PRIZREN SOCIAL SCIENCE JOURNAL
VOLUME: 8
ISSUE: 3
SEPTEMBER- DECEMBER, 2024

ISSN: 2616-387X
DOI: 10.32936/PSSJ

www.prizrenjournal.com
info@prizrenjournal.com

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE CONCERN ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION

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Article history:

Submission 01 September 2024
Revision 29 November 2024
Accepted 20 December 2024
Available online 31 December 2024

Keywords:

Climate Change,
Entrepreneurship,
Entrepreneurial Intention,
Climate Change Concern.

DOI:

https://doi.org/10.32936/pssj.v8i3.592

Abstract

As a country significantly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, Turkey made an ambitious climate change commitment by ratifying the Paris Agreement in October 2021 and set a target of net zero emissions by 2053. Both climate change and the targets set by our country in this context make the issue important in terms of sectors and entrepreneurship. In this study, the effect of climate change on entrepreneurial intention was examined. The study aims to analyze the perceptions of active and potential entrepreneurs about climate change concerns and reveal the effects of the said concern on entrepreneurial intention.

The study surveyed active and potential entrepreneurs of different ages, genders, and sector groups to measure the participants' attitudes toward climate change concerns and entrepreneurial intentions. The scale was applied online to a total of 103 entrepreneurs, 56 of whom were female (54%) and 47 of whom were male (46%), with potential and existing enterprises in Izmir province. During the study, the participants administered a 10-question "climate change concern scale" consisting of anxiety and helplessness dimensions and a 6-question "entrepreneurial intention scale" consisting of a single dimension. The study revealed that the data were normally distributed, and the internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) coefficient was more significant than 0.70 in reliability tests. The study's main finding is that climate change concern affects female participants more than males.

1. Introduction

The threat and impacts of climate change is not only a technical issue that can be predicted with physics and arithmetic, but also a global crisis that will have significant economic, psychological and sociological impacts in Turkey as well as in the world (Acar, 2020).

Countries worldwide are adversely affected by the serious consequences of contemporary global environmental problems such as global warming and climate change. For example, in 2021, Texas experienced persistent blizzards and low temperatures, while many areas in the Mediterranean region experienced temperatures above 40°C. Mongolia was affected by persistent and intense dust storms and snowstorms. In 2022, numerous European countries, including France, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom, witnessed unprecedented high temperatures and heat waves. Pakistan experienced a multitude of heavy precipitation events, resulting in widespread flooding.

Meanwhile, several African countries, such as Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia, grappled with the most severe drought in a decade

(Han et al., 2024). Various impacts are associated with climate change, including extreme weather events, sea level rise, alterations to rainfall patterns, and the disruption of ecosystems. Such consequences are, in turn, reflected in economic systems, giving rise to alterations in supply chains, impacts on productivity, transformations in consumer behavior, and shifts in trade dynamics. The impact of climate change concerns on macroeconomic uncertainty extends to financial markets and investment decisions (Enwo & Nnenna, 2024).

Climate-related risks may introduce unpredictability into investment portfolios. As investors assess the potential impact of climate-related risks, their decisions may contribute to asset valuations and capital allocation shifts. The interconnection of these changes introduces uncertainty into the economic landscape, thereby challenging traditional forecasting models that frequently assume stable environmental conditions. Therefore, the climate system's inherent unpredictability increases economic outcomes' uncertainty, making decision-making more difficult for governments, businesses, and investors (Enwo & Nnenna, 2024). In addition, these global warming and climate change issues severely impact operational decisions in various areas, including power supply, venture capital, transportation, etc. It also exposes business management to risks and affects society and market patterns (Han et al., 2024).

The psychological effects of climate change have the potential to manifest as trauma, anxiety, fear, and depression, both in the short and long term. Although the existing literature places considerable emphasis on the physical impacts of climate change on health, recent scientific literature indicates that climate change and related weather events can also profoundly affect psychological well-being and mental health, both directly and indirectly. A growing body of research literature on climate change and mental health has found that climate change increases the likelihood of major depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, conscientious trauma, guilt, complex grief, anxiety, substance abuse, an exhausting recovery period, and suicidal ideation (Özbay & Alcı, 2021). These negative emotions have led to the emergence of concepts such as climate change anxiety, climate change concern, eco-anxiety, defined as "chronic fear of environmental apocalypse," and research on the psychological effects of climate change (Stewart, 2021).

From a sociological perspective, the impacts of climate change can be observed in the loss of livelihoods, unemployment, lack of clean water and food, problems arising in electricity, sanitation, etc., due to the deterioration of infrastructure, problems in accessing essential services such as education and health services further increase poverty, which is widespread worldwide. Consequently, the challenges associated with the climate crisis disproportionately impact those with lower incomes. According to the World Bank (2016, p. 12), between 35 and 122 million people will be impoverished due to climate change by 2030. The climate crisis also has social implications for migration. Indeed, at the 1990 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) meeting, the panel's defining statement was that "the single greatest impact of climate change will be on human migration." Climate change causes food insecurity, water insufficiency, malnutrition, and famine, significantly reducing living space and forcing people to migrate to sustain their vital activities (Şengül & Murat, 2024). In terms of security, it can be said that water scarcity and drought can increase the intensity of triggered migration, tensions, and conflicts (Kızmaz, 2021).

Both developed and developing countries recognize the importance of entrepreneurship in dealing with increasing global challenges, including the climate crisis. In developed countries such as the United States, entrepreneurship has long been regarded as fostering innovation and technological advancement, competition, and employment, which drives economic growth and national prosperity (Holmgren & From 2005). In less developed countries, governments recognize entrepreneurship to stimulate economic development and overcome serious economic and social challenges (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). However, as mentioned above, it is assumed that the anxiety and worry that arise from the harmful effects of climate change in economic, psychological, and social terms will also affect the entrepreneurial intentions of individuals. Therefore, this study aims to assess the impact of climate change concerns on individuals' entrepreneurial intentions. The research mainly focuses on 'climate change concern' and 'entrepreneurial intention' concepts in this context.

A literature review revealed that these two concepts were associated with different subjects. For instance, it was observed that climate change concern mainly was concentrated on energy, renewable energy, household behaviors, economic dimensions of climate change concern, tax, and finance. At the same time, studies on entrepreneurial intention were mainly matched with concepts such as entrepreneurial intention, gender, creativity and entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurship education, and personal values in students at various levels. A literature review reveals no studies addressing the nexus between climate change concerns and entrepreneurship. Therefore, the research is important in terms of filling this gap in the literature. The primary purpose of the research is to test whether climate change concern affects individuals' entrepreneurial intentions.

To further clarify the issue, climate change concern and entrepreneurial intention are discussed conceptually below.

2. Climate Change Concern

The term "climate change concern" describes how individuals know about and perceive climate change as a significant and imminent issue. The concept involves both affective and cognitive appraisals of climate change. Affective appraisal refers to the extent to which an individual is concerned about climate change and its impact. In contrast, cognitive appraisal refers to people's perceptions of the severity and impact of climate change (Chan & Tam, 2021).

As previously stated, the observed consequences of climate change, or its possible effects in the future, may lead to psychological reactions such as fear, stress, trauma, depression, and anxiety in individuals (Gezer & İlhan, 2021). Accordingly, a literature review reveals that studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between climate change and the mentioned psychological reactions, and measurement tools that can be used for this purpose have been developed. Böhm (2003), who classifies the negative emotions that people may experience concerning environmental risks, found that people experience feelings of regret, sadness, or sympathy for environmental consequences that have already occurred and feelings of fear, anxiety, or hopelessness for negative consequences that have not yet occurred and are thought to occur in the future. This situation has led researchers to develop measurement tools for the assessment of climate change anxiety (Clayton & Karazsia, 2020) and climate change concern (Stewart, 2021). One of the measurement tools is the Climate Change Worry Scale (CCWS), which was developed by Stewart (2021). Stewart (2021) stated that in this period when news about climate change is frequently covered in the media, individuals' attention is more directed towards the issue of climate change, and this situation was practical in the development of the CCWS (Gezer & İlhan, 2021). Although climate change is a global problem, it is evident that individuals' beliefs about climate change may differ depending on several factors, including their demographic and psychological characteristics, as well as their ideologies and altruistic values (equality, social justice, world peace, etc.) (Milfont et al., 2015).

In addition, it has been observed that the perception of concern about climate change differs according to society. For instance, the French population exhibits more significant concern than their counterparts in Germany and Norway, whereas the British population displays a comparatively lower degree of concern. It has also been observed that the perception of public opinion is subject to fluctuations over time. For instance, social surveys show that the American public's concern about climate change has fallen significantly since 2008. The issues, as outlined in the study conducted by Gezer and İlhan, serve to confirm that the construct validity of the Turkish version of the CCWS has been adequately established. However, in contrast to the unidimensional structure observed in the original version of the scale, the Turkish version exhibits a two-dimensional structure. Accordingly, the Turkish version of CCWS identifies two dimensions of climate change: anxiety and helplessness (Gezer & İlhan, 2021). This study uses a Turkish version of CCWS with a two-dimensional scale.

3. Entrepreneurial Intention

The term "entrepreneurial intention" is defined as "a self-acknowledged belief that a person will initiate a new business venture and have a conscious plan to do so at some point in the future." (Thompson, 2009), (Monllor & Murphy, 2017). Entrepreneurial intention can be described as an individual's commitment to actions towards making entrepreneurial endeavors to start his/her own business (Timuroğlu & Çakır, 2014).

When the literature on entrepreneurial intention is analyzed, three important theories come to the fore in explaining the entrepreneurial intention of the individual: Shapero and Sokol's (1982) 'Entrepreneurial Event Model,' Bird's (1988) 'Entrepreneurial Intention Model' and Ajzen's (1991) 'Theory of Planned Behaviour' (Timuroğlu & Çakır, 2014).

In their Entrepreneurial Event Model, Shapero and Sokol (1982) concentrated on the entrepreneurial event as initiating a new business venture rather than on entrepreneurial intention. The model posits that individuals first develop aspirations towards entrepreneurship, subsequently evaluate the feasibility of these aspirations, and ultimately decide whether to pursue them. Shapero and Sokol (1982) argue that every entrepreneurial event takes place in real-time as part of a dynamic process driven by situational forces, influencing individuals whose perceptions and values are shaped by their social and cultural background and experiences.

In Bird's (1988) Entrepreneurial Intention model, the factors constituting entrepreneurial orientation are socio-political, individual, rational, intellectual, and intuitive. In this context, legal regulations can be considered as socio-political factors, experiences as individual factors, goals and objectives in mind as intellectual factors, and the visionary view of the individual as intuitive factors. According to Ajzen, the individual enters into entrepreneurial tendency in line with personal expectations and social norms in society, and the behavioral control he perceives

creates the intention to perform entrepreneurial behavior by providing personal motivation. In this context, TPB (Theory of Planned Behavior) presents the most significant finding that human behavior is a planned action driven by intentions (Şeşen & Basım, 2012). This finding provides an important framework, suggesting that individuals' actions regarding whether to become entrepreneurs in their future lives can be predicted by their current intentions (Timurolu & Çakir, 2014).

Some scholars argue that both individual and contextual determinants determine entrepreneurial intention. Individual determinants of entrepreneurial intention, as presented by Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior and Shapero and Sokol's (1982) Entrepreneurial Event Model, are often also related to personal attitudes and perceived abilities to perform an entrepreneurial behavior, personality traits, and prior entrepreneurial exposure (Nakara et al., 2020)

Linan and Chen (2009) evaluated all these studies in the literature and developed the Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ) to understand better the impact of different cultures and values on entrepreneurial intentions. Şeşen and Basım (2012) adapted this scale into Turkish. This study used the Turkish version of the EIQ to measure entrepreneurial intention.

4. Methodology

When literature is examined, there are many obstacles to entrepreneurship. These obstacles can be caused by external factors and obstacles created by the entrepreneur himself/herself. In recent years, the concern about climate change has become a situation that cannot be ignored in all business models worldwide. This research aims to identify the problems in eliminating obstacles in front of entrepreneurial intention regarding climate change concerns. This research is an important study in determining the effects of the perception of climate change concern and revealing the effect of this variable on entrepreneurial intention.

4.1. Data Collection Procedure and Data Sampling

Within the scope of the research problem, cross-sectional and quantitative research was designed using the survey method, one of the primary data collection techniques. In this research, a questionnaire was applied to 103 participants to investigate climate change's effect on entrepreneurial intention. In the first part of this questionnaire, there are question statements that will reveal the demographic characteristics of the participants. These question statements aim to categorize the participants according to characteristics such as age, gender, education level, and sector. The second part of the questionnaire is a climate change concern scale consisting of 10 statements and two dimensions (Anxiety and Helplessness) that reveal the perception of climate change concern. While the anxiety dimension was measured with seven statements, the helplessness dimension was measured with three statements. The question statements in the scale were developed by Steward (2021). This study used the scale translated into Turkish by Gezer and İlhan (2021). The scale is organized as a 5-point Likert scale, and the level of agreement with the statements is determined as 1- Never, 5- Always. Another scale in the questionnaire is the entrepreneurial intention scale. This scale was developed by Lui and Chen (2009) and adapted into Turkish by Şeşen and Basım (2012). This one-dimensional scale includes a total of 6 question statements. In the scale, which is organized as a 5-point Likert scale, the level of agreement is 1- Strongly Disagree, 5- Strongly Agree.

The research population consists of active or potential entrepreneurs in Izmir, Turkey. In terms of time and cost, non-random convenience sampling was used. A total of 109 face-to-face and online questionnaires were collected from 109 participants. Six questionnaires were excluded from the study because they were not suitable for analysis, and 103 questionnaires were deemed suitable for data analysis.

4.2. Findings

Regarding the data analysis, the reliability of the scales (internal consistency coefficient) and whether they are in the standard distribution assumption were analyzed. Descriptive statistics (frequency analysis) were analyzed to reveal the demographic characteristics of the participants. Reliability analysis was conducted for the anxiety and helplessness dimensions of the climate change scale, and the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) was calculated as 0.945 for the anxiety dimension and 0.813 for the helplessness dimension. The internal consistency coefficient of entrepreneurial intention as a single dimension was calculated as 0.971. Since all these values are more significant than 0.70, the scale is answered reliably (Nunnaly, 1979). Another control of the data is the tests for conformity to normal distribution. As a result of these analyses, the kurtosis and skewness values of all dimensions were between -2 and +2. These values make the data suitable for normal distribution (Fidel, 2009).

Descriptive statistics were applied to identify the participants. Table 1 gives characteristics such as gender, age, education level, and sector.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Gender	f	%
Female	56	54,4
Male	47	45,6
Total	103	100,0
Age	f	%
0-18	5	4,9
19-25	35	34,0
26-32	14	13,6
33-42	20	19,4
43-50	12	11,7
50 and above	17	16,5
Total	103	100,0
Educational Level	f	%
Middle School	2	1,9
High School	30	29,1
Associate's degree	39	37,9
Bachelor's degree	24	23,3
Postgraduate graduate	8	7,8
Toplam	103	100,0
Industry	f	%
Wood and Wood Products	4	3,9
Electricity, Electronics and Computers	17	16,5
Food Products	25	24,3
Activities Related to Land and Marine Vehicles	5	4,9
Stationery, Photography, Press and Publication	3	2,9
Chemical, Plastic, Porcelain, etc. Products	10	9,7
Media, Communication and Publishing	20	19,4
Textile, Footwear and Leather Goods	16	15,5
Building Arts and Building Materials	3	2,9
Total	103	100

Many of the participants are in the middle age group. The level of education is generally composed of high school, associate degree, and bachelor's degree graduates. When examining sectors, the food sector emerges as a prominent field with a higher concentration of entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial candidates.

Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to the scales used in the study with the LISREL 8.80 package program to determine whether the measurement model was confirmed or not. First, confirmatory factor analysis was applied to the climate change concern scale consisting of anxiety (KYGI) and helplessness (CARESIZ) dimensions. Figure 1 shows the measurement model consisting of observed variables and latent variables. All the standardized values for the paths defined from latent variables to observed variables are below 1, indicating that each observed variable has a good representation ability about latent variables. Another value for the model is the t-values. t-values are above the critical value of 1.96 at the 0.5 level. However, the LISREL 8.80 program suggested a modification to improve the scale. Figure 2 shows the confirmatory factor analysis after modification.

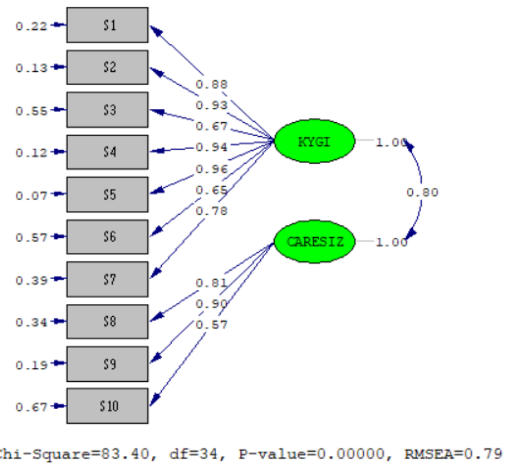

Figure 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Climate Change Concern Scale

Another important finding regarding measuring the model is the definition of model goodness of fit values. Table 2 shows that acceptable and good fit values were obtained except for GFI and AGFI parameters (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 1998; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996; Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2012). In this case, LISREL suggests two modifications with close margins of error.

Table 2. Goodness of Fit Values Before Modification

Goodness of Fit Measure	Value	Goodness of Fit
χ^2 / (sd=83)	2,53	Acceptable Fit
RMSEA	0,79	Acceptable Fit
SRMR	0,060	Acceptable Fit
NFI	0,95	Good Fit
NNFI	0,96	Good Fit
CFI	0,97	Good Fit
GFI	0,85	Poor Fit
AGFI	0,81	Poor Fit

The proposed modifications made the scale more harmonized by correcting the errors of S1, S2, S3, and S6 statements in the anxiety dimension. Factor loadings are below 1. The chi-square value decreased, and the chi-square/sd decreased below two and reached a good fit value. The RMSEA value also decreased below 0.50 and reached a good fit value, and the t values are more significant than 1.96 at the 90% confidence interval.

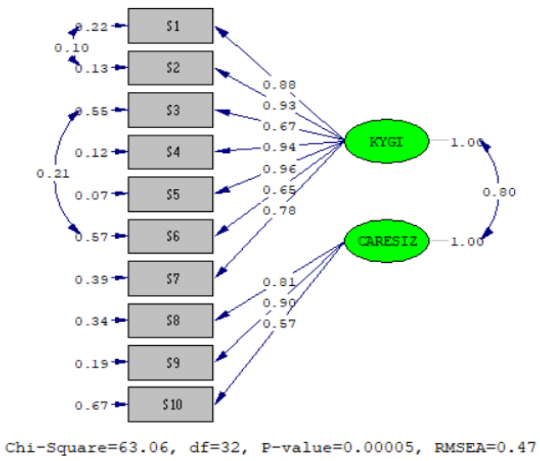

Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis After Modification

Looking at the goodness of fit values after the modification (Table 3), GFI and AGFI values, which were insufficient fit before the modification, reached 0.90 and were defined as acceptable fit. Chi-squared/df (1.97) and RMSEA (0.47) values reached from acceptable to good fit values.

Table 3. Goodness of Fit Values After Modification

Goodness of Fit Measure	Value	Goodnes of Fit
χ^2 / (sd=63)	1,97	Good Fit
RMSEA	0,47	Good Fit
SRMR	0,057	Acceptable Fit
NFI	0,96	Good Fit
NNFI	0,97	Good Fit
CFI	0,98	Good Fit
GFI	0,90	Acceptable Fit
AGFI	0,9	Acceptable Fit

The data confirmed the two-dimensional measurement model of the climate change concern scale, indicating a good fit. Another scale is the unidimensional scale of entrepreneurial intention. As seen in Figure 3, factor loadings are below 1 in confirmatory factor analysis. The chi-square/df (7) value is below 2, and the RMSEA value is calculated as 0.79. This analysis shows that the measurement model is within acceptable fit values.

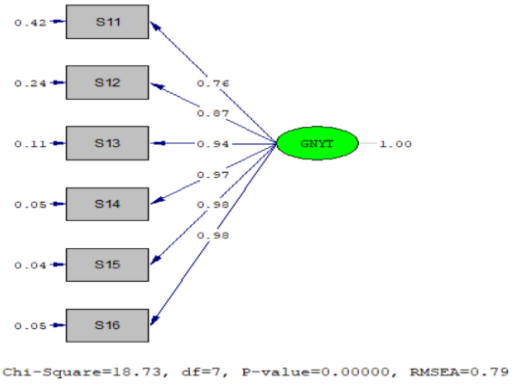

Figure 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Entrepreneurial Intention Scale

Table 4. Entrepreneurial Intention Scale Goodness of Fit Values

Goodness of Fit Measure	Value	Goodness of Fit
χ^2 / (sd=7)	2,67	Good Fit
RMSEA	0,79	Acceptable Fit
SRMR	0,024	Good Fit
NFI	0,98	Good Fit
NNFI	0,97	Good Fit
CFI	0,99	Good Fit
GFI	0,94	Acceptable Fit
AGFI	0,85	Acceptable Fit

Another analysis is the structural model in which the effect of anxiety and helplessness dimensions of the climate change scale on entrepreneurial intention is observed. Looking at Figure 4, which shows the main subject of the research, the effect of the two dimensions on entrepreneurial intention (GNYT) through the structural model, it is seen that both dimensions have different effects on entrepreneurial intention (GNYT). As seen in Figure 4, the effect values of anxiety and helplessness dimensions are different from each other. The effect value of the anxiety variable (CAI) was calculated as 0.82 because of the modifications made to the statements S1 and S2 as well as S3 and S4. The helplessness variable was calculated as -0.23, and the t value is lower than 1.96 at a 95% confidence interval, i.e., it is statistically insignificant. The model's Chi-squared/df (98) value was below 2, and the RMSEA value was among the acceptable fit values at 0.61.

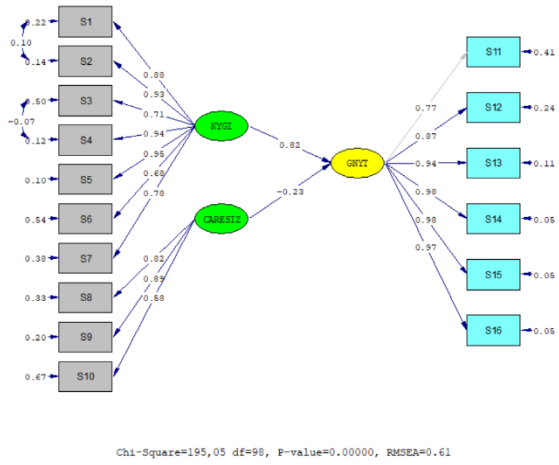

Figure 4. The Effect of Climate Change Concern on Entrepreneurial Intention (Structural Equation Model)

When Table 5 is examined, the goodness of fit values is within good fit and acceptable fit values. Chi-squared/df (98) indicates a good fit with 1.99, and the RMSEA value, another important parameter, is within acceptable fit values at 0.61. The other values of SRMR, NNFI, GFI, and AGFI are within the acceptable fit, while NFI and CFI values indicate a good fit. The structural model confirmed that climate change concern significantly affects entrepreneurial intention.

Table 5. Structural Model Goodness of Fit Values

Goodness of Fit Measure	Value	Goodness of Fit
χ^2 / (sd=98)	1,99	Good Fit
RMSEA	0,61	Acceptable Fit
SRMR	0,069	Acceptable Fit
NFI	0,96	Good Fit
NNFI	0,97	Acceptable Fit
CFI	0,98	Good Fit
GFI	0,90	Acceptable Fit
AGFI	0,85	Acceptable Fit

5. Conclusion

When we examine the research conducted within the framework of climate change concerns and entrepreneurial intention, a limited number of studies address both topics. This research is an empirical and preliminary quantitative study. The research aims to present ideas on how entrepreneurs perceive the dimensions of climate change, their concern about external environmental factors, and how they can remove the barriers they create. Today, with the impact of external environmental factors, entrepreneurs' orientation toward sustainable business models has become necessary. This study examines the impact of climate change concerns on entrepreneurial intention.

According to the research results, the confirmatory factor analysis conducted on the two-dimensional (anxiety, helplessness) climate change concern scale and the one-dimensional entrepreneurial intention scale validated the scales by the collected data and were found to be usable. In the confirmatory factor analysis, the goodness of fit values of the scales was within the good fit and acceptable goodness of fit values, and the effect values of all dimensions were statistically significant. The effect of climate change on entrepreneurship, the infrastructure of which has been explained in the literature, was confirmed with the structural equation model (Figure 5). The goodness of fit values of the structural equation model reached good fit and acceptable fit values with two modification suggestions. In another analysis, linear regression analysis was applied to female and male participants separately, and the climate change concern of female participants explained entrepreneurial intention at a higher level. This result is one of the important results of the study.

Research findings support the need to develop strategies that encourage both policymakers and actors in the entrepreneurship ecosystem to transform concerns and worries about climate change into sustainable business ideas. In this context, special financing programs can be designed to encourage environmentally friendly and climate-friendly initiatives, and grants and low-interest loans can be provided mainly for such initiatives. Financial facilities are undoubtedly an important condition for operating in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. In addition to financial support for active and potential entrepreneurs, it is possible to provide various incentives to investors who invest in green entrepreneurship projects with tax incentives such as tax deductions and tax holidays for environmentally friendly initiatives and entrepreneurs.

Training programs can be organized for active and potential entrepreneurs on climate change, new and sustainable business models, and green innovation. Participation in these programs can be compulsory for potential entrepreneurs operating in specific sectors. In addition to raising awareness about environmental threats, these trainings can emphasize how opportunities can arise for entrepreneurs with innovative solutions.

Along with financial incentives and training and awareness-raising activities, it is possible to establish a green entrepreneurship ecosystem in which green entrepreneurship can flourish; establish the legal and regulatory framework needed in this context; provide infrastructure and technology support, especially for research and development (R&D) activities; market studies and market support to encourage green consumption and thus green production through public procurement, floor and ceiling price practices.

The finding that climate change concerns negative impact entrepreneurial intentions suggests that more in-depth studies are needed in this area. Expanding the scope of the research, diversifying the research tools, and investigating the reasons for the relationship found will make important contributions to literature. The fact that climate change concerns explain the entrepreneurial intention of female participants at a higher level indicates that there is a need for a specific gender-based analysis and a detailed investigation of why climate change concerns affect the entrepreneurial intention of female entrepreneurs more.

Although the research is important in filling the literature gap by matching the concepts of climate change concern and entrepreneurial intention, it has some limitations. First, this research constitutes only a pilot study so that the research sample could be more extensive. In the next part of the research, it is planned that the target group will consist of women since the sample will constitute a larger population and climate change concern, which has a more significant impact on women's entrepreneurial potential. In addition, a gender dimension will be added to the study, along with climate change concerns and entrepreneurial intention.

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