, but they still offer a wide variety of programs. Ledgerwood has created a theoretical study by looking at the microfinance sector from the perspective of financial systems.

Tömen (2013) examined the literature on women's poverty and women's entrepreneurship. It summarized the programs aimed at developing women's entrepreneurship and reducing women's poverty in the world and in Turkey, as well as the institutions and organizations that carry them out. It has been revealed that the use of microcredit is not enough to save women from poverty, but that it gives them a certain entrepreneurial power and generally affects their lives positively.

Tilci (2014) made a sociological analysis of the Grameen microcredit program in Muş, where traditional gender roles are dominant. A survey was conducted on 100 microcredit customers, among a total of 409 women using credit. 70% of the women participating in the research define themselves as housewives. It is noteworthy that each of the women using credit defines herself as a "housewife," even though she is doing a job that requires a certain amount of expertise with the credit she uses. Work done by women through microcredit: It has been revealed that it is perceived not as an opportunity to participate in socio-economic life or to realize oneself, but as a kind of occupation that takes time away from housewifery whenever possible. The more modern and democratic the cities where women live and start businesses, the more entrepreneurial women feel. Otherwise, in more traditional and conservative regions, microcredit is depicted as a support for household expenses, not capital.

Ece (2014) compared women and housewives in Şırnak province who used microcredit and those who did not use microcredit but carried out entrepreneurial activities with their own means. Research data was obtained using

interview and survey methods. During the analysis, the discriminant analysis method was used to determine the differences between women using microcredit, entrepreneurial women who do not use microcredit, and housewives in terms of personality and demographic characteristics and to determine the characteristics that differentiate the groups, and the multinomial logistic regression method was used to determine the probability of the participants belonging to the groups. The interview method, one of the qualitative methods, was applied to determine the impact of microcredit use on the socio-economic level. As a result of the study, it was determined that women who use microcredit are similar to housewives in terms of entrepreneurial personality traits, but they differ from entrepreneurial women who do not use microcredit. The study also found that women using microcredit perceived a positive change in their socio-economic levels after receiving microcredit. It was determined that entrepreneurial women who did not use microcredit perceived a positive change in their socio-economic levels after their entrepreneurial activities. It was determined that housewives did not perceive any change in their socio-economic levels over time.

Eral (2018) examined examples of microcredit practices and tried to determine how effective microcredit is in bringing women into the economy. Based on the opinions of women entrepreneurs, it has been determined that there is a general satisfaction with microcredit applications. In the study, all women not only gained a certain income but also improved self-confidence, motivation, sociability, and communication skills.

5. Methodology

The research population consists of women entrepreneurs who received loans from the TGMP in the Central Anatolia Region. Eskişehir province, located in the Central Anatolia region and a branch of the TGMP, was selected as a sample.

The analysis of the research consists of two parts. In the first part, a questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. The questionnaire was administered to 100 microentrepreneurs receiving active loans at Eskişehir TGMP for a pilot study. After the data were analyzed with the EFA method, the survey questions were rearranged and finalized. The questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section includes questions about demographic information (age, marital status, education level, number of children and the business established with microcredit), the second section includes questions measuring the change in women's socio-economic status after using credit (increase in food and clothing expenditures, increase in social activities such as cinema and eating out, ability to save, increase in income), and the last section includes questions about the impact of microcredit on entrepreneurship (women supporting each other in entrepreneurship, women who have previously received microcredit setting an example for each other, microcredit facilitating the use of capital and credit). All questions, except demographic information, were prepared using a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree). The questionnaire was administered to 250 women entrepreneurs in the Eskişehir branch of TGMP. The data were analyzed using the SPSS statistical program. Before making comparisons between variables, normality analysis was performed. The Skewness and Kurtosis values of the data were between -2 and +2, as in the study conducted by George and Mallery in 2010, and it was assumed that the data were normally distributed. Therefore, one-way ANOVA, one of the parametric test techniques, was used for the analysis. In the second part of the analysis, 10 semi-structured interview questions were prepared, taking into account the data obtained in the first part, and 50 active microentrepreneurs registered in the Eskişehir branch of TGMP were interviewed. In order to conduct the interview, permission was obtained from the TGMP Eskişehir branch officials, and care was taken to protect personal data.

6. Results

52.8% of the participants are between the ages of 41 and 60; 59.6% are married; 53.2% are middle school or high school graduates; and 32.4% have two children. It was determined that 17.6% of the participants started doing business with the microloan they received, and 33.2% used the loan they received to open a bridal shop, souvenir shop, pita shop, wood painting, marketing, healthy life products, and tattoo shop. In addition, 52.8% of the participants learned that microloans were given by TGMP employees; 34% said that they increased their income by 501-1000 TL after taking a microloan and starting a business; 29.2% said that they used five or more basic loans; and 50% said that they had never received an entrepreneur loan. 5.6% of the participants used livestock loans, 53.2% used social development loans, and 44% used communication loans.

After the first part containing demographic data, the answers given to the questions measuring the change in the socio-economic status of women microentrepreneurs in the second part of the survey and the questions measuring the effect of microloans on women's entrepreneurship in the third part were analyzed. In the analysis, 16 hypotheses below were tested using one-way ANOVA (see Table 1) and the post hoc test results were interpreted. [3] (see Note [3]) The first eight hypotheses focus on the changes in the socio-economic status of the participating women, and the other eight focus on their entrepreneurial characteristics.

Table 1. ANOVA values of hypotheses (H_{1,0}-H_{8,0})

	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean of Squares	F	P
H ₁	Intergroup	3.487	2	1.743	5.336	0.005
	In-group	80.702	247	0.327		
	Total*	84.189	249			
H ₂	Intergroup	7.641	7	1.092	3.451	0.002
	In-group	76.548	242	0.316		
H ₃	Intergroup	22.323	4	5.581	22.101	0.000
	In-group	61.866	245	0.253		
H ₄	Intergroup	10.283	5	2.057	6.790	0.000
	In-group	73.906	244	0.303		
H ₅	Intergroup	6.131	5	1.226	3.833	0.002
	In-group	78.058	244	0.320		
H ₆	Intergroup	1.447	3	0.482	1.435	0.233
	In-group	82.742	246	0.336		
H ₇	Intergroup	21.968	5	4.394	17.229	0.000
	In-group	62.221	244	0.255		
H ₈	Intergroup	3.915	4	0.979	2.988	0.020
	In-group	80.274	245	0.328		
	Total*	84.189	249			

H_{1,0}: Socio-economic status after microcredit use does not differ according to education.

H_{1,1}: does differ

H_{2,0}: The socio-economic situation after microcredit use does not differ depending on the business established.

H_{2,1}: does differ

H_{3,0}: The socio-economic situation after microcredit use does not differ according to income increase.

H_{3,1}: does differ

H_{4,0}: The socio-economic situation after microcredit use does not differ according to the number of Basic Credit uses.

H_{4,1}: does differ

H_{5,0}: The socio-economic situation after microcredit use does not differ according to the number of Entrepreneur Loan uses.

H_{5,1}: does differ

H_{6,0}: The socio-economic situation after microcredit use does not differ according to the number of Livestock Loans used.

H_{6,1}: does differ

H_{7,0}: The socio-economic situation after microcredit use does not differ according to the number of Social Development loans used.

H_{7,1}: does differ

H_{8,0}: The socio-economic situation after microcredit use does not differ according to the number of Communication Loans used.

H_{8,1}: does differ

H_{9,0}: The impact of microcredits on women's entrepreneurship does not differ according to education.

H_{9,1}: does differ

H_{10,0}: The impact of microcredits on women's entrepreneurship does not differ depending on the business established.

H_{10,1}: does differ

H_{11,0}: The effect of microcredits on women's entrepreneurship does not differ according to income increase.

H_{11,1}: does differ

H_{12,0}: The impact of microcredits on women's entrepreneurship does not differ depending on the number of Basic Credits used.

H_{12,1}: does differ

H_{13,0}: The impact of microcredits on women's entrepreneurship does not differ according to the number of Entrepreneur Loans used.

H_{13,1}: does differ

H_{14,0}: The impact of microcredits on women's entrepreneurship does not differ according to the number of Livestock Loans used.

H_{14,1}: does differ

H_{15,0}: The impact of microcredits on women's entrepreneurship does not differ according to the number of Social Development Loans used.

H_{15,1}: does differ

H_{16,0}: The impact of microcredits on women's entrepreneurship does not differ depending on the number of Communication Credits used.

H_{16,1}: does differ

6.1 The Socio-Economic Status of the Participants after Microcredit Use

Findings regarding the socio-economic status of the participants after microcredit use are given below.

ANOVA values of hypotheses (H_{1,0}-H_{8,0}).

H_{1,0}; H_{2,0}; H_{3,0}; H_{4,0}; H_{5,0}; Hypotheses H_{7,0} and H_{8,0} were rejected and alternative hypotheses (H_{1,1}; H_{2,1}; H_{3,1}; H_{4,1}; H_{5,1}; H_{7,1} and H_{8,1}) hypotheses were accepted.

For all of these hypotheses, except H_{6,0} - as a result of the analyses performed for the hypotheses, a significant difference was found between the groups as $p < 0.05$ at the 95% confidence level.

It was concluded that the socio-economic situation after microcredit use varies according to education, job type, and income increase. In addition, it was concluded that the socio-economic situation after microcredit use differs according to the number of uses of "basic loans", "entrepreneur loans", "social development loans", and "communication loans". In short, there are differences in the socio-economic status of the participants depending on the type of microcredit used.

H_{6,0}: "The socio-economic situation after microcredit use does not differ according to the number of livestock loan uses. One-way ANOVA values of the hypothesis: As a result of the analysis, no significant difference was found between the groups as $p > 0.05$ at the 95% confidence level. H_{6,0}: "The socio-economic situation after microcredit use does not differ according to the number of livestock loan uses. H_{6,0}, in other words, the null hypothesis, was accepted.

A post hoc test was applied to see which groups there was a significant difference. According to post hoc test results (see Note [1])

- A significant difference was detected between female entrepreneurs who were primary school and university graduates. At the same time, a significant difference was found between female entrepreneurs who were secondary school and university graduates. Women entrepreneurs who graduated from primary and secondary schools experienced more changes in their socio-economic situations after using loans compared to university graduates.

- Significant differences were found between home cooks and female entrepreneurs engaged in trade, cosmetics, agriculture, and animal husbandry. Women entrepreneurs who cook at home have experienced more socio-economic changes after using loans than women who work in trade, cosmetics, agriculture, and animal husbandry.

- Those who increased their income between 0-500 TL experienced more changes in their socio-economic life after using the loan compared to women who increased their income over 501-1000 TL, 1001-1500 TL, 1501-2000 TL, and 2001 TL. Those whose income increased between 501 and 1000 TL experienced more changes in their socio-economic lives after using the loan compared to women who increased their income between 1001-1500 TL, 1501-2000 TL, and over 2001 TL. Those whose income increased by 1001-1500 TL experienced more changes in their socio-economic lives after using the loan compared to women who increased their income by more than 2001 TL.

- Significant differences were found between women entrepreneurs who received basic loans once or twice and those who received four or more loans. Women who received one or two basic loans experienced more socio-economic changes after using the loan than women who received four or more basic loans.

- There is a significant difference between the groups that have never received an entrepreneur loan, those who have received an entrepreneur loan once, twice, or three times, and the groups that have received five or more entrepreneurial loans. The change in the socio-economic lives of women who received five or more entrepreneurial loans was less than that of those who did not receive any entrepreneurial loans or those who received entrepreneurial loans once, twice, or three times.

- A significant difference was found between those who received no social development loans and those who received two, three, four, five, or more social development loans. A significant difference was also found between the group that received a social development loan only once and the group that received it two, three, and four times. Women who did not receive any social development loans experienced more changes in their socio-economic situations than women who received two, three, four, five, or more social development loans. The results are quite striking. This shows that women who do not receive social development loans benefit more from other types of loans, such as basic loans and entrepreneur loans. In other words, for the women entrepreneurs participating in the research, other types of loans, such as basic loans and entrepreneur loans, are more effective in changing their socio-economic lives than social development loans.

6.2 The Impact of Microcredit on Women's Entrepreneurship

In this part of the research, ANOVA results and post hoc tests regarding entrepreneurship are included. One-

way ANOVA values of hypotheses related to entrepreneurship (H₉-H₁₆) are shown in Table 2.

H_{9,0}; H_{10,0}; H_{11,0}; H_{12,0}; Hypotheses H_{13,0} and H_{15,0} were rejected. Alternative hypotheses H_{9,1}; H_{10,1}; H_{11,1}; H_{12,1}; H_{13,1} and H_{15,1} were accepted.

For each hypothesis above, as a result of the analysis, a significant difference was found between the groups as $p < 0.05$ at the 95% confidence level.

The impact of microcredits on women's entrepreneurship varies depending on the education, employment, income increase, and the number of basic loans, entrepreneur loans and social development loans used.

Table 2. ANOVA values of hypotheses (H_{9,0}-H_{16,0})

	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean of Squares	F	P
H ₉	Intergroup	2.947	2	1.473	7.333	0.001
	In-group	49.628	247	0.201		
	Total*	52.574	249			
H ₁₀	Intergroup	3.391	7	0.484	2.384	0.023
	In-group	49.183	242	0.203		
H ₁₁	Intergroup	6.597	4	1.649	8.789	0.000
	In-group	45.977	245	0.188		
H ₁₂	Intergroup	3.417	5	0.683	3.393	0.006
	In-group	49.157	244	0.201		
H ₁₃	Intergroup	2.438	5	0.488	2.373	0.040
	In-group	50.136	244	0.205		
H ₁₄	Intergroup	0.720	3	0.240	1.138	0.334
	In-group	51.855	246	0.211		
H ₁₅	Intergroup	6.355	5	1.271	6.709	0.000
	In-group	46.220	244	0.189		
H ₁₆	Intergroup	0.963	4	0.241	1.143	0.337
	In-group	51.611	245	0.211		
	Total*	52.574	249			

As a result of the post hoc test, significant differences were found between women who were university graduates and the groups who were primary school, secondary school, or high school graduates.

- Microloans used by women who are primary, secondary, and high school graduates are more effective for entrepreneurship than those used by women who are university graduates.
- Significant differences were found between women doing handicrafts and trading groups. Microloans used by women doing handicrafts are more effective for entrepreneurship than those working in trade.
- Significant differences were found between women whose income increased by 0-500 TL and the groups whose income increased between 1501-2000 TL and 20001 TL and above. Microloans used by women whose income increases between 0-500 TL are more effective for entrepreneurship compared to those whose income increases between 1501-2000 TL and 20001 TL and above.
- Significant differences were found between women who received basic loans once and twice and the groups who received them four times. Microloans used by women who received a basic loan once and twice are more effective on entrepreneurship than those who received a basic loan four times.

For H₁₅, according to the results of the post hoc test carried out to determine which groups there were differences (see Tablo A2)

- A significant difference was found between the group that never received a social development loan and the group that received it once. Other (basic, communication, etc.) microloans received by women who have never used a social development loan are more effective on entrepreneurship compared to women who have received a social development loan once.
- A significant difference was found between the group that had never received a social development loan and the group that had received it three times. Other (basic, communication, etc.) microloans received by women who have never used social development loans are more effective on entrepreneurship compared to women who have received three social development loans.

For hypothesis H_{14,0} and H_{16,0}, the null hypothesis were accepted; and alternative hypotheses H_{14,1} and H_{16,1} were rejected.

As a result of the analysis, there was no significant difference between the groups, as $p > 0.05$ at the 95% confidence level.

- The impact of microcredits on women's entrepreneurship does not differ according to the number of uses of livestock loans and communication loans.
- The impact of microcredits on women's entrepreneurship does not differ depending on the number of communication loans used.

As a result, in line with the data obtained, the socio-economic status and entrepreneurial status of women

entrepreneurs who receive microloans are affected in different ways depending on their educational status, the type of business they establish, the increase in income they obtain, and the type of loan they use.

6.3 Semi-Structured Interview Assessments

In the second part of the data analysis of the study, 10 semi-structured interview questions were asked of 50 participants who agreed to volunteer. One of the main reasons for conducting an interview is to examine the responses to the survey in as much depth as possible. An interview was conducted to examine in depth how microentrepreneurs using loans were affected in social, economic, and entrepreneurial dimensions during the pandemic.

The first question is, "Why did you choose microcredit among different financial sources?" Reasons for applying for microcredit: 54% of the participants stated that they preferred it because it does not have a guarantor, 22% because it is easy to get, and 24% stated that they preferred it for both reasons.

The second question is, "Which business did you start with the micro loan you received, and for what reason?" For the question, participants first explained what they were doing and then explained why. They stated that they are engaged in clothing, boutique, amigurumi (knitted) toy making, hairdressing, leather product sales, mushroom cultivation, bridal shop business, gardening, cosmetic product sales, winter food production, ravioli shop management, curtain shop management, jewelry shop management, jam syrup making, patisserie, tailoring, souvenir sales, pasta making, tomato paste making, beauty salon management, and soap packaging. Entrepreneurs who sell souvenirs, dowry products, and cosmetics reported that they use microcredit to earn additional income. The entrepreneur who owns a curtain shop says that this is the job he knows best. An entrepreneur who works as a tailor stated that he started his own business by taking a microloan because he did not have a wife and had to earn income to raise his children alone. The entrepreneur who runs a beauty salon said that she first started this business as a hobby, but over time it became her profession. Entrepreneurs who run boutiques and jewelry shops have declared that they want to be the bosses of their own businesses. The entrepreneur who makes amigurumi (knitted) toys is a business he has always thought about; the entrepreneur who runs a bridal shop reported that she started a business with microcredit because it was her dream job. Those other than the entrepreneurs who do the mentioned jobs stated that they took out microloans and started a business for economic reasons.

"Can you tell us about the change in your economic situation after receiving a microloan?" Participants stated that earning an increase in income from the businesses they established and expanded with microcredit contributed to their family budget (80%) and that they were able to spend more easily (20%). The majority of them declared that they have a budget that will focus on savings at the same time as increasing their income.

"How did the business you established thanks to microcredit change your social situation?" Participants' answer to the question: They answered: "I feel more respect from those around me, 24%; I have a say in the family, 12%; my self-confidence has increased, 44%; our relationships within the family have improved." Communication within the family has begun to become healthier, and children have begun to express that they are proud of their mothers who receive microcredit. Those whose professions are hairdressers and tailors say that they have a wide network thanks to the use of microcredit. He stated that they started to become respected people in their circles.

"Do you see yourself as a female entrepreneur?" 98% of the participants defined themselves as entrepreneurs. 2% reported that they were not aware that they were entrepreneurs in the first days of receiving microcredit, but as their circle expanded, they realized that they were doing business, and later they realized that they were entrepreneurs.

"How do you think microcredit affects women's entrepreneurship?" All are supportive; the majority find it positive and encouraging; and the majority think that everyone should benefit.

"How have other female entrepreneurs who received microcredits and established their own businesses influenced you?" 70% of the participants reported that they were influenced by the stories of other female entrepreneurs and took themselves as an example, and that the stories they took as examples were guiding and encouraging. Most of the female entrepreneurs who participated in the interview were positively influenced by other female entrepreneurs around them.

"How do you evaluate the relationship between women entrepreneurs receiving microcredits?" 20% of them responded that they only shared information. 76% stated that they communicate well, mutually support their partners, and also share information.

"How were you affected economically and socially by the pandemic process?" Most women stated that they had no difficulty paying. We can say that even though they experienced negativity in the pandemic, they tried to look to the future with hope, they took care of their businesses and continued to produce, and there were those who started to grow in their businesses.

Participants were asked the question, "Did you receive support from your family when starting a business?"

A striking finding is that 70% of the participants stated that their families had a negative attitude towards this situation when they started a business. The majority of those who made negative statements frequently stated that their spouses were not welcoming and that financial freedom disturbed their spouses.

7. Discussion

In this study, the effects of microcredits given by the TGMP to empower women in the fight against poverty on women's entrepreneurship and the socio-economic lives of women entrepreneurs were investigated. Research data was obtained through survey and semi-structured interview techniques and analyzed with ANOVA. Eskişehir province, Turkey, was chosen for sampling.

The female entrepreneurs participating in the research are predominantly between the ages of 20-60. 74% of the participants are secondary school, high school, and university graduates. Those who are primary school graduates are in the minority. 52.8% of the survey participants heard from TGMP Eskişehir Branch personnel that microloans were given.

In the study, the effect of education level on socio-economic situations and women's entrepreneurship after loan use was investigated. According to the analysis results, it has been determined that the level of education has an impact on socio-economic situations and entrepreneurship after loan use.

As a result of the interviews, it was determined that microcredit is a financing tool preferred by entrepreneurial women. Participants declared that they preferred microcredit because it is easy and without a guarantor. The findings are similar to Gökyay's study in 2008. After using microcredit, 34% of the participants increased their income between 501-1000 TL, and 23.6% increased their income by 1501 TL or more. The findings are similar to Karapınar's 2010 study, which found that women benefiting from microcredit experienced an increase in their income.

The effect of income increases on female entrepreneurship was also analyzed in the study. Significant differences were found between women whose income increased by 0-500 TL and the groups whose income increased between 1501-2000 and 2001 and above. It has been concluded that microloans used by women whose income increases between 0-500 TL are more effective in entrepreneurship compared to those whose income increases between 1501-2000 TL and 2001 TL and above. Microloans are more encouraging for women entrepreneurs whose income increases less after using the loan. As a result, the fact that participants who did not have income before started to earn income after using the loan plays an important role in encouraging them to become entrepreneurs. It was determined that income increases had an impact on women's entrepreneurship for all 250 women entrepreneurs participating in the study. 68.4% of the participants used three or more Basic Loans, and 50% used one or more Entrepreneur Loans. Women entrepreneurs who received a Basic Loan once or twice experienced more socio-economic changes after using the loan than women who received four, five, or more loans. The change in the socio-economic lives of women who received five or more Entrepreneur Loans after using the loan was less than that of those who never received an Entrepreneur Loan or those who received an Entrepreneur Loan once, twice, or three times.

In the study, what type of business did the entrepreneurs establish with the loan they received? It was investigated whether the type of business they established had an impact on their social and economic situation after using the loan. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the type of business they established had an impact on their social and economic situation after using the loan. Significant differences were found between female entrepreneurs who cook home meals and those who engage in trade, cosmetic product sales, agriculture, and animal husbandry. Women entrepreneurs who do home cooking have experienced more socio-economic changes after using loans than women entrepreneurs who do trade, cosmetic product sales, agriculture, and animal husbandry.

The study also investigated the effect of the type of business established by women on women's entrepreneurship. As a result of the analysis, it was found that the type of business has an effect on women's entrepreneurship. Microloans used by women doing handicrafts are more effective for entrepreneurship compared to those engaged in trade. It may be asked whether this is due to the fact that handcrafted women interact more easily and quickly with their female customers or whether it is due to traditional role specialization. It can also be thought that the lower performance of women in trade compared to those who do manual work is due to the harassment, mobbing, "glass ceiling syndrome," and similar obstacles these women face in business life. Because, as partially mentioned in previous explanations, research supports this situation.

Female entrepreneurs participating in the research stated that after using microcredit, they experienced ease in their spending, had a say in the family, and experienced an increase in their self-confidence. The findings coincide with the findings of Akkul (2011) and Sancak Baktr (2014)'s studies that women who have achieved financial freedom have a say in the household. During the interviews, female entrepreneurs who sell cosmetic products, for example, said, "We can buy products in bulk" with microcredit and also stated that microcredit provides support and convenience in trade. The findings are similar to the result of Şahin's research conducted in 2010, which found that most of the participants used microcredit for the purpose of "purchasing goods."

94.4% of the participants in the study did not use Livestock Loans, 46.8% did not use Social Development Loans, and 56% did not use Communication Loans. Participants mostly preferred to use Basic and Entrepreneur Loans. Social Development Loan is provided to support women using microcredit to earn additional income, but

it is not preferred by almost half of the participants. When women entrepreneurs use a Social Development Loan, they will have repaid the Social Development Loan installments along with the installments of the previous loan. Participants do not prefer this loan because they may have difficulty paying two loans at the same time. This shows that the facilities provided regarding repayments will increase the use of more loans.

50 women who participated in the interview were asked whether they saw themselves as female entrepreneurs, and 98% of the women said, "Yes, I do." The finding differs from Tilci's study in 2014 in Muş, where traditional gender roles are dominant. Tilci found in his study that the participants saw themselves as housewives even though they received microcredit. The more modern and democratic the cities where women live and start businesses, the more entrepreneurial women feel. Otherwise, in more traditional and conservative regions, microcredit is depicted as a support for household expenses, not capital. As a result of the analysis, women who live a relatively more modern life use microcredits to meet their daily needs rather than starting a business, compared to women who live in traditional and conservative areas, and they cannot convert the loans into capital. Moreover, despite everything, even if women start a business and work, they still define themselves as housewives. This situation is an indication of how strong and effective the traditional patriarchal understanding is, not only for men but also for women.

It was determined that 26% of the female entrepreneurs who participated in the interview experienced an increase in their self-confidence during the pandemic process. This finding is similar to the results of Şengür's 2011 study, in which he found that 68% of women using credit experienced an increase in self-confidence. When women get rid of economic dependencies and become economically stronger, they also become socially and culturally stronger. Their self-confidence and prestige in society increase.

Although some of the research findings are similar to those in the literature, different results were also obtained. In addition to the survey, the data obtained through interviews, combined with the pandemic process data, yielded different results than the studies in the literature. The majority of participants (65% saying they strongly agree, 32% saying they agree) stated that they were economically affected by the pandemic. The majority of 250 participants (72.8% saying they strongly agree, 27.2% saying they agree) stated that they were socially affected by the pandemic. The results obtained identify the strengths of the study.

8. Conclusions

Some women use microcredit to support businesses they have already established. Some prefer it for economic purposes to earn additional income. Participants do not prefer microcredit only to generate income. According to the interview results, some of the participants turned their hobbies into businesses with the courage of the feeling of success; some chose to be their own boss; and some preferred to participate in working life by using loans for the job they dreamed of.

Producer women have been involved in economic life by working in various jobs not only at home but also outside the home and in their shops. Therefore, microcredit brings women into the economy. Those who receive a Basic Loan for the first time can contribute to the household economy by taking small steps at first, such as paying bills, and later becoming able to support their spouses and even give pocket money to their children. Those who do not have difficulty making payments can apply for basic loans many times. Some of them can start their business lives by getting an entrepreneur loan. In this way, they can realize their potential, gain self-confidence, and become respected in their family and environment. Although most women are supported by their families, those with family problems cannot receive support from their husbands. A woman's financial freedom may be perceived as a threat by husbands. The number of women experiencing such problems is a minority. Some of the female entrepreneurs who participated in the interview stated that their story was cited as an example and that their children were proud of them. In this context, it can be stated that microcredit changes the social and economic lives of women entrepreneurs, often in a positive way.

Even if female entrepreneurs who trade are aware that they are entrepreneurs, the awareness of women in rural areas, especially those who do handicrafts, knit, and make dowry items, may not be as high as others. In this case, microcredit workers step in, and women's awareness of entrepreneurship is increased. Although microcredit contributes to bringing women into the economy, increasing women's entrepreneurship, and changing their lives socially and economically positively, it is an area that needs to be developed to adapt to today's rapidly changing socio-cultural, economic, technological, and political conditions.

Although there is an increase in women's income after using credit, it remains small-scale in preventing poverty. Government support or encouraging donors to give larger sums of money are two options for making it have a bigger impact. Although various institutions provide grants to women entrepreneurs in Turkey and support such as tax exemptions is provided by the state, the support provided is not sufficient. Most of the time, there is an age limit to benefit from tax exemption (such as being under 40 or being a young entrepreneur). Even if a female entrepreneur meets these conditions, she or he may earn a certain annual income, and some of this income will be exempt from taxes. This type of tax exemption is not available when women entrepreneurs receive microcredits. Even if a tax exemption is provided for microcredits, some criteria, such as age, will cause problems. As a matter

of fact, 52.8% of the female entrepreneurs participating in this study are between the ages of 41-60. If tax exemption is to be provided for microloans, exemption should be provided for one or more years without any criteria. When women establish a business, they may be granted tax exemption for the first year or for a period of time. In addition, tax exemptions in this regard will support women entrepreneurs.

The findings of the research will provide guidance for such studies to be conducted in the future. The study is especially informative about loan types and usage amounts. Livestock loans are a much less preferred type of loan. High costs may prevent people from seeking livestock loans. This type of microcredit is important in supporting women who work as unpaid family workers or are unregistered in rural areas but lack social security. Cooperative forms that can benefit from economies of scale can be suggested to reduce costs. In this way, mass production can reduce costs while the amount of capital grows.

The amounts of some loans given within the scope of microcredit (such as basic loans and livestock loans) are not sufficient for entrepreneurship. A model proposal can be offered to increase the loan amounts given.

In this study, it was investigated what kind of changes the use of microcredit created in the social situations of women entrepreneurs. The answers given showed that microcredits have psychological effects such as making women feel proud of themselves, feeling good because they have a say in their environment, and for some, their family relationships changing positively. Women's poverty is trying to prove its existence as a multidimensional problem. For this reason, more interdisciplinary scientific research in this field will guide the identification of problems and solution-oriented policies. For example, the psychological states of women entrepreneurs who receive microloans can be investigated. In future research, women's needs should be identified, taking into account the changing conditions, and it should be investigated what new types of loans can be created other than existing ones.

It is clear that there should be socio-cultural policies as well as macroeconomic policies that combat poverty or microeconomic policies in the form of microcredit support. According to the results of the study, low-educated women use the loans for basic expenditures and define themselves as housewives, while more educated women start businesses and define themselves as entrepreneurs. The fact that women with higher education levels are more successful in using microcredit and, therefore, in entrepreneurship indicates the need for supportive policies, especially for girls. In addition to educational policies, any policy aimed at eliminating gender is also a necessity. Unless socio-cultural pressures and obstacles are removed, owning capital alone will not be enough for women to be strong and to make this situation sustainable.

Author Contributions

Authors' Contributions to the Article are equal to 50%, 50%. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Data Availability

The data used to support the research findings are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Adaçay, F. R. (2021). *Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kalkınma*. Nisan Kitabevi, Eskişehir, Türkiye.
- Akkul, R. (2011). *Cinsiyetler arası gelir eşitsizliğini gidermede mikro kredi uygulamalarının etkinliği: Bilecik ili örneği*. Bilecik University, Türkiye.
- Alliance, Institute for Policy Studies, Oxfam, & Patriotic Millionaires. (2023). *Richest 1% bag nearly twice as much wealth as the rest of the world put together over the past two years*. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/richest-1-bag-nearly-twice-much-wealth-rest-world-put-together-over-past-two-years>
- Bossoutrot, S. K. (2005). *Microfinance in Russia: broadening access to finance for micro and small entrepreneurs*. Washington, D.C., The World Bank.
- Credit Summit. (2022). *What is microfinance? A complete guide*. <https://www.mycreditsummit.com/what-is-microfinance2.html>
- DİSK-AR. (2021). *DİSK-AR KADIN RAPORLARI*. https://arastirma.disk.org.tr/?page_id=1904
- Dündar, S. O. (2007). *Mikro Finansman*. Ekonomik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Müdürlüğü. p. 10.
- Düzkan, A. (2022). *Yoksulluğun kadınlaşması üzerine*. <https://kadineki.com/detay/yoksullugun-kadinlasmasi-uzerine/>
- Ece, S. (2014). *Mikro kredi kullanan kadınlar: Şırnak örneği*. Hacettepe University, Türkiye.

- EMAR & GENEL İŞ Emek Araştırma Dairesi. (2022). *GELiR eşitsizliği ve yoksulluk (RAPOR#4)*. <https://cloudsdomain.com/uploads/dosya/47114.pdf>
- Eral, P. K. (2018). *Yoksullukla mücadele stratejisi; mikrofinans uygulamaları ve kadın*. Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University, Türkiye.
- Gender Insights Report. (2023). <https://www.evidensia.eco/resources/3197/gender-insights-report-2023/>
- Global Wealth Report. (2021). *Switzerland: Credit suisse research institute*. Credit Suisse (Schweiz). 24.
- Gökyay, Ç. (2008). *Türkiye’de mikro kredi uygulamaları ve istihdama yansımaları*. Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı, Uzmanlık Tezi.
- González, L. (2013). The effect of a universal child benefit on conceptions, abortions, and early maternal labor supply. *Am. Econ. J. Econ. Policy*, 5(3), 160-188. <https://orcid.org/10.1257/pol.5.3.160>.
- İncedal, S. (2013). *Türkiye’de Yoksulluğun Boyutları: Mücadele Politikaları ve Müdahale Araçları, aile ve sosyal politikalar bakanlığı sosyal yardımlar genel müdürlüğü*. Ministry of Family and Social Policies General Directorate of Social Assistance, Türkiye.
- Kangeldiev, J. (2010). *Mikro finans ve kırgızistan örneği*. [Masterthesis]. İstanbul University, Türkiye.
- Karapınar, K. (2010). *Türkiye’de yerel kalkınma modeli olarak mikro finans sistemi: Bursa örneği*. [Masterthesis]. Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Türkiye.
- Ledgerwood, J. (2013). *The New Microfinance Handbook*. Washington: The World Bank.
- McGuire, P. B. & Conroy J. D. (2000). The microfinance phenomenon. *Asia-Pac. Rev.*, 7(1), 90-108.
- Oxfam International. (2023). *Survival of the richest, richest 1% bag nearly twice as much wealth as the rest of the world put together over the past two years*. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/richest-1-bag-nearly-twice-much-wealth-rest-world-put-together-over-past-two-years>
- Özar, Ş. et al. (2022). Türkiye’de Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliği bağlamında kadın yoksulluğu. *Cogito, Yoks. Dos.*, 105-106, 87-112.
- Özdemir, G. (2009). Türk kadınının toplumsal konumunun gelişim süreci. *Sos. Bil. Met.*, 2009(1), 1-19.
- Paramo, C. S. & Boudet, A. M. M. (2018). *No. 70% of the world’s poor aren’t women, but that doesn’t mean poverty isn’t sexist*. Let’s Talk Development (blog). World Bank. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/no-70-world-s-poor-aren-t-women-doesn-t-mean-povertyisn-t-sexist#comments>
- Populationmatters. (2022). *Empower women, save the planet*. <https://populationmatters.org/news/2022/03/empower-women-save-the-planet-2/>
- Poverty & Shared Welfare. (2022). Washington, USA: World Bank Group.
- Poverty Populationmatters. (2022). *The fight inequality*. https://populationmatters.org/the-facts-development/poverty/?gad_source=
- Sağlamyürek Taşdemir, S. (2021). Women entrepreneurs and businesses in socio-economic development. *J. Entrepren. Dev.*, 16(2), 76-90.
- Şahin, H. (2010). *Kadın girişimciliğinin teşviki ve geliştirilmesinde mikro kredinin önemi: Sakarya örneği*. [Masterthesis]. Sakarya University, Türkiye.
- Şahpaz, İ. K. (2017). *Mikro kredi uygulamalarının ekonomik, sosyal ve mali analizi*. [Doctoralthesis]. Sakarya University, Türkiye.
- Sancak Baktır, N. (2014). *Yoksulluk sorununun çözümünde mikro finans sistemi ve mikro kredi uygulamaları: Türkiye’de kadın yoksulluğu üzerine bir araştırma*. [Doctoralthesis]. Erciyes University, Türkiye.
- Şengür, M. (2011). *Yoksulluk ve yoksullukla mücadele politikası aracı olarak mikro kredi (Eskişehir grameen bank analizi)*. [Masterthesis]. Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Türkiye.
- Srinivas, H. (2015). *Microfinance-credit lending models*. GDRC Research Output E-059. Global Development Research Center.
- TGMP. (2023). *Turkish Grameen Microfinance Program (TGMP)*. https://www.tgmp.net/eyayin/tgmp_information_file.html
- Tilci, Ö. (2014). *Yoksulluğu azaltmada mikro kredinin yeri: Muş örneğinde kadın girişimcilerin sosyolojik analizi*. [Masterthesis]. Ankara University, Türkiye.
- Tömen, G. (2013). *Türkiye grameen mikro finans programının (TGMP) kadın yoksulluğu ve girişimciliği üzerine etkilerinin antalya ili bağlamında araştırılması*. [Masterthesis]. Akdeniz University, Türkiye.
- Topgül, S. (2013). Türkiye’de yoksulluk ve yoksulluğun kadınlaşması. *C. Ü. İkt. İd. Bil. Derg.*, 14(1), 277-296.
- TUIK. (2022). *Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK)*. Labor Statistics. <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Isgucu-Istatistikleri-Agustos-2022-45654>
- Ulutaş, Ç. Ü. (2009). Yoksulluğun kadınlaşması ve görünmeyen emek. *Çal. Top.*, 2(21), 25-40.
- Worldbank. (2023). <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators/Series/SI.POV.GINI>

Appendix

Notes

- [1] Wealth differences between adults widened in 2020 for the world as a whole and also in most countries. The

global number of millionaires expanded by 5.2 million to reach 56.1 million. As a result, an adult now needs more than USD 1 million to belong to the global top 1%. The ultra-high net worth (UHNW) group added 24% more members, the highest rate of increase since 2003. The upper-middle segment, with wealth ranging from USD 100,000 to USD 1 million, has also expanded significantly this century, from 208 million to 583 million.

[2] Gini Coefficient represents equality in income distribution as its value becomes close to zero and as its value approaches 1 it represents a failure to establish a balance in the income distribution. The countries with the highest equality of income distribution are the Nordic countries, which have Gini Coefficient value between 0.22 and 0.30 as well as some of the former socialist countries.

[3] In order not to exceed the scope of the study, only selected post hoc results are included in Appendix 1&2.

Table A1. Post hoc Tukey test results after ANOVA conducted to determine which subgroups the effect of micro credits on women's entrepreneurship differs according to educational status

(I) Educational Attainment	(J) Educational Attainment	Mean Differences (I-J)	Std. Error	P
primary school	middle school/high school	,08507	,06784	,423
	university	,30989*	,08340	,001
middle school/high school	primary school	-,08507	,06784	,423
	university	,22482*	,07331	,007
university	primary school	-,30989*	,08340	,001
	middle school/high school	-,22482*	,07331	,007

Table A2. Post hoc Tukey test results after ANOVA conducted to determine which subgroups the effect of micro credits on women's entrepreneurship differs according to the number of social development loan usage

(I) Social Development Loan	(J) Social Development Loan	Mean Differences (I-J)	Std. Error	P
never	one	-,02784	,07634	,999
	two	,20546	,07899	,101
	three	,47375*	,10114	,000
	four	,37375	,14339	,100
	five and above	,20708	,11936	,510
one	never	,02784	,07634	,999
	two	,23329	,09397	,133
	three	,50159*	,11322	,000
	four	,40159	,15216	,092
two	5 and above	,23492	,12976	,461
	never	-,20546	,07899	,101
	one	-,23329	,09397	,133
	three	,26829	,11502	,185
	four	,16829	,15350	,883
three	5 and above	,00163	,13133	1,000
	never	-,47375*	,10114	,000
	one	-,50159*	,11322	,000
	two	-,26829	,11502	,185
	four	-,10000	,16599	,991
four	5 and above	-,26667	,14573	,449
	never	-,37375	,14339	,100
	one	-,40159	,15216	,092
	two	-,16829	,15350	,883
	three	,10000	,16599	,991
five and above	5 and above	-,16667	,17768	,936
	never	-,20708	,11936	,510
	one	-,23492	,12976	,461
	two	-,00163	,13133	1,000
	three	,26667	,14573	,449
	four	,16667	,17768	,936