



Presenting a Model for Women's Entrepreneurship in Rural Tourism Based on Grounded Theory

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Abstract

Purpose- The ultimate goal of this research is to present a model for women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism to address the growing needs in this field and facilitate rural women's economic participation, thereby contributing to sustainable rural development through tourism-based entrepreneurial activities.

Design/methodology/approach- In this study, the qualitative method of grounded theory was used to achieve this model, with semi-structured interviews conducted with knowledgeable individuals and specialists in the subject area as the primary method of data collection. The sampling method employed was theoretical sampling. After conducting interviews and collecting data, the obtained codes were analyzed in various sections, and the final model was derived through the three stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Findings- The final model comprises six main components: causal conditions (tourism industry dynamics, customer dynamics, organizational strengthening, human resource dynamics, and problem identification), the central category (women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism), contextual conditions (organizational complexity, customer characteristics, and environmental conditions), intervening conditions (managerial barriers, structural barriers, and tourism industry characteristics), strategies (organizational flexibility, customer-oriented human resource development, enhancing customer interactions, and service development), and outcomes (policy evaluation, market development, customer satisfaction, economic-cultural growth, increased revenues, and emerging opportunities). The findings highlight that addressing infrastructure barriers and external factors affecting tourism supply can create a favorable environment for women's entrepreneurship.

Research limitations/implications- The qualitative nature and limited sample size (21 participants) may restrict generalizability. Future research could employ quantitative methods to test the proposed model across diverse geographical contexts. Additionally, longitudinal studies examining the long-term impacts of implemented strategies are recommended.

Originality/value- This research presents a comprehensive, empirically grounded model specifically designed for women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism, addressing a significant gap in the literature. The model provides practical guidance for policymakers, rural development planners, and tourism stakeholders seeking to empower rural women economically and promote sustainable rural development through tourism entrepreneurship.

Keywords- Women's Entrepreneurship, Rural Tourism, Grounded Theory.

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1. Introduction

Today, rural sustainable development is more dependent than ever on entrepreneurship, with researchers considering rural entrepreneurs the most significant lever for developing rural areas (Aggarwal, 2018). One of the major potentials that has gained significant attention in recent years in rural areas, and where rural women are extensively active, is rural tourism. Rural tourism is regarded as a tool for economic and social revitalization in villages. As the fastest-growing global industry, tourism, by engaging women and supporting their abilities, has enabled rural women's mobility and entrepreneurship (Mrema, 2015; Nemirschi & Craciun, 2010). The increasing demand from tourists and the need for diverse tourism products and services have paved the way for business development and entrepreneurship in rural tourism (Rezaei et al., 2020). Hence, entrepreneurship in rural tourism has become increasingly important today (Akbarpour & Azimi, 2018). Experts believe that rural tourism entrepreneurship can play a significant role as a new strategy in reducing poverty, unemployment, and migration in villages and achieving sustainable rural development (Abbasi et al., 2022).

Many developed and developing countries agree that focusing on women's entrepreneurship can improve production and productivity. In recent years, efforts in Iran have been aimed at promoting and developing women's entrepreneurship in rural areas. These efforts include empowering rural and nomadic women, equipping them with the skills necessary to launch successful businesses, creating new opportunities for rural women, increasing their income and capital, and fostering self-sufficiency and independence (Movahedi & Yaghoubi Farani, 2015). The role of rural women in achieving rural development goals is undeniable (Kalupokuna et al., 2020). In many member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the number of women entrepreneurs is growing daily. For instance, in 2020, the OECD reported that 17 million women entrepreneurs in Europe created jobs for 22 million people, and 9.4 million women in the United States created jobs for 12.2 million people (Ball, 2005; Fallatah, 2012).

Additionally, in Denmark in 2019, the country's Investment and Production Organization designed and implemented an operational plan to increase women entrepreneurs (Nedelcheva, 2012). In India, organizations such as the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises, banks, and non-governmental organizations have implemented special initiatives for women's entrepreneurship, particularly in rural areas (Vimlesh, 2014). According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, in the three years leading to 2022, women launched 163 million businesses worldwide (Niethammer, 2013).

In contrast, statistics show that less than 10% of entrepreneurs in Iran are women (Mohammadi & Sharifi, 2019). Considering the low economic participation of rural women, the necessity of their self-employment for rural development, the undeniable role of rural women in national production and economic development, and the attention of policymakers and officials to these issues, it is essential to provide appropriate conditions for rural women's entrepreneurial activities.

With the potential of rural areas, especially in tourism, facilitating women's engagement in this sector could unlock their capabilities, leading to significant economic transformations in the country. Rural women, who have the potential to be pioneers in transforming rural tourism and improving their families' livelihoods, often work in limited, low-income roles that fail to consistently attract tourists.

By leveraging rural women's inherent abilities and the region's tourism potential, women could establish entrepreneurial small businesses to improve the current unfavorable situation, generating positive economic and social impacts for themselves, their families, and the rural community. This would help steer regional rural tourism toward sustainability, fostering a resilient and livable environment in their villages.

To address these challenges, this research aims to develop a women's entrepreneurship model in rural tourism, focusing on rural development. This model seeks to facilitate women's entrepreneurial processes in rural tourism, enabling rural development while creating valuable tourism services for both tourists and rural women. Given these challenges, formulating a model for women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism is crucial.

Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following core question: What are the characteristics of the women's entrepreneurship model in rural tourism?

2. Theoretical Foundations of the Study

2.1. Women's Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the economic development of a country and is regarded as the sole solution for asset growth, job creation, and the provision of new and improved goods and services (Kumar, 2019). Entrepreneurship in rural tourism holds a significant position (Ciochină et al., 2016). Among these, the full participation of women in entrepreneurship, based on the principle of gender equality, is a fundamental factor in economic growth, development, and poverty reduction (Singh, 2016). Women entrepreneurs' activities in agritourism contribute to achieving sustainable development in rural areas (Dhahri et al., 2021).

In the field of women's entrepreneurship, research remains limited, and definitions provided are also restricted. Women's entrepreneurship involves activities such as participatory self-employment, independent self-employment, being an employer, and operating businesses with sole ownership. Women entrepreneurs are individuals who establish businesses either alone or collaboratively, producing new products through creativity and innovation, while accepting financial, social, ethical, and psychological risks to outperform competitors in the market (Ahmadi et al., 2019).

Given the undeniable role of women in rural development, enhancing rural women's entrepreneurship is considered an effective strategy for achieving sustainable rural development (Heidari Sareban, 2012). Rural women's entrepreneurship does not require formal and professional education but relies on experiential knowledge passed down through generations. Thus, on the one hand, governmental support should be directed toward helping these women entrepreneurs in areas where they lack knowledge, such as sharing expertise (e.g., management and marketing). On the other hand, government support for fostering a culture of entrepreneurship among rural women can facilitate coordination among stakeholders, including key actors and other factors. This means entrepreneurial events for rural women, which require risk-taking and innovation with new approaches, can further advance rural communities.

Moreover, the success of women's entrepreneurial efforts depends on collaboration and networking among various actors (individuals, service providers, and organizations) living in rural communities (Pato, 2015; Shirmohammadi & Mavouni, 2021). A rural woman entrepreneur can be considered a person who brings about significant changes in the rural environment by innovating most social goods. Thus, rural women entrepreneurs are crucial agents of economic development in villages (Muthulakshmi & Gurudevi, 2019).

2.2. Rural Tourism

Rural tourism is one of the low-cost forms of tourism that is widely practiced worldwide (Paresishvili et al., 2017). It is a unique type of tourism, attracting urban dwellers to explore rural areas. This form of tourism offers the authentic experience of rural life, leisure, creativity, ethnicity, local culture, exhibitions and festivals, handicrafts, seasonal changes, and more, which appeal to tourists (Madani & Taghavi Zirvani, 2022). Compared to the global tourism market, rural tourism represents a relatively small segment, as much of tourism is still concentrated on beaches and in cities (Shcherbachenko et al., 2021).

In reality, rural tourism has specific attractions that distinguish it from other types of tourism, including natural landscapes, natural reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, protected areas, unique scenery, and biodiversity (Paresishvili et al., 2017). Navarro Jurado and Nel-lo Andreu (2011) emphasized that rural tourism contributes to the development and economic growth of destination areas or tourist regions, prioritizing the achievement of economic, social, cultural, and environmental sustainability goals (Navarro Jurado & Nel-lo Andreu, 2011).

Thus, this type of tourism should be promoted and developed as it encourages the rural population to stay in their regions. Rural tourism may be the most suitable model for sustainable development in the tourism sector (López-Sanz et al., 2021). Various exciting tourist routes exist in these areas, such as adventure tours, eco-tours, educational tours, sports and wellness tours, and more. Tourists have the opportunity to engage in certain unique attractions and arrangements of this type of tourism, including observing natural landmarks, fishing, horseback riding, surfing, etc. (Paresishvili et al., 2017).

Bramwell (1994) argued that in many developed countries, special attention is given to rural areas, emphasizing their unique value and the need for protection (Bramwell, 1994).

The importance of environmental protection in rural areas has led to the association of rural tourism with sustainable tourism development (Sharpley & Roberts, 2004). Additionally, tourism can have various impacts on communities, which are particularly significant in developing countries. The development of rural tourism aims to address some issues such as reversing migration from urban areas to rural regions, increasing the stability of the active population by improving living conditions, providing opportunities for new economic and commercial activities, and protecting the natural environment and local culture (Hajarian, 2022; Grgić et al., 2017; Samantaray, 2016).

Rural tourism offers a fresh connection with nature, explaining the widespread popularity of agritourism, ecotourism, and other alternative tourism forms over the past decade. These types of tourism have gained substantial support through balanced marketing efforts and significant financial backing from governments and regional organizations (Shcherbachenko et al., 2021).

Rural tourism can bring social and cultural benefits to rural areas, facilitating social and cultural exchanges between local residents and visitors. It increases awareness of the value of heritage and the need for preservation among both tourists and local communities. Additionally, it strengthens the sense of identity and unity within local communities (Shcherbachenko et al., 2021).

Local transportation and other services will be utilized more effectively, enhancing their viability. For these reasons, tourism, in its optimal form, can help rural communities find new opportunities for local economic development, improve their quality of life, and preserve social and cultural values (Krajcik et al., 2019).

2.3. Background of the Research

Madawala et al. (2023) in a study titled "Investigating the Role of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy among Women Entrepreneurs in the Tourism Sector" confirmed through survey data collected from women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is influenced by social media, entrepreneurial passion, and entrepreneurial role models, while education and

work experience do not impact entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The study also confirmed the mediating role of entrepreneurial sustainability behavior. For entrepreneurship stakeholders, this research highlighted an important factor: entrepreneurial self-efficacy is influenced by social media in the digital world. Moreover, the research provided a valid model of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which enhances its use during business challenges or growth stages, while offering valuable insights for policymakers in developing countries to increase the contribution of female entrepreneurs to the economy. Vukovic et al. (2023) in a study titled "Rural Tourism Development, Entrepreneurship, and Women's Empowerment – A Case Study in the Suburbs of Serbia" adopted a quantitative approach and surveyed a sample of 513 women from a less developed rural area in Serbia. The results showed that self-employment is the main goal of women's empowerment. The study concluded two practical implications: (1) the potential of rural tourism can be enhanced through support from local tourism stakeholders; (2) women without professional careers in rural areas, especially in areas traditionally dominated by men (husband/brother/father), have more opportunities for earning income and economic independence. This research could impact future studies by examining other aspects of empowerment based on regional differences and alternative opportunities for tourism and local development in less developed rural areas. Rao et al. (2022) in a study titled "Enhancing Women's Entrepreneurial Competence in Rural Tourism: An Experiential Learning Perspective" focused on a 10-year regional program aimed at improving female entrepreneurship in China. The study examined the behaviors of women entrepreneurs and the improvements in entrepreneurship due to interventions by development agencies. From the perspective of experiential learning, the study revealed the crucial role of intellectual support, which aligns with the knowledge nature in tourism, and proposed a theoretical framework describing a dynamic participatory learning process between development agency staff and entrepreneurs responding to it. In a changing market, collaborative action learning helps women entrepreneurs overcome obstacles, improve entrepreneurship, and achieve independence.

Ghouse et al. (2021) in a study titled "Rural Women Entrepreneurs in Oman: Challenges and Opportunities" found multiple challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs that hinder their business investments, including personal, family, educational, social-cultural, legal, financial, economic, organizational, and geographical factors, with family, organizational, and geographical challenges being the most significant. The study shows that policymakers should adopt a holistic view of how rural women involved in informal businesses can be better supported and sustained by overcoming challenges to gain business opportunities and contribute to regional socio-economic development. Figueroa-Domecq et al. (2020) in a study titled "Gender, Tourism, and Entrepreneurship: A Critical Review" found that dominant accounts of tourism entrepreneurship present successful entrepreneurial performance as male. This article highlights the marginal yet crucial role of feminist post-colonial economics, political economy, and post-structural approaches, helping to challenge implicit economic and male bias in the literature.

Maden (2018) in a study examined women's entrepreneurship in Turkey. This qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews with successful women entrepreneurs in Turkey, revealed that most women entrepreneurs in Turkey rely on traditional methods (such as government, non-government, and banking support mechanisms) for financial assistance. Family members and economic partners were other supportive resources that might provide support to female entrepreneurs. Movahedi et al. (2012) found that effective factors on entrepreneurship development included initiative, activity, opportunity recognition, perseverance, effort, overcoming obstacles, and individual competencies of women, indicating that an entrepreneur acts without requiring the request or command of others. The study also found that entrepreneurship is an economic activity requiring continuous search for new ideas, innovation, and profitability potential. Barriers to rural women's entrepreneurship were social-cultural barriers, support-economic barriers, and management barriers. The study also indicated the role of women entrepreneurs in the health of the economy and socialization. Mohammadi and Sharifi (2019) in a study titled "Investigating the Barriers to Rural Women's Interest in Tourism Entrepreneurship

(Case Study: Oraman District of Sarvabad County)" found that the main barriers to rural women's entrepreneurship in the tourism sector include weaknesses in planning, executive performance of government agencies, financial limitations, marketing deficiencies, rural social-cultural barriers, individual weaknesses, educational limitations, and technical and practical obstacles. Among these, weaknesses in planning, executive performance of government agencies, and financial limitations had the most significant impact on the willingness of rural women involved in tourism entrepreneurship.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Geographical Scope of the Research

This study is fundamental in terms of its research results, as the researcher, using the grounded theory approach, aims to present a new model in the tourism industry. The study is exploratory in nature, and because the data was collected through semi-structured interviews, the study is qualitative in terms of the type of data used. Overall, the research method employed in this study adopts a core approach to the model. Grounded theory research typically uses theoretical sampling (non-random) in the sampling process, which continues until theoretical saturation is reached. Theoretical saturation is reached when repetitive answers are obtained in interviews, and the researcher realizes that no new information can be gained (Pandit, 1996; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this research, interviews were conducted with 21 women entrepreneurs and tourism experts. To address the shortcomings of previous research, this study uses a qualitative approach and grounded theory methodology to develop a comprehensive model that includes causal factors, intervening factors, contextual factors, examines the concept of women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism, strategies, and consequences.

3.2. Data Collection Tools

In this research, in-depth interviews were used as the primary data collection tool. In-depth interviews are a form of unstructured interviews that generate rich data and often provide surprising evidence. In the qualitative research culture, in-depth interviews are used as a well-known method for data collection. An in-depth interview is a two-way conversation between a trained interviewer and an interviewee, aiming to extract detailed and

significant information that can be used in analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

3.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study followed the guidelines of Strauss and Corbin (2015). The analysis included three main stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, which ultimately led to the formulation of the qualitative model.

- **Open Coding:** The first step in data analysis is open coding, a process through which identified concepts and their features and dimensions are discovered in the data. During the open coding phase, data from interviews were carefully examined to identify main and sub-categories, with the subsequent classification of sub-categories (or sub-concepts). The analysis process followed the analytical techniques suggested by Strauss and Corbin (2015). The primary unit of analysis for open coding was the concepts. Transcripts of interviews were regularly examined to identify main categories, concepts, and sub-categories, leading to 249 open codes, 52 concepts, and 25 categories related to rural tourism, which were identified.
- **Axial Coding:** Axial coding is the process of relating categories to their sub-categories and linking categories at the level of features and dimensions. This coding is called "axial" because it revolves around a central category. In this stage, the grounded theory theorist selects a category from the open coding stage and places it at the center of the process, relating other categories to it. These categories include: causal conditions, strategies,

contextual conditions, intervening conditions, and consequences. This stage involves creating a diagram called the coding pattern.

- **Selective Coding:** In selective coding, conditions or classes from the axial coding phase are merged, and a comprehensive analysis is carried out, presenting theoretical propositions based on the paradigm model (Alvani et al., 2011). Selective coding (theory creation) includes one of the axial codes as the central concept for the researcher (Pourabadi, 2016). In this research, during open coding, the data were divided into separate sections and carefully examined for similarities and differences, producing numerous themes. Through a back-and-forth data analysis process, these raw qualitative data were reduced to fewer categories, from which preliminary categories related to the phenomenon under investigation were derived by asking questions, comparing cases, events, and other states of each phenomenon, and identifying similarities and differences. In the next phase (axial coding), other categories were theoretically linked to the main or core phenomenon. Based on qualitative data analysis, the axial coding phase was completed, establishing the relationships among research categories, including causal conditions, core category, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences. During the selective coding phase, theoretical propositions or statements were presented based on the components of the axial coding stage (figure 1).

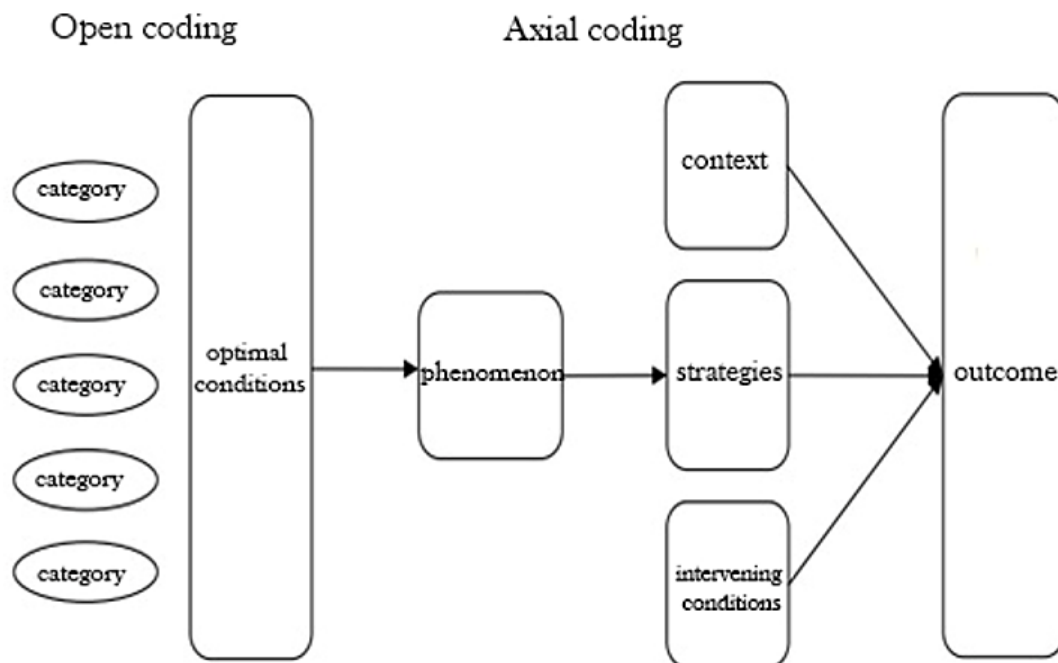


Figure 1. Paradigmatic Model of Coding

Thus, in this research, based on the dimensions of the coding paradigm, the analysis of interview data is clarified.

4. Research Findings

4.1. Causal Conditions

Causal factors include the categories directly influencing the phenomenon of women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism or creating and

developing the phenomenon. Causal conditions are sometimes called preliminary or pioneering conditions, and often, based on the phenomenon itself and by systematically reviewing the data and reviewing events or incidents that are temporally prior to the phenomenon under investigation, causal conditions can be identified (table 1).

Table 1. Sample Codes in the Section on Causal Condition

General Category	Subcategory	Concept	Final Codes
Causal Conditions	Tourism Industry Dynamics	Competition Dynamics in the Tourism Industry	Liberalization of the competitive environment Formation of local markets Elimination of intermediaries
		Requirements for Competition Dynamics	Strengthening the position and positive image of tourism in villages Legal requirements of the tourism industry
	Customer Dynamics	Increased Customer Awareness	Knowledge and awareness of customers Importance of providing information to customers
		Increased Customer Demands	Increased options for customers Customer needs and expectations
	Strengthening Organizations and Infrastructure	Organizational Development	Development of tourism in villages Enhancing women's entrepreneurial competitiveness in villages
		Strategic Entrepreneurial Thinking	Strategic thinking in entrepreneurship policymaking in tourism

General Category	Subcategory	Concept	Final Codes
	Human Resource Dynamics	Market Development Motivation	Gaining competitive advantage and market share Women's motivation for market development
		Knowledge and Awareness of Women Entrepreneurs	Women's knowledge and awareness Importance of addressing customer needs
	Dynamic Process of Problem Identification	External Problem Identification	Recognizing issues based on existing laws Examining similar issues faced by competitors
		Internal Problem Identification	Recognizing issues using customer feedback Identifying problems through consultants' opinions
		Identifying Significant Issues	Financial and legal issues in the tourism industry Issues related to market survival and development Issues impacting the achievement of rural tourism objectives

4.2. Contextual or Governing Factors

Contextual characteristics include factors that are essential for achieving women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism. The governing context provides the specific

conditions under which strategies are implemented to manage, control, and respond to phenomena. These conditions are made up of a collection of concepts, categories, and contextual variables (table 2).

Table 2. Sample Codes in the Section on Contextual Conditions

General Category	Subcategory	Concept	Final Codes
Contextual Conditions	Organizational Complexity	Structural Complexity	Organizational structure of women's entrepreneurship
		Stakeholders	Interests of stakeholders and shareholders Similarity of women's entrepreneurship services
	Customer Characteristics	Number and Diversity of Customers	High number and wide distribution of customers Diversity and heterogeneity of customers
		Customer Awareness and Knowledge	High awareness and knowledge of customers Competitors' special services and benefits to customers
		Customer Needs and Expectations	Customers' values, expectations, and demands Customers' bargaining power
	Environmental Conditions	Economic Conditions	Economic boom or recession Growth rate of the tourism industry
		Government Legal Requirements	Tourism industry regulations Government economic policies

4.3. Intervening Conditions

Intervening conditions modify the causal conditions and influence strategies and mutual

interactions. These conditions act to either facilitate or restrict strategies in the specific

context under consideration (table 3).

Table 3. Sample Codes in the Section on Intervening Conditions

General Category	Subcategory	Concept	Final Codes
Intervening Conditions	Managerial Barriers	Traditional Thinking in Senior Management	Government-oriented mindset among tourism managers Lack of support and resource allocation by senior management Limited knowledge of senior management about entrepreneurship policymaking
		Weak Entrepreneurship in the Industry Core	Incomplete belief in entrepreneurship among employees Weak innovation and creativity among staff
	Structural Barriers	Structural Conflicts	Unclear position of entrepreneurship in organizational structures
		Bureaucracy	Restrictive regulations
		System Weaknesses	Weak organizational culture of entrepreneurship at various levels of the tourism industry
	Tourism Industry Characteristics	Knowledge and Experience Weakness in the Tourism Industry	Limited organization of relevant conferences and training programs Unprofessional policymaking for entrepreneurship in rural areas
		Capabilities and Quality	Quality and diversity of rural tourism services Educated and knowledgeable human resources

4.4. Main Category

Considering that the aim of this study is to present a model for branding women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism, the main phenomenon under study is

defined as women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism (table 4).

Table 4. Sample Codes in the Section on the Main Category

General Category	Subcategory	Concept	Final Codes
Main Category	Tourism Strategies	Environmental and Cognitive Limitations	Cognitive limitations faced by policymakers Environmental limitations faced by policymakers
		Time and Information Constraints	Time limitations for policymakers Information limitations for policymakers
	Market Analysis	Monitoring customers and competitors	Monitoring competitor behavior
		Analyzing target customers	Market segmentation Analyzing customer behavior
	Creating Value for Customers	Value creation	Creating value for customers
		Enriching Services	Customizing rural tourism services based on customer feedback Prioritizing services according to customer opinions
	Introducing and Offering Services to	Introducing services to customers	Introducing services using logical messaging Providing information to customers

General Category	Subcategory	Concept	Final Codes
	Customers	Offering services to customers	Introducing and recommending tourism services to customers
	Expanding the Market for Tourism Services	Market development through advertising	Attracting valuable and potential customers
		Changing customer perceptions	Changing customer attitudes toward tourism services
	Nature-Based Job Creation	Increasing job opportunities	Formation of small home-based businesses Revitalization and promotion of handicrafts production Increasing rural women's employment

4.5. Strategies

Strategies reflect the interactions and actions taken by actors in response to certain conditions. These actions occur as a response to specific events and situations related to the phenomenon. The purpose of strategies is to manage, execute, and better realize the targeted phenomenon within the

prevailing context. Strategies are chosen purposefully and implemented for a specific reason. By using tactics and strategies, the central phenomenon can be effectively achieved (table 5).

Table 5. Sample Codes in the Section on Strategies

General Category	Subcategory	Concept	Final Codes
Strategies	Organizational Flexibility	Flexibility in Policy-Making Processes	Flexibility in organizational structures and processes Utilizing experienced tourism experts and elites for policy-making
	Customer-Oriented Human Resource Development	Adjusting Employee Attitudes and Behavior	Improving the behavior of women entrepreneurs with customers Promoting a culture of customer orientation
		Training in Necessary Skills and Expertise	Providing training and enhancing communication skills for women entrepreneurs Continuous training for women entrepreneurs in planning, decision-making, entrepreneurship, and tourism
		Developing Human Resource Systems	Designing customer-oriented compensation systems Training women entrepreneurs in customer focus and program orientation
	Enhancing Interactions with Customers	Purposeful communication with customers	Regular and systematic assessment of customer behavior and attitudes
		Loyalty Programs	Establishing customer clubs to promote rural tourism Expanding customer loyalty programs
	Service Development and Improvement	Improving Service Quality	Enhancing diversity and quality of tourism services in villages Increasing efficiency and speed in responding to customers
		Developing Innovative Services	Creating and offering new tourism services in villages

4.6. Outcomes and Results

The purpose of this section is to identify concepts and categories related to the outcomes resulting from the implementation of women's entrepreneurship strategies in rural tourism. In fact,

strategies are implemented either to confront or to manage and control a phenomenon, leading to certain outcomes (table 6).

Table 6. Sample Codes in the Section on Outcomes

General Category	Subcategory	Concept	Final Codes
Outcomes of Women's Entrepreneurship in Rural Tourism	Evaluation of Implemented Policies	Assessment of Economic Outcomes	Evaluating the outcomes of implemented policies by comparing them to the objectives Evaluating policy outcomes concerning allocated resources
		Assessment of Cultural and Social Outcomes	Evaluating outcomes based on customer satisfaction Assessing policy results with regard to enhancing the community's economic security
	Market Development and Strengthening Women's Entrepreneurship	Market Expansion, Retention, and Customer Acquisition	Increasing customer awareness Creating behavioral tendencies among customers Enhancing customer loyalty and commitment
		Improvement of Market Position	Attracting new customers Development and sustainability of women's entrepreneurship
	Increased Customer Welfare and Satisfaction	Enhancing customer satisfaction	Improving the quality of rural tourism services Increasing customer satisfaction
		Improving Customer Welfare	Increasing customer welfare
	Economic and Cultural Growth of Society	Economic Growth of Society	Enhancing economic security Promoting economic growth in the community
		Cultural Development and Social Welfare	Improving overall community welfare levels
	Increased Revenues and Cost Reduction	Increased Revenues	Increased sales of services Higher revenues and profitability
		Cost Reduction	Lower customer attrition rates Reduced marketing costs
	Opportunities from the Tourism Entrepreneurship Market	Increasing opportunities derived from the tourism entrepreneurship market	Expanding environmental capacities aligned with tourism entrepreneurship Improving living standards

4.7. Validation of the Grounded Theory

While some qualitative researchers traditionally associate discussions about the validity and reliability of data and findings with quantitative research (Johansen & Christensen, 2008), the reality is that in qualitative research, the accuracy and credibility of data and findings are also critical components of the research process (Creswell,

2012). Various methods exist for validating grounded theory. In this study, two methods were used:

1. **Participant Review:** Feedback was gathered from participants.
2. **Expert Review:** Consultation and review by five university faculty members and three senior tourism managers were conducted. Based on the feedback and revisions, along

with guidance from supervisors and advisors, the final model was developed.

4.8. Propositions of the Research

Based on the components of the axial coding stage, the following propositions were derived:

1. **Proposition 1:** The dynamism of the tourism industry, customer dynamism, strengthening organizations and infrastructure, human resource dynamism, and the dynamic process

of problem identification are causal conditions.

2. **Proposition 2:** Tourism strategies, market analysis, value creation for customers, introducing and providing services to customers, market development of tourism services, and nature-based employment are considered the main category (central phenomenon).

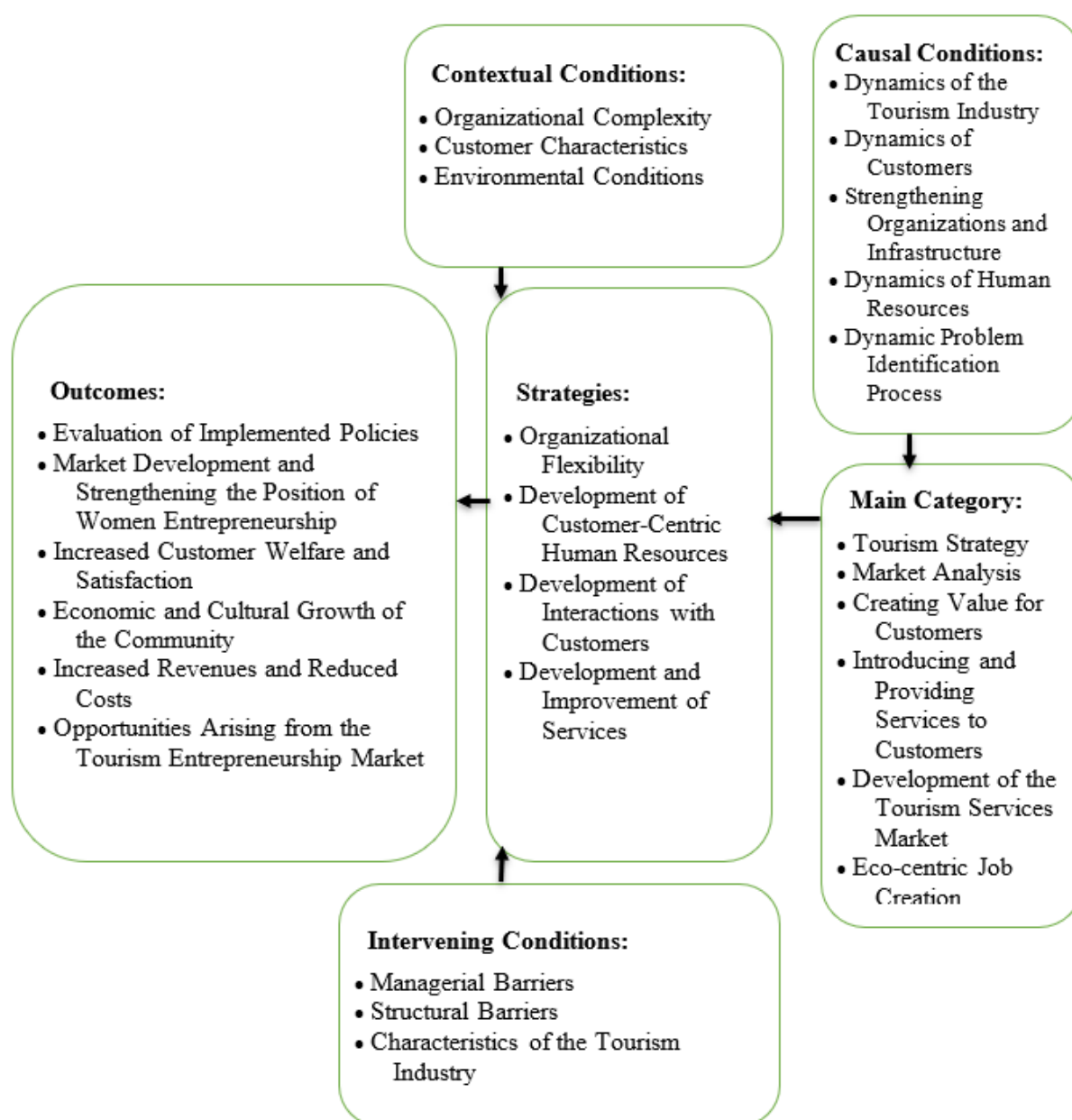


Figure 2. Diagram of Women's Entrepreneurship Model in Rural Tourism

3. **Proposition 3:** Organizational complexity, customer characteristics, and contextual

conditions are considered the background for women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism.

4. **Proposition 4:** Managerial barriers, structural barriers, and characteristics of the tourism industry are considered intervening conditions for women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism.
5. **Proposition 5:** Organizational flexibility, customer-oriented human resource development, enhancing customer interactions, and service development and improvement are strategies for women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism.
6. **Proposition 6:** Contextual conditions, intervening conditions, and strategies result in the following:
 - Outcomes of implemented policies
 - Market development and strengthening the position of women's entrepreneurship
 - Increased customer welfare and satisfaction
 - Economic and cultural growth of society
 - Increased revenues and reduced costs
 - Opportunities emerging from the tourism entrepreneurship market (figure 2).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This research was conducted with the aim of designing a model for women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism based on grounded theory. Using a mixed-method approach, expert interviews were conducted with a selected network of entrepreneurship and tourism experts, based on the research background and existing theoretical foundations. The final model was derived from the data collected during the research process and the analysis performed using coding methods.

In this study, efforts were made to select individuals for the interviews who had more than 10 years of work experience and possessed knowledge related to women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism. Every research is conducted with the goal of using its results to improve processes or change conditions. The findings of this research can be useful for women entrepreneurs working in rural and tourism settings today, who are seeking to enhance their position.

Economic development cycles are always driven by the development of

entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship is the engine of growth and development. Given that women have significant entrepreneurial potential, especially in institutionalizing the culture of entrepreneurship, their entrepreneurial skills lead to self-employment and job creation. Evidence shows that traditionally, women have been marginalized. This has resulted in women being at a lower level in terms of social, technical, cognitive, and business skills.

Moreover, entrepreneurship is a powerful tool for creating opportunities that can help solve problems such as unemployment, lack of creativity and dynamism, low productivity, poor product and service quality, and economic stagnation. On the other hand, tourism, with its characteristics such as variable demand, the need for innovation, wealth generation capacity in communities, and its role in economic and social development, provides a suitable platform for entrepreneurial activities. Thus, tourism is sufficiently new, chaotic, and unregulated to attract entrepreneurs.

If we aim to encourage entrepreneurship in the rural tourism sector through the involvement of women, the primary and infrastructure barriers must first be addressed, followed by external factors that influence the performance of the tourism supply side. This will lead to mutual and direct improvements in both supply and demand sides of tourism, ultimately expanding tourism in rural areas. This development will have significant economic impacts on rural communities, driven by women's participation, providing an exceptional stimulus for creating a favorable environment for attracting and supporting rural women's entrepreneurship in tourism.

The findings of this study align with the results of other researchers (Madawala et al., 2023; Vukovic et al., 2023; Rao et al., 2022; Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2022; Movahedi et al., 2012). Given the inter-institutional nature of both tourism and entrepreneurship, it is essential to establish a unified body or

committee composed of all institutions and active stakeholders in rural development, with activities directed towards the development of entrepreneurship and tourism, with particular emphasis on women active in the region's tourism sector. Furthermore, securing financial capital for launching women's startups through low-interest, long-term loans with facilitated terms for receiving and repaying them, establishing production cooperatives in the rural tourism sector by pooling savings from households and women active in rural tourism, creating a safe environment for private investors to support rural women's ideas, facilitating the competitive conditions for women's businesses against men, and recognizing women's economic role in legal

arenas by offering supportive incentives, can play a crucial role in fostering women's entrepreneurship in rural tourism.

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Authors' contributions

The authors equally contributed to the preparation of this article.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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ارائه مدلی برای کارآفرینی زنان در گردشگری روستایی مبتنی بر نظریه داده بنیاد

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چکیده مبسوط

۱. مقدمه

توسعه پایدار روستایی امروزه بیش از هر زمان دیگری به کارآفرینی وابسته است و کارآفرینان روستایی مهم‌ترین اهرم توسعه مناطق روستایی محسوب می‌شوند. در این میان، گردشگری روستایی به عنوان یکی از ظرفیت‌های مهم که در سال‌های اخیر توجه قابل توجهی به آن شده و زنان روستایی نیز فعالیت گسترده‌ای در این حوزه دارند، می‌تواند نقش مؤثری در تحرک و کارآفرینی زنان روستایی ایفا کند. با وجود پتانسیل بالای مناطق روستایی در جذب گردشگر، زنان روستایی اغلب در مشاغل محدود و کم‌درآمد فعالیت می‌کنند که قادر به جذب پایدار گردشگر نیستند. با بهره‌گیری از توانمندی‌های ذاتی زنان و پتانسیل‌های گردشگری منطقه، زنان می‌توانند کسب‌وکارهای کوچک کارآفرینانه ایجاد کنند و تأثیرات مثبت اقتصادی و اجتماعی برای خود، خانواده و جامعه روستایی به همراه آورند. با توجه به آمار پایین مشارکت اقتصادی زنان در ایران (کمتر از ۱۰ درصد کارآفرینان)، ضرورت خوداشتغالی زنان روستایی برای توسعه روستایی و نقش انکارناپذیر آنان در تولید ملی، ارائه مدلی برای کارآفرینی زنان در گردشگری روستایی ضروری به نظر می‌رسد. این پژوهش در پی پاسخ به این سؤال اصلی است که مدل کارآفرینی زنان در گردشگری روستایی دارای چه ویژگی‌هایی است؟

۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

کارآفرینی نقش حیاتی در توسعه اقتصادی کشور دارد و کارآفرینی در گردشگری روستایی از جایگاه ویژه‌ای برخوردار است. مشارکت کامل زنان در کارآفرینی، مبتنی بر برابری جنسیتی، عامل اساسی در رشد اقتصادی، توسعه و کاهش فقر محسوب می‌شود. کارآفرینی زنان شامل خوداشتغالی مشارکتی، خوداشتغالی مستقل، کارفرمایی و اداره کسب‌وکار با مالکیت انحصاری است. زنان کارآفرین با تولید محصولات جدید از طریق خلاقیت و نوآوری، ریسک‌های مالی،

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اجتماعی و روانی را می‌پذیرند. گردشگری روستایی با جذابیت‌هایی مانند مناظر طبیعی، تنوع زیستی و فرهنگ بومی، به توسعه اقتصادی مناطق کمک می‌کند و اهداف پایداری اقتصادی، اجتماعی و زیست‌محیطی را دنبال می‌نماید. پیشنهاد تحقیق نشان می‌دهد عواملی مانند خودکارآمدی کارآفرینانه، توانمندسازی زنان و موانع متعدد فراروی کارآفرینان زن روستایی از موضوعات کلیدی این حوزه بوده است.

۳. روش تحقیق

این پژوهش از نظر نتایج تحقیق، بنیادی و به لحاظ ماهیت، اکتشافی است. با توجه به اینکه داده‌ها از طریق مصاحبه‌های نیمه‌ساختاریافته جمع‌آوری شده، پژوهش از نظر نوع داده‌ها کیفی محسوب می‌شود. روش تحقیق بر اساس رویکرد نظریه داده‌بنیاد (گراندد تئوری) انجام شده است. نمونه‌گیری در این پژوهش به صورت نظری (غیرتصادفی) انجام شد و تا رسیدن به اشباع نظری ادامه یافت. اشباع نظری زمانی حاصل می‌شود که پاسخ‌های تکراری در مصاحبه‌ها به دست آید و محقق به این نتیجه برسد که اطلاعات جدیدی قابل کسب نیست. در این تحقیق، با ۲۱ نفر از کارآفرینان زن و خبرگان حوزه گردشگری مصاحبه انجام شد. ابزار اصلی گردآوری داده‌ها، مصاحبه‌های عمیق بود که نوعی مصاحبه نیمه‌ساختاریافته محسوب می‌شود و داده‌های غنی و شواهد قابل توجهی را تولید می‌کند.

تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها در سه مرحله اصلی شامل کدگذاری باز، کدگذاری محوری و کدگذاری انتخابی انجام شد که در نهایت به تدوین مدل کیفی منجر گردید. در مرحله کدگذاری باز، داده‌های حاصل از مصاحبه‌ها به دقت بررسی و مفاهیم و زیرمقوله‌های اصلی شناسایی شدند و منجر به شناسایی ۲۴۹ کد باز، ۵۲ مفهوم و ۲۵ مقوله مرتبط با گردشگری روستایی گردید. در مرحله کدگذاری محوری، مقوله‌ها در سطح ویژگی‌ها و ابعاد به یکدیگر مرتبط شدند و

رشد اقتصادی و فرهنگی جامعه، افزایش درآمدها و کاهش هزینه‌ها و فرصت‌های ناشی از بازار کارآفرینی گردشگری است.

۵. بحث و نتیجه‌گیری

این پژوهش با هدف طراحی مدل کارآفرینی زنان در گردشگری روستایی مبتنی بر نظریه داده‌بنیاد انجام شد و با استفاده از رویکرد آمیخته، مصاحبه‌هایی با خبرگان حوزه کارآفرینی و گردشگری انجام گرفت. چرخه‌های توسعه اقتصادی همواره با توسعه کارآفرینی به حرکت درمی‌آیند و کارآفرینی موتور رشد و توسعه محسوب می‌شود. با توجه به پتانسیل بالای زنان در کارآفرینی، توانمندسازی آنان می‌تواند منجر به خوداشتغالی و ایجاد شغل شود. گردشگری نیز با ویژگی‌هایی مانند تقاضای متغیر، نیاز به نوآوری، ظرفیت ثروت‌آفرینی در جوامع و نقش در توسعه اقتصادی و اجتماعی، بستر مناسبی برای فعالیت‌های کارآفرینانه فراهم می‌کند.

یافته‌های این پژوهش با نتایج محققان دیگر از جمله مداوالا و همکاران (۲۰۲۳)، ووکوویچ و همکاران (۲۰۲۳)، رائو و همکاران (۲۰۲۲)، فیگورو و همکاران (۲۰۲۲) و خورشیدی‌پور و همکاران (۲۰۲۰) همسو است. با توجه به ماهیت بین‌نهادی گردشگری و کارآفرینی، ضروری است که نهاد یا کمیته واحد متشکل از کلیه نهادها و ذی‌نفعان فعال در توسعه روستایی تشکیل شود. همچنین تأمین سرمایه مالی برای راه‌اندازی کسب‌وکارهای زنان، تشکیل تعاونی‌های تولیدی، ایجاد محیط امن برای سرمایه‌گذاران خصوصی، تسهیل شرایط رقابتی برای کسب‌وکارهای زنان و به رسمیت شناختن نقش اقتصادی زنان در عرصه‌های قانونی، می‌تواند نقش اساسی در توسعه کارآفرینی زنان در گردشگری روستایی ایفا کند.

کلیدواژه‌ها: کارآفرینی زنان، گردشگری روستایی، نظریه داده‌بنیاد.

تشکر و قدردانی

مطالعه حاضر برگرفته از رساله دکتری مهین مرادبخش، گروه برنامه‌ریزی گردشگری، دانشکده گردشگری، دانشگاه علم و فرهنگ، تهران، ایران است.

مقوله مرکزی در مرکز فرآیند قرار گرفت. در مرحله کدگذاری انتخابی، شرایط یا طبقات حاصل از مرحله کدگذاری محوری تلفیق و تحلیل جامعی ارائه گردید.

۴. یافته‌های تحقیق

یافته‌های پژوهش در قالب الگوی پارادایمی شامل شش بخش اصلی ارائه شد:

شرایط علی: شامل عواملی است که به طور مستقیم بر پدیده کارآفرینی زنان در گردشگری روستایی تأثیر می‌گذارند و شامل پویایی صنعت گردشگری، پویایی مشتریان، تقویت سازمان‌ها و زیرساخت‌ها، پویایی منابع انسانی و فرآیند پویای مسئله‌یابی می‌باشد.

مقوله محوری (پدیده اصلی): کارآفرینی زنان در گردشگری روستایی شامل راهبردهای گردشگری، تحلیل بازار، ایجاد ارزش برای مشتریان، معرفی و ارائه خدمات به مشتریان، توسعه بازار خدمات گردشگری و اشتغال‌زایی طبیعت‌محور است.

شرایط زمینه‌ای: عواملی که برای دستیابی به کارآفرینی زنان در گردشگری روستایی ضروری هستند و شامل پیچیدگی سازمانی، ویژگی‌های مشتریان و شرایط محیطی می‌باشند.

شرایط مداخله‌گر: عواملی که شرایط علی را تعدیل کرده و بر راهبردها و تعاملات متقابل تأثیر می‌گذارند و شامل موانع مدیریتی، موانع ساختاری و ویژگی‌های صنعت گردشگری می‌باشند.

راهبردها: اقدامات و کنش‌هایی که در پاسخ به شرایط خاص توسط کنشگران انجام می‌شود و شامل انعطاف‌پذیری سازمانی، توسعه منابع انسانی مشتری‌محور، توسعه تعاملات با مشتریان و توسعه و بهبود خدمات می‌باشد.

پیامدها و نتایج: شامل ارزیابی سیاست‌های اجرا شده، توسعه بازار و تقویت جایگاه کارآفرینی زنان، افزایش رفاه و رضایت مشتریان،

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