

ECONOMIC STRUGGLE AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TOURISM: THE EXAMPLE OF ÇANAKKALE

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Summary

Economic crisis in any country in the globalizing world can significantly and rapidly affect the economies of other countries, as seen in the Covid-19 Pandemic. The main reason for this is that money and asset markets have reached an international dimension. These real states of equilibrium and imbalance are elastic and can cause slipperiness. For this reason, it is not a rational approach to attribute the emergence of economic crises to a single cause and to believe that the exit from the crisis will be solved with the introduction of a single instrument. In this context, dynamic sectors such as the tourism, which is connected with many different sectors, can be useful in overcoming economic crisis. The tourism sector contributes to overcoming the crisis periods, especially since it is a sector that provides opportunities for social entrepreneurship due to its natural structure. Social entrepreneurship emerged as an innovative approach to addressing complex social needs. Social entrepreneurship involves pursuing opportunities, using resource combinations and innovation to catalyze social change and/or meet social needs. This entrepreneurship is a process that integrates economic and social value creation. Therefore, giving importance to social entrepreneurship in the tourism of a particular destination is an important factor that prevents countries from having an economic struggle. From this point of view, in this study, the social entrepreneurship perceptions of tourism employees in Çanakkale, which has an important place in Turkey's tourism sector, were conveyed by associating the Çanakkale destination with its place in the tourism sector. When the results are examined, it is seen that the employees working in the destination of Çanakkale are strong in terms of social entrepreneurship and thanks to this, they both achieve profitability in tourism and make positive contributions to the local people. In addition, it has been seen that economic struggles increase the social entrepreneurship aspects of tourism employees.

Keywords: Economic Struggle, Social Entrepreneurship, Çanakkale, Tourism.

JEL: Z30, Z32, M10

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Introduction. The Covid-19 epidemic, which emerged in the last months of 2019 in Wuhan, China and turned into a pandemic in March 2020, has begun to show a crisis effect that disrupts the economic balances in Turkey. Especially in the first quarter of 2020, the rapid spread of the pandemic in European countries, where Turkey's commercial relations are intense, has been instrumental. The slowdown in

economic activities and the stopping of activities in some sectors put pressure on cash flows in the real sector and increased the demand for forward-looking liquidity in the economy. One of the main sectors in which sectoral activities came to a standstill was the tourism sector. As in many countries, policy makers in Turkey have taken extensive financial and fiscal measures to limit the negative economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. In fact, dynamic sectors such as tourism, which are linked to many different sectors, can be beneficial in overcoming the economic crisis. Although precautions have been taken, the decrease in the activities in the tourism sector and tourist mobility has reached approximately 70% in Turkey. Tourism expenditure also decreased by 89.8% compared to same quarter of previous year and declined to \$ 126 million 79 thousand (TSI, 2022).

The tourism sector needs to overcome of this negative picture and gain a new perspective. The negative conditions brought by the pandemic can also be right in opportunities for those looking for a chance to enter in tourism sector. With the entry of new ideas and initiatives into the sector, the sector may also revive and affect other sectors related to it in the direction of development.. In this context, entrepreneurs and especially social entrepreneurs can play an important role. Because social entrepreneurs primarily play important roles in eliminating social problems without prioritizing material benefit and profit, and transforming the sector they are in.

Entrepreneurship in the business sector is about the profit motive. However, social entrepreneurship is an expression of altruism. In other words, altruistic reasons such as personal participation are as important as moral responsibility and ethical motives in social entrepreneurship (Mair & Martin, 2006: 38). Social entrepreneurship has psychological aspects as well as sociological aspects. Social entrepreneurship is of great importance for individuals who try to be beneficial to society and need social satisfaction. Entrepreneurs do not only produce new methods, new technology, new corporate forms, new businesses, and realities simply through the process of pursuing their own profit-making, selfish goals. In addition to all these, they increase social wealth by creating net increases with their economic gains, which in turn provides social welfare (Venkataraman, 1997). Considering the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic period, it is noteworthy that there are not many scientific studies on social entrepreneurship and the tourism sector. At this point, the purpose of this study is to enrich the literature by considering the economic situation of the tourism sector. In this context, the economic situation of the tourism sector in Çanakkale, which has an important place in the Turkish tourism, and the social entrepreneurship perceptions of tourism employees, and the place of Çanakkale destination in the tourism sector are conveyed.

Literature review. The most negative effect of pandemics is undoubtedly that they threaten human health and result in a large number of deaths. However, it is also stated that the pandemic causes the closure of schools, workplaces, shopping malls, the decrease in production, the crowdedness of the emergency services of hospitals, and the quarantine of daily life, resulting in the morbidity of the society in general (McKibbin & Sidorenko, 2006: 10). Especially pandemics have begun to affect the world economies much more with the effect of the globalization process. Many reasons, such as the removal of the spatial limitations of production and consumption, and the more interrelatedness of countries with export, import and supply chain, make

a global epidemic a serious threat to the world economy. In general, it is emphasized that the economic problems experienced during the pandemic periods include all of the private and public expenditures necessary for the diagnosis and treatment of the pandemic disease.

The COVID-19 pandemic has threatened everyone, regardless of class. However, the virus did not affect all social groups in the same way economically. In particular, the poor, young people, students, women, and those whose jobs are not suitable for digital work have been affected much more negatively by the pandemic (İpekoğlu, 2021). The rate of transmission of the virus, its shape and the fact that one of the important means of protection is social distancing took the service sector to the historical low level. In this context, the most important sector affected within the service sector has been the tourism sector based on face-to-face communication and interaction with people. This situation has created an irreparable effect for countries such as Turkey, which receive serious foreign currency inflows from the tourism sector.

The ongoing process with the entry and exit of destinations into travel permits, the restriction of domestic flights, the closure of international flights, the cancellation of intercity bus services and curfews have minimized domestic and international tourism mobility. This situation has brought about developments that directly affect the tourism sector, such as the cancellation of large-scale international travels and organizations, which are called mass tourism, the closure of hotels, the significant decrease in the sales of new package tours by travel agencies. Aviation, accommodation and food and beverage sectors, which are the carriers of tourism, are among the areas affected by the virus. Situations where it is necessary not to enter crowded environments and to avoid close contact now allow people to do their work through online services. With the spread of online transactions during the pandemic period, it has been seen that digitalization has increased in the tourism sector. National and international meeting, conference, seminar, congress etc. organizations have started to be held more online. In this case, it has brought about a decrease in additional activities in the tourism sector (Boone et al., 2020).

It is thought that the impact of the Covid-19 on the tourism sector may continue throughout the pandemic, and a rapid recovery is expected in 2022 after the decrease in global tourism travels, while the figures for 2019 will not be reached before 2023. In addition, since domestic travel restrictions will be lifted earlier than international restrictions, it will create some substitution (Trimble et al., 2020; Çetin & Göktepe, 2020).

Social Entrepreneurship. One of the most destructive areas of periods such as the Covid-19 pandemic, which deeply affect social structures, is the deterioration of the economic order. To minimize the economic deterioration, investments made especially in areas that concern the society are very important. These investments are not always made by governments or certain areas of public authority. Here, perhaps the most meaningful role is played by entrepreneurs who touch the society with their investments or initiatives in social understanding.

Social entrepreneurship, which can be expressed as the reshaping of entrepreneurship with a new understanding, is essentially to create social value, provide social change, perform services that cannot be provided by the private and the

public sectors, follow opportunities to meet social needs and produce solutions to problems and produce innovations (Austin et al., 2006: 2; Bull, 2008: 268). One of the most basic features that distinguishes commercial entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs from each other is the commercial entrepreneur creates an organization to make a profit, and the social entrepreneur creates an organization to find a solution to a social problem (Şahin & Çavuş, 2021). Social entrepreneurship finds its place in economic life as an innovative approach to meet complex social needs. While the success of commercial entrepreneurs is measured quantitatively, the success of social entrepreneurs is evaluated with qualitative data and these evaluations are mostly based on observation (Ercan, 2016: 24). Social entrepreneurship involves pursuing opportunities, using resource combinations and innovation to catalyze social change and/or meet social needs. Social entrepreneurship is a process that integrates economic and social value creation. Thus, it can be said that social entrepreneurship is an area that has relations with many disciplines such as sociology, psychology, economy, law, finance, and politics. When the concept of social entrepreneurship is examined in depth, it is seen that this concept is associated with the concept of 'social' in terms of having social outputs, creating social capital, having an organizational structure for social purposes, providing social services, and taking part in the social sector. The reason for its identification with the concept of 'enterprise' is it includes features such as need-orientedness, entrepreneurial personality traits, and innovation that exist in commercial entrepreneurship (Kümbül Güler, 2008: 66-67).

The tourism sector attracts the attention of social entrepreneurs with the many investment and entrepreneurship opportunities it offers due to the multiplicity and nature of the other sectors it is connected to. Social entrepreneurship activities created in the tourism sector can mediate the trust of economic actors to each other. As the trust in the economy increases, the work of social entrepreneurs can progress more easily, and the development of social entrepreneurship can increase confidence in the economy. Social entrepreneurship has an important place in terms of solving the problems regarding the participation of the unemployed and disadvantaged groups in employment and making the workforce better equipped (Biçerli, 2010: 85).

Research methodology. In line with the research purpose, this research was designed with a quantitative method. The reason for choosing the quantitative research method is; to determine the exact boundaries of the variables, to measure the relationships between the variables, and the need for quantitative research, especially in social entrepreneurship studies (Hockerts, 2015). Questionnaire technique was used as data collection technique in this study. In the design of the scales, the 5-point Likert Scale was preferred because of the positive and negative answers are gradually equal to each other and suitable for the scale questions.

Within the scope of the study, the scale developed by Hockerts (2015; 2017) was used to measure the social entrepreneurship behaviors of tourism business employees. The sub-dimensions that make up the scale are; empathy (3), moral obligation (4), social entrepreneurial self-efficacy (3), perceived social support (3), prior experience (3) and social entrepreneurial intent (3). With these dimensions, the scale consists of 19 statements in total. In addition, questions were asked to the employees in order to learn about the local economy and their economic situation.

This research aims to address the perceptions of social entrepreneurship in connection with the economic situation of the tourism employees in Çanakkale, which has an important place in the tourism sector of Turkey, and to help to understand the situation of tourism employees by interpreting the findings. Therefore, the research population of this study consists of employees who work in the tourism destinations of the Çanakkale region.

After determining the research population, another issue is determining the sample size. The sample is a group consisting of a certain amount of elements selected in the research universe and having the characteristics that can represent the universe. The sample of this study consists of those working in tourism enterprises located in the Çanakkale region, who agreed to participate in the research. During the 2021-2022 March, April and summer months, when Çanakkale tourism destinations are intense, data were collected from the employees of the tourism enterprises in the region through face-to-face surveys and additionally online surveys. Data from 387 questionnaires in total were used in the analyses.

Main results. Below are the demographic and employment characteristics of the employees participating in the research, the point at which they see Çanakkale's tourism in a national sense, and the findings regarding the questions of the position of tourism working life in the face of the economic struggle.

Table 1. Findings Related to Demographic Variables (N=387)

Variable	Variable Ranges	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	197	50.90
	Female	190	49.10
Marital Status	Married	210	54.26
	Single	177	45.74
Income	5250 TL and below	109	28.16
	5251-6000 TL	115	29.72
	6001-7000 TL	88	22.74
	7001-8000 TL	44	11.37
	8001 TL and over	31	8.01
Age	25 and below	110	28.42
	26 – 35	130	33.59
	36 – 45	82	21.19
	46 and over	65	16.80
How valuable is Çanakkale in Turkish tourism?	None	-	-
	Low	8	2.07
	Moderate	78	20.15
	High	301	77.78
How much were you affected by the economic struggle caused by the Covid-19 pandemic?	None	-	-
	Low	21	5.43
	Moderate	62	16.02
	High	304	78.55

According to the table, the ratio of female and male employees is approximately equally distributed. In terms of marital status, it is seen that the majority of them are married employees ($x = 54.26$). In terms of the income of the employees, it is seen that the majority of them receive wages in the range of 5251-7000 TL ($x = 52.46$). Considering the age distribution of the participants, it is seen that the majority of them are in the middle age range of 26-45 ($x = 54.78$). It was asked what the importance of Çanakkale destination for the Turkish tourism sector is, and the majority of the answers were shaped as highly important ($x = 77.78$). Employees were asked how much they were affected by the economic struggle caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the majority of them answered that they were highly affected ($x = 78.55$).

Social Entrepreneurship Scale. Social entrepreneurship aspects of tourism employees were evaluated in the titles: ‘prior experience, empathy, moral obligation, social entrepreneurial self-efficacy, perceived social support, social entrepreneurial intent’ as Hockerts (2015; 2017) stated. In the table below, the means of the answers given by the tourism employees to the statements that make up the scale, the reliability values (Cronbach’s Alphas) of the dimensions of the scale and the standard deviation values are given.

Table 2. Cronbach’s Alphas of the factors, standard deviation and mean

	Cronbach’s α	sd	$\bar{x}$
<i>Prior Experience</i>	.820		
I have some experience working with social problems.		1.01	4.04
I have volunteered or otherwise worked with social organizations		.801	3.88
I know a lot about social organizations		1.15	4.54
<i>Empathy</i>	.762		
When thinking about socially disadvantaged people, I try to put myself in their shoes		1.12	4.72
Seeing socially disadvantaged people triggers an emotional response in me.		1.23	4.68
I feel compassion for socially marginalized people.		1.17	4.60
<i>Moral Obligation</i>	.770		
It is an ethical responsibility to help people less fortunate than ourselves.		1.02	4.40
We are morally obliged to help socially disadvantaged people		1.04	4.58
Social justice requires that we help those who are less fortunate than ourselves.		.87	4.38
It is one of the principles of our society that we should help socially disadvantaged people		.79	4.70
<i>Social Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy</i>	.790		
I am convinced that I personally can make a contribution to address societal challenges if I put my mind to it.		.65	4.12
I could figure out a way to help solve the problems that society faces.		.85	3.34
Solving societal problems is something each of us can contribute to.		.78	4.24
<i>Perceived Social Support</i>	.833		
People would support me if I wanted to start an organization to help socially marginalized people.		1.03	3.33

If I planned to address a significant societal problem people would back me up.		1.11	3.28
It is possible to attract investors for an organization that wants to solve social problems.		1.05	3.15
<i>Social Entrepreneurial Intent</i>	.880		
I expect that at some point in the future I will be involved in launching an organization that aims to solve social problems		1.19	3.48
I have a preliminary idea for a social enterprise on which I plan to act in the future.		1.04	3.60
I plan to start a social enterprise.		1.03	3.72

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is a measure of the internal consistency of the items, is used to explain or question the homogeneous structure of the items in the scale. It is seen that the reliability values (Cronbach's alpha coefficient) of the dimensions that make up the scale are within the acceptable range in terms of social sciences (Tabachnick & Fidel, 1996). When the expressions that make up the scale are examined, it is seen that the employees generally express their opinions in the direction of participation. The dimension of empathy ($x= 4.67$) received the highest participation. It is seen that the expression ' When thinking about socially disadvantaged people, I try to put myself in their shoes ' in the dimension of empathy is the one with the highest ($x= 4.72$) participation. Whereas the 'Perceived social support' dimension has received the lowest ($x=3.25$) participation. It is also seen that the expression 'It is possible to attract investors for an organization that wants to solve social problems' under perceived social support dimension received the lowest ($x=3.15$) participation.

Discussion and conclusions. Çanakkale province is one of the important tourist destinations for the Turkish tourism sector. In this regard, there are many large and small tourism enterprises in the tourism sector in Çanakkale and employees affiliated with these enterprises. In this study, which aims to measure the social entrepreneurship levels of tourism employees, who were especially negatively affected by the economic struggle created by the Covid-19 pandemic period, it was seen that the employees were at a very positive point in terms of social entrepreneurship. However, it has been observed that a significant part of the employees earn an income slightly above the minimum wage. This situation has made the economic struggle more severe for tourism employees. In addition, it has been seen that economic struggles increase the social entrepreneurship aspects of tourism workers.

Social entrepreneurship aspects of employees may be more positive if their welfare level improves. Considering that the majority of employees are married, tourism enterprises and public authorities can work to improve the income of tourism employees. Considering that the empathy dimension receives the highest participation, it can be evaluated that the employees make positive social contributions to the local people. The holistic nature of social entrepreneurship, which has a wide range from providing welfare in destinations to solving social problems and protecting local people, can be achieved in harmony with local employees and through empathy. Giving importance to social entrepreneurship in the tourism of a

particular destination also is an important factor that prevents countries from having an economic struggle.

This study has some limitations. In the study, only the sub-dimensions and variables of the social entrepreneurship scale were discussed. More detailed information on the subject can be obtained by considering the variables and sub-dimensions of other scales in future studies. More detailed information on the subject can be obtained by conducting the variables and sub-dimensions of other scales qualitative studies in the future.

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