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## PROMOTING FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Abstract.** *The paper presents the arguments and counterarguments within the scientific discussion on the issue of the development of female entrepreneurship in tourism. Today female entrepreneurs consider being the driving force of economies. Many governments try to promote female engagement in many economies to cover the gender gap. The tourism sphere has a great significance in the economy of the Republic of Armenia. For Armenia, it is crucial to foster female entrepreneurship in tourism that leads to sustainable and equitable development of regions and contributes to social, economic, and environmental development. Today women face many problems for starting a business in tourism in Armenia. The problems are connected with the lack of finance, necessary knowledge, and skills in management, marketing, business organization, etc. The research aims to explore the main competencies and needs of sustainable entrepreneurship and female entrepreneurial skills in the tourism sector. Systematization literary sources and approaches for solving the problem unveiled many studies on promoting female entrepreneurship in tourism. Investigation of the topic in the paper is carried out in the following logical sequence. Firstly, some literature sources were discussed, then the current tourism situation in Armenia was analyzed, and finally, the main results of surveys were presented. The methodological tool of the research was mainly a survey based on a questionnaire, which includes about 50 questions and 45 questions regarding the main skills. The study applied quantitative and statistical methods to analyze the survey results. The survey engaged women who have or plans to start a business in tourism. The results indicate that women have many problems with starting a business. Also, they have difficulties in business development, doing innovations, marketing and attracting tourists, etc. They rate their skills level at a medium-rare, and the majority want to improve their skills for doing business, marketing, communication, analytical, decision-making, and other skills. The results could be the basis on which many steps are taken to promote sustainable female entrepreneurship in tourism.*

**Keywords:** tourism, female, entrepreneurship, skills, knowledge, Republic of Armenia.

**Introduction.** Nowadays, female entrepreneurship is a developing sector in the global business environment. In many countries, it is a real driving force for the economy. Female employment rates are high in services and especially in tourism. Many women try to start their own business in tourism, while many countries promote it.

In Armenia, tourism has a very significant role in economic development. According to the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia (RA), 1894377 tourists arrived in Armenia in 2019 (increased by 14.7% as compared to 2018) (Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 2019). In 2020, the number of incoming tourist visits to Armenia was only 360338, there was a decline by 81% compared to 2019. In 2021 the sphere began to restart slowly, and 870308 incoming tourists visited Armenia (Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 2021).

In 2019 the total contribution of tourism in the GDP in Armenia was 1.8 billion US dollars or 872.1 billion Armenian dram (12.9% of the GDP). In 2020 during pandemic the total contribution of tourism in the GDP in Armenia decreased to 446.9 million US dollars or 216.8 billion Armenian dram (3.4% of the GDP) (WTTC, 2021). The total contribution of tourism to employment amounted to 107.4 thousand people in 2020 compared to 137.8 thousand in 2019 (11.2% of the employed) (WTTC, 2021).

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In 2020, the number of the employed population in Armenia was 1060.1 thousand people, 46.2% or 489.9 thousands of which were female. 70% of female workers were 35-64 years old. Only 3% of employed women are working in the accommodation sector and food service activities, 2% in arts, entertainment and recreation, 20% in agriculture, forestry and fishing, 10% in manufacturing, 19% in education, 10% in human health and social work activities, etc. (Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 2021).

For Armenia, it is essential to promote female entrepreneurship in tourism. Indeed, it would lead to sustainable development due to solving gender issues and equitable regions' development. Moreover, female entrepreneurship contributes to social, economic, and environmental development. There are many problems for women to start a business in tourism. The problems are connected with the lack of finance, necessary knowledge, skills, etc.

The article aims at exploring the main competencies and needs of sustainable entrepreneurship and female entrepreneurial skills in the tourism sector. The results could be the basis to promote sustainable female entrepreneurship in tourism.

**Literature Review.** The past 30 years have seen critical changes within women entrepreneurs' status and political weight. Besides, there was an increase in interest and research on the topic. By the end of the 1990s, female entrepreneurship had been established as a well-respected and defined area of academic inquiry. It had become a popular argument for the media and political debates on employment and labor markets (Minniti and Naude, 2010).

Female entrepreneurship is an increasing global trend in developed, developing, and even less-developed nations. Female entrepreneurship is very important for communities and nations as it is connected with income generation, increased quality of local life, higher employment rates, human capital accumulation, and balanced wealth generation (Pinar, 2021).

Women in rural areas, where men mainly dominate the population, have an opportunity to gain money and to be independent economically (Vukovic et al., 2021). To find out if there are gender differences in entrepreneurial behavior, Minniti (2010) has researched people from 34 nations. The results showed that GDP per-capita levels are associated with the gender gap in entrepreneurial behavior. However, subjective perceptions have their role as well. This study revealed that individual demographic and economic conditions have no significant importance. A survey in Macedonia showed that the perception of women towards taking part in tourism entrepreneurship differs from the perceptions of men. Women think that their participation in tourism is low and needs to be changed (Serafimova and Petrevska, 2018). A study by Serafimova and Petrevska (2018) showed the problems women face when they are employed in the tourism sphere. Between 70% and 98% of respondents denoted presence from a medium to the high level of intensity: lack of an established system of support and understanding by the employer; job specifics (working time is not fixed); inadequate competencies for the workplace; unequal possibilities in payment, career advancement, participation and professional development of women; and the case when the woman is a single parent. Four-fifths of the respondents identified the 'Difficulties in establishing a confidential relation' as medium significance.

A recent study showed that cultural issues in gender perspectives are still obstacles for women to start or run businesses in some countries. It is because women are placed in roles related to domestic work and caring for children. In addition, women are seen as incompatible with the business because they are too emotional and less rational in making decisions (Hapsari and Soeditaningrum, 2018).

According to a study in Serbia, rural tourism development could encourage female entrepreneurship development. In turn, it could be the factor of rural tourism development in the Republic of Serbia. Direct economic effects of female entrepreneurship, which was created in rural tourism and activities relating to it, are women's securing extra profit in rural areas, i.e., their economic empowerment. Furthermore, rural tourism and female entrepreneurship development would prevent depopulation of rural areas and enable more balanced development of rural areas and regions in the Republic of Serbia (Radovic and Radovic-

Markovic, 2016). A study in Jordan shows that the number of women entrepreneurs and their role in the economy is rising. Women face more challenges than men entrepreneurs. A survey done among 254 female business students showed their thoughts about the main barriers to entrepreneurship in Jordan and whether their education helps them prepare for their future entrepreneurial activity. The main environmental factors that potential women entrepreneurs mentioned were the economy's weakness, lack of financial resources, fear of taking a risk, gender inequality issues, and inability to maintain a balance between private life and work (Mehtap et al., 2017).

The key factors of female entrepreneurship in tourism in 30 European countries were explored. The study results showed a long-run cointegration among female entrepreneurship, GDP, receipts from tourism, and other variables (Ghosh, 2020). According to research in Catalonia, the most significant factors of becoming a woman entrepreneur in tourism are 'fear of failure' and 'perceived capabilities' (Noguera et al., 2013). According to a study in Germany, while promoting women's entrepreneurship, it is important to consider the gaps in the societal, political environment, which may restrict the interest of females in entrepreneurship (Welter, 2004).

Thus, some studies show that female entrepreneurship has a significant role in the economy. In this case, institutional steps should be taken to promote it.

**Methodology and research methods.** The research methodology includes a survey based on the Questionnaire.

The purpose of this survey is to:

- have a general overview of the current level of the main skills and competencies of the target groups (female who has or wants to start a business);
- have a perspective on the general training and development needs of the target groups;
- develop suggestions aimed at raising the entrepreneurial skills and competencies of women in tourism based on the survey results;
- gather tips promoting female entrepreneurship in tourism.

The questionnaire consists of open, semi-open, and closed questions. Herewith it includes about 50 questions and 45 questions regarding the main skills. The number of respondents is 30. The respondents were from various parts of the country, including women who already have an established business and want to start a business. The survey was done both online and offline.

This study applied quantitative and statistical methods to analyze the survey results. Pearson Chi-square test was applied to evaluate any significant relations between some factors.

**Results.** The first part of the questionnaire included questions for understanding respondents' profiles.

The 37% of participants were 36-50 years old, 27% were 26-35 years old, 17% were 51-63 years old, 13% were up to 25 years old, and only 6% were 64 and older (Table 1).

**Table 1. Age of respondents**

Age of participants	Frequency (Total 30 respondents)	Percent
26-35 years old	8	27
36-50 years old	11	37
51-63 years old	5	17
64 and elder	2	6
Up to 25 years old	4	13

Sources: developed by the author.

26 people responded to the question «What is tourism according to you?». The summary of the most frequent answers is the following:

- Tourism is the temporary movement of people inside or outside the country for recreation (everyone understands recreation differently, depending on the types of tourism).
- A tourist visits another country to not earn money that lasts more than 24 hours but less than a year.
- A study visits or a trip to a place other than your place of residence.
- When a foreigner could discover another country, its culture, history, traditions, and customs.
- Through it, people go from place to place for leisure, entertainment, health, business trips, getting acquainted with other cultures.
- Tourism is the temporary (up to one year) movement of people from their permanent residence to another area within their country for leisure, health, hospitality, cognitive, professional, or business purposes, without paid work or lucrative activity at the place of visit.
- Tourism is a way to show the cultural wealth, traditions, and customs of the Republic of Armenia, the «art» of doing any work, informing others about them, and making a profit. Also, it is one of the priorities of the RA economy.
- Pleasant, meaningful, creative-smart organization of leisure time and relaxation.
- Tourism is a type of recreation during which the tourist gets acquainted with the life, culture, customs, national cuisine, and people of another country.
- It is one of the essential branches of the economy, which stimulates the economic and cultural, agricultural, and educational spheres.
- Discovery and recognition.
- Business, hobby, and freedom.
- Intercultural exchange.
- Combination of the pleasant with the useful.

18 respondents (60%) mentioned that they had established a tourism business, and 12 or 40% were planning to start a tourism business. One of them has started his/her business in 2007, 3 of them in 2017. Besides, 1 in 2018, 2 in 2019, 3 in 2020, 3 in 2021, and 5 people have not mentioned the year.

Out of 30 respondents, 12 still had not an established tourism business and were planning to start their business. They have mentioned the following reasons for which they still had no business. The most common answer was the lack of financial resources (Table 2).

**Table 2. The reasons why women still have not an established tourism business**

Reasons	Number of respondents	
	(out of 12 total respondents planning to start a business, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
Lack of financial resources	11	92
Lack of entrepreneurial skills	7	58
Lack of knowledge about tourism	3	25
Lack of knowledge of foreign languages	1	8
Legislation issues	1	8
Issues connected with the tax system	1	8

Sources: developed by the author.

The respondents also mentioned why they have set up or are planning to start a business. The majority's motivation was personal reasons and the purpose to preserve natural and cultural heritage (Table 3).

The businesses are situated in Yerevan and in the regions of Armenia: Armavir, Gegharquniq, Syunik, Vayots Dzor, Tavush, Aragatsotn, Kotayk, Lori.

**Table 3. Motivation to set up a tourism business**

Reasons	Number of respondents (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
To earn money	12	40
To preserve natural heritage sites and culture	14	47
To create new jobs	7	23
For personal reasons (lifestyle change, tourism as a hobby, etc.)	16	53
Other (please specify)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To make Armenia more recognized in the world and contribute to the country's economic growth.</li> <li>➤ To make my native village a well-known tourist destination, to present its literary, cultural heritage, traditions, unique nature, to promote tourism by ensuring sustainable development of the village, creating new and permanent jobs, as an alternative to the mining industry desolating our native nature and villages.</li> </ul>	

Sources: developed by the author.

The sphere of tourism businesses was mainly hotel services and tour guiding (Table 4).

**Table 4. Sphere of the tourism business**

Sphere of tourism business	Number of respondents (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
Hotel services (in the hotel, motel, B&Bs, etc.)	15	50
Food and beverage services	7	23
Tour operating	7	23
Tourism agency	5	17
Transport service	1	3
Tour guiding	12	40
Other (please specify)	Water tourism, Camping, Interactive Museum	

Sources: developed by the author.

The most common services were nature sightseeing, visiting historical-cultural sites, overnight stay, food and drink, hiking, organizing excursions, master classes on cooking national food (Table 5).

**Table 5. Kind of services provided to tourists**

Services	Number of respondents (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)		Percent
	1	2	
Overnight stay	18	60	
Food and drink	18	60	
Nature sightseeing	22	73	
Arts and crafts	14	47	
Fishing	2	7	
Hunting	0	0	
hiking	17	57	
Horse-riding	4	13	
Bird watching	4	13	
mountain-biking, cycling	2	7	
adventure sport	4	13	

Continued Table 5

1	2	3
visiting historical-cultural sites	19	63
music and dance	10	33
boating	2	7
rafting	2	7
beekeeping	10	33
harvesting	12	40
agricultural works	10	33
master classes on cooking	16	53
local food		
tour guiding	11	37
organizing excursions	17	57
tour package developing and selling	12	40
selling air-tickets	0	0
booking services	0	0
other (please specify)	SUP-boarding, camping	

Sources: developed by the author.

30 respondents, who have or plan to start a business, answered whether the business is or would be the main source of their income. For 63% of respondents, the business is their main source of income (Table 6).

**Table 6. Tourism business as the main or complementary source of income**

Source of income	Frequency (Total 30 respondents)	Percent
Main	19	63
Complementary	11	37

Sources: developed by the author.

The business of 17 (57%) is seasonal, and 13 (40%) is all year round. 15 people (50%) mentioned that their tourism business is not being advertised through any tourism networks (local, regional, international), 12 mentioned yes, and 3 mentioned that it would be soon. People have mentioned the networks of advertisement: All Hotels, Eventtura, Booking.com, Facebook, Blogs, TV channels, media, etc. 19 people responded to the question «What is tourism marketing according to you?» The summary of the most frequent answers is the following:

- Activities of planning, developing, promoting the sale of tourism services or products.
- From a management perspective, marketing is viewed as the art of selling products. According to that, tourism marketing is the sale of travel packages.
- Choosing the right targeting and creating an attractive product.
- Sale of the package in the target market.
- Promotion of tour packages.
- Ensure growth in sales of tourism-related offers.
- Strategy for developing and implementing sales-oriented programs.
- The best marketing in tourism is to provide quality service.
- Beautifully packaged presentation on different networks.

- Achieve maximum results with the right targeted advertising and materials under other equal conditions.
- Well-planned marketing is the key to a successful business.
- Tourism marketing is a set of mechanisms for research, analysis, demand regulating methods in tourism services.

- Mastery of presenting the established business correctly.
- Sale of food and drink, sale, presentation of culture.
- It is a way to inform the public about the tourism product, inform about its potential, and attract tourists.

15 people responded to the question «What is digital tourism marketing according to you?». The summary of the most frequent answers is the following:

- All the digital marketing tools that could be used for tourism (SMM, SEO ...).
- Marketing through digital technologies and social networks.
- Digital marketing is the sale of travel packages on a social platform.
- Online promotion.
- Ensuring visibility on Internet platforms and increasing sales volume due to it.
- Promotion on social networking sites.
- Internet marketing.
- Programs aimed at raising the profile of your business on the Internet.
- Digital marketing, in my opinion, is the advertisement for the right products, for the right segment, placed on the Internet, on various websites.
- Make digital information available to existing and potential customers by using digital technologies.
- Digital marketing is social networks, platforms, applications, etc., which, as a marketing result, influence tourism development.
- Tourism on the Internet.
- Organizing a marketing campaign through digital technologies (social networks, websites).
- Social media in tourism.

The majority of respondents (74%) use or plan to use the Internet in their business every day (Table 7).

**Table 7. Using the Internet in tourism business**

Internet in tourism business	Frequency (Total 30 respondents)	Percent
I never use it	4	13
Every day	22	74
Once a month	0	0
Few days in a week	3	10
Other (often)	1	3

Sources: developed by the author.

The majority (63%) of respondents have never participated in any business field training. People who have participated (37%) mentioned that the pieces of training were in universities and different courses organized by various organizations. The majority (67%) of respondents have no degree in tourism. 20% have a master's degree, 13% – a bachelor's degree. The majority (67%) of respondents had no work experience in the tourism sphere before starting their business. Some of the respondents mentioned that they had worked as a tour guide (5 people), in a tourism agency (2 people), and at a hotel (1 person).

Some of them had from 2 to 8 years of experience. The majority has gained business skills for running the business on the job training and through consultants (Table 8).

**Table 8. Gaining business skills for running the business**

Gaining business skills	Frequency (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
At school	0	0
On the job training	15	50
At work	4	13
Through consultants	13	43
Online courses	10	33
Other (tour-guide courses)	2	7

Sources: developed by the author.

The majority (80%) use or plan to use their own social media platform for their business promotion (Table 9).

**Table 9. Platforms for business promotion**

Platforms for business promotion	Frequency (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
Own website	9	30
Own social media platform	24	80
Tourism magazines	3	10
Tourism offices	6	20
Local, regional, national networks	3	10
Local, regional, national newspapers	0	0
TV	1	3
Radio	0	0
Online booking/reservation systems (Booking.com, Airbnb, Tripadvisor, Expedia, Hotel.am, All hotels.am, etc.)	6	20

Sources: developed by the author.

The majority uses Facebook and Instagram for their business promotion (Table 10).

**Table 10. Social media platforms for business promotion**

Social media platforms	Frequency (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
Facebook	25	83
Instagram	20	67
Twitter	0	0
LinkedIn	1	3
Pinterest	2	7
YouTube	1	3
Snapchat	0	0
WhatsApp	7	23
Signal	0	0
Google	7	23
Telegram	1	3
I do not use any social media platform	2	7
Other (please specify)	0	0

Sources: developed by the author.



The majority may communicate in Russian (73%) and English (63%), also German, Spanish and Italian (7%), 10% does not know any foreign language. The majority of the respondents (28 people or 94%) run or plan to run their business on their own. The majority of the respondents (80%) are responsible for the financial activities of the business himself/herself, and 20% mentioned that the family members are responsible. The majority of the respondents (80%) are responsible for the management activities of the business himself/herself, and 17% mentioned their family members are responsible, 3% has an employee for that. The majority of the respondents (64%) are responsible for the marketing activities of the business himself/herself (Table 11).

**Table 11. Responsibility for the marketing activities of the business**

Responsibility for the marketing activities	Frequency (Total 30 respondents)	Percent
Myself	19	64
I have an employee(s) for that	3	10
My family members	7	23
Other (other private company)	1	3

Sources: developed by the author.

The majority of the respondents (86%) are or would-be business owners. Only 2 of the staff members participate in the decision-making process. From the 4 respondents who are not the owner but a staff members, only 1 is aware of the business policy and financial flows of the business. 57% of respondents advertise his/her business on social networks, and only 10% do nothing (Table 12).

**Table 12. Marketing steps for attracting national and international tourists**

Marketing steps	Frequency (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
I do nothing	3	10
I advertise my business on the Internet	11	37
I advertise my business on social networks	17	57
I advertise my business at national and (or) international booking systems	4	13
I print booklets and distribute them at the airport and other places	4	13
I participate in national and (or) international exhibitions	2	7
Other (please specify)	0	0

Sources: developed by the author.

47% of respondents are aware of the characteristics of international tourists, 27% are partly aware (Table 13).

**Table 13. Being aware of the characteristics of international tourists (of different nationalities), their needs**

Being aware of the characteristics of international tourists	Frequency (Total 30 respondents)	Percent
Yes	14	47
No	6	20
I do not know how I can be aware of that	2	7
Other (partly)	8	27

Sources: developed by the author.

50 % of respondents cooperate with the private sector in connection with their business activity, 33% cooperate with local self-government bodies (Table 14).

**Table 14. Cooperation with other bodies in connection with the business activity**

Cooperation with other bodies	Frequency (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
Local self-government bodies	10	33
National tourism authorities (Tourism Committee)	7	23
Public administration bodies	1	3
Non-governmental organizations	8	27
International organizations	5	17
Private sector	15	50
Other (please specify)	0	0

Sources: developed by the author.

Table 15 shows 60% of participants have never participated in international grant programs, 23% have participated, and 17% would apply. 33% of respondents had employed staff. The employed staff members varied from 1 to 10.

**Table 15. Number of people working in the business**

Number of people working in the business	Frequency (Total 30 respondents)	Percent
Myself	5	17
Myself and my family	15	50
Employed staff (please state how many)	10	33

Sources: developed by the author.

67% had staff training problems. The staff training problems were connected with the need to give mainly marketing, computer skills and knowledge of foreign languages. Table 16 shows the most popular function of human resource management was learning & development (57%), then recruitment & selection (33%).

**Table 16. Functions of human resource management accomplished in the tourism business**

Functions of human resource management	Frequency (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
I do nothing	4	13
Recruitment & selection	10	33
Performance management	4	13
Learning & development	17	57
Career development	8	27
Material incentives	7	23
Non-material incentives	4	13
Other (please specify)	0	0

Sources: developed by the author.

The most common business development problems are marketing (77%) and financial (70%) problems (Table 17).

**Table 17. Business development problems**

<b>Business development problems</b>	<b>Frequency (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
I have no problems	1	3
Financial problems	21	70
Marketing issues	23	77
Lack of knowledge on tourism business	9	30
Problems connected with staff training	8	27
Problems connected with the use of the Internet and computer technologies	7	23
Problems connected with the community infrastructures	4	13
Legislative issues	3	10
Tax issues	2	7
Other (please specify)	0	0

Sources: developed by the author.

The majority (57%) are not involved in the decision-making process at the local or state level. However, they did not mention the reasons. 40% is involved, and the involvement is connected with the community budget discussions. 3% mentioned that they would participate in the future. 77% was not a member of any tourism association.

Some participants mentioned that they are members of the Armenian Association of Professional Guides. To the question «What is a business plan and what sections it usually consists of?» 15 people responded. The summary of the most frequent answers is the following:

- Purpose and means.
  - Business description, market research, target group selection, financial analysis.
  - It is a unique map for further actions.
  - A business plan is a detailed plan with clear steps and a schedule.
  - It has the following main sections: marketing, expenses, profit, attracting investors.
  - Segmentation, service selection, sales, goal setting.
  - The business plan is the beginning of creating a business. The main sections are the marketing plan, operational plan, financial plan.
  - Working document, which has the following sections: 1. Summary; 2. The idea of the proposed project; 3. Marketing plan; 4. Production plan; 5. Organizational plan; 6. Risk assessment and insurance; 7. Financial plan; 8. Attachments.
  - A business plan is a document that includes the steps and sequence through which a business is to be promoted. A business plan is also an important document that the investor sees when deciding whether to invest or not.
  - The business plan consists of a title page, sometimes a privacy policy, a brief description, the main idea of the project description, industry market research.
  - The sequence of steps to start a business, the definition of goals, vision. Business Profile, Market Analysis, Organization and Management, Marketing, Financial Part.
  - Business idea, key resources, value proposition, customer segment, business processes, key partners, market research, relationships, ways, costs, beneficiaries, social issues.
- Only 47% have ever developed a business plan for their business (Table 18).

**Table 18. Developing a business plan for the business**

Developing a business plan	Frequency (Total 30 respondents)	Percent
Yes	14	47
No	10	33
I do not have business plan development skills	5	17
There was no need to develop a business plan	1	3
Other (please specify)	0	0

Sources: developed by the author.

63% mentioned that they need innovations in marketing activities, 50% mentioned new products (Table 19).

**Table 19. Innovations for developing the business**

Innovations	Frequency (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
Innovations in business model	9	30
Innovations in marketing activities	19	63
Innovations in staff management	3	10
Innovations in financial management	9	30
New technologies	12	40
Innovations in the service process	11	37
New products	15	50
I do not need any kind of innovations	0	0
I do not know	2	7
Other (please specify)	0	0

Sources: developed by the author.

83% mentioned information technologies could help attract new partners and new tourists (Table 20).

**Table 20. The role of Information technologies in the business development**

Information technologies in the business development	Frequency (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
To make the work easier	21	70
To do better marketing	24	80
To attract new partners	25	83
To attract new tourists	25	83
I do not know	0	0
Other (please specify)	0	0

Sources: developed by the author.

93% mentioned that they need promotion through social networks for business development, and 87% mentioned that they need advertising (Table 21).

19 people responded to the question «What are the positive impacts of tourism?». The summary of the most frequent answers is the following:

- Organization of leisure, recognition of cultural heritage, homeland recognition.
- Economic growth, job creation, service sector development year by year, intercultural communication, the inflow of investments, development of infrastructures, etc.

- We present our culture, arts, and crafts through tourism, and the money received contributes to the development of the economy.
- Tourism stimulates the country's economy and creates new jobs. It is a stimulus for balanced development in communities and reduction of emigration.
- Sustainable development in communities.
- Intercultural contacts, increase of tolerance in the society.
- Popularization of different places, historical and cultural monuments, natural monuments, national customs, different branches of tourism, development of infrastructure, activation of rural communities.

**Table 21. Marketing steps for business promotion**

Marketing steps	Frequency (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
Advertising	26	87
Promotion through social networks	28	93
Advertising with the help of celebrities (influencer marketing)	15	50
Price discounts	5	17
Development of new products	17	57
Other (please specify)	0	0

Sources: developed by the author.

14 people responded to the question «What are the negative impacts of tourism?». The summary of the most frequent answers is the following:

- Spread of the virus in Covid-19 conditions.
- The spoil of the country's historical and cultural sites and the violation of environmental norms.
- Environmental pollution.
- Environmental damage, overuse of tourism resources (over-tourism) without considering their consequences or irrational use, implementation of tourism activities that are not in line with the specifics of the region (settlements, culture, etc.).

67% mentioned that they pay attention to environmental issues, 53% contribute to the development of local culture, 43% – to local employment growth (Table 22).

**Table 22. Applying the principles of sustainable tourism in the tourism business**

Principles of sustainable tourism	Frequency (Total 30 respondents, they could choose more than one option)	Percent
I do not apply them at all	0	0
I am not aware of the principles of sustainable tourism	4	13
I pay attention to environmental issues	20	67
I contribute to the development of local culture	16	53
I contribute to local employment growth	13	43
I use resources rationally	10	33
Other (please specify)	0	0

Sources: developed by the author.

The second part of the survey assessed the skills and competencies of females.

19 people responded to the question «What do you think are the most important skills to run a tourism business, and why?». The summary of the most frequent answers is the following:

- Management and marketing.
- Ability to solve problems, understand tourists' expectations, and have good communication skills.
- Be able to motivate your team properly and conduct training with guides so that guides never give wrong information to tourists.
- Knowledge.
- Targeted promotion.
- Excellent knowledge of internal offers and promotions on the Internet.
- Be flexible and informed, have a large circle of acquaintances.
- Active, knowledgeable, language proficiency, punctuality.
- Initiative, politeness, knowledge of languages.
- High human qualities polite approach is always and everywhere the most important.
- Creating a business network, providing high-quality services, communication culture.
- To be knowledgeable and hospitable to represent our guest house and an entire country so that they could come to Armenia again.
- The most important thing is to master tourism and business skills simultaneously because one without the other will lead to the failure of the business, regardless of the strength or interest of the business idea.
- Education, experience, marketing knowledge, proper time, and financial management.

All participants think there is a need to develop their (their staff) competencies and skills. The respondents mentioned the following skills and knowledge that they need to develop: SEO, professional knowledge to find «long-term» cooperation and partners, English language, innovation, business promotion, marketing and advertising, customer engagement, financial management, customer service, doing business, getting idea financing, creating a competitive business plan, expanding tourism knowledge, gaining some entrepreneurial skills, SMM knowledge, financial management (Table 23).

**Table 23. Evaluating the level of skills**

Skills	How would you rate the level of your skills? (Total 30 respondents)					Percent					Average rate
	1-very bad	2-bad	3-med.	4-good	5-exe-t	1-very bad	2-bad	3-med	4-good	5-exc-t	
	Skills for developing long-term strategies for my tourism business	1	8	12	8	1	3.3	26.7	40.0	26.7	
Skills for developing a business plan for my tourism business	1	11	10	6	2	3.3	36.7	33.3	20.0	6.7	2.90
Financial management skills to operate the tourism business (knowledge of sources of finance, pricing, financial planning, profit and loss, cash flow, etc.)	2	8	12	6	2	6.7	26.7	40.0	20.0	6.7	3.00
Marketing skills (knowledge of 7 P's)	3	10	11	4	2	10.0	33.3	36.7	13.3	6.7	2.73
Market research skills (SWOT, Benchmarking, competitor analysis, etc.)	4	6	9	8	3	13.3	20.0	30.0	26.7	10.0	3.00
Management skills to run the business successfully	1	8	8	9	4	3.3	26.7	26.7	30.0	13.3	3.23

Continued Table 23

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Skills for building partnerships	2	7	9	5	7	6.7	23.3	30.0	16.7	23.3	3.27
Networking and negotiation skills	3	7	10	5	5	10.0	23.3	33.3	16.7	16.7	3.07
Knowledge of laws and regulations of the sphere	4	10	6	8	2	13.3	33.3	20.0	26.7	6.7	2.80
Computer skills (MS office)	2	4	11	7	6	6.7	13.3	36.7	23.3	20.0	3.37
Digital marketing skills	4	7	12	5	2	13.3	23.3	40.0	16.7	6.7	2.80
Using web tools for business promotion (online booking, TripAdvisor, etc.)	4	8	11	5	2	13.3	26.7	36.7	16.7	6.7	2.77
Using social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) for business purposes (communication, marketing, networking, etc.)	1	8	10	9	2	3.3	26.7	33.3	30.0	6.7	3.10
Ability to use online tools for business promotion (placing adverts on the Internet, using emails, blogs, forums, etc.)	3	8	8	8	3	10.0	26.7	26.7	26.7	10.0	3.00
Ability to use mobile applications related to tourism	3	11	6	7	3	10.0	36.7	20.0	23.3	10.0	2.87
Knowledge of foreign languages	2	6	6	13	3	6.7	20.0	20.0	43.3	10.0	3.30
International marketing skills	6	11	9	4	0	20.0	36.7	30.0	13.3	0.0	2.37
Exploring and understanding customer needs and motivations	2	7	11	6	4	6.7	23.3	36.7	20.0	13.3	3.10
Understanding USP (unique selling point) and UBR (unique buying reason)	9	10	10	1	0	30.0	33.3	33.3	3.3	0.0	2.10
Skills of creating unique selling point	9	6	13	2	0	30.0	20.0	43.3	6.7	0.0	2.27
Tourism services providing skills	1	6	6	12	5	3.3	20.0	20.0	40.0	16.7	3.47
Communication skills (communication with a tourist, listening to him/her, understanding his/her problem, explaining or persuading him/her something, etc.)	2	4	6	7	11	6.7	13.3	20.0	23.3	36.7	3.70
Problem-solving skills	2	5	6	11	6	6.7	16.7	20.0	36.7	20.0	3.47
Administrative skills (making contracts, monitoring, etc.)	4	6	10	5	5	13.3	20.0	33.3	16.7	16.7	3.03

Continued Table 23

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Risk-taking skills	3	5	10	8	4	10.0	16.7	33.3	26.7	13.3	3.17
Team-building skills	2	5	8	7	8	6.7	16.7	26.7	23.3	26.7	3.47
Time management skills	2	4	10	9	5	6.7	13.3	33.3	30.0	16.7	3.37
Decision-making skills	1	5	8	8	8	3.3	16.7	26.7	26.7	26.7	3.57
Knowledge of sustainable tourism principles	2	9	9	5	5	6.7	30.0	30.0	16.7	16.7	3.07
Knowledge of tourism ethics	1	6	9	10	4	3.3	20.0	30.0	33.3	13.3	3.33
Awareness of local culture and values	2	4	6	8	10	6.7	13.3	20.0	26.7	33.3	3.67
Ability to get involved in the local community programs, events	3	3	7	12	5	10.0	10.0	23.3	40.0	16.7	3.43
Knowledge on how to support the local economy and the ability to do it	3	3	10	9	5	10.0	10.0	33.3	30.0	16.7	3.33
Ability to engage local communities in business	3	3	10	9	5	10.0	10.0	33.3	30.0	16.7	3.33
Knowledge on how to build on local strengths	3	4	12	7	4	10.0	13.3	40.0	23.3	13.3	3.17
Academic knowledge in tourism	4	5	10	7	4	13.3	16.7	33.3	23.3	13.3	3.07
Knowledge of the tax policy of the sphere	3	9	9	6	3	10.0	30.0	30.0	20.0	10.0	2.90
Skills for creating innovative tourism policy	3	9	13	2	3	10.0	30.0	43.3	6.7	10.0	2.77
Cooperation skills (with all stakeholders)	3	6	11	3	7	10.0	20.0	36.7	10.0	23.3	3.17
Fundraising skills	5	10	11	3	1	16.7	33.3	36.7	10.0	3.3	2.50
Knowledge of tourism statistics and statistical recording	5	9	11	3	2	16.7	30.0	36.7	10.0	6.7	2.60
Entrepreneurial skills	3	7	10	7	3	10.0	23.3	33.3	23.3	10.0	3.00
Knowledge of social entrepreneurship	3	7	10	8	2	10.0	23.3	33.3	26.7	6.7	2.97
Social entrepreneurship skills	3	8	12	5	2	10.0	26.7	40.0	16.7	6.7	2.83
Tourism product developing skills	3	6	10	9	2	10.0	20.0	33.3	30.0	6.7	3.03

Sources: developed by the author.

To the question «What additional skills or knowledge do you need to develop your business?» the following answers were gathered (Table 24):

- Cooperation with international tourism organizations to activate inbound tourism.
- New knowledge and skills.
- Skills in social entrepreneurship, finance, international, digital marketing.
- Basic knowledge of photography.
- Ethics of communicating with tourists, service, marketing and sales, restaurant management.



Table 24. Need to improve the skills

Skills	Would you like to improve these skills? (Total 30 respondents)			Percent		
	yes	no	I do not know	yes	no	I do not know
	Skills for developing long-term strategies for my tourism business	28	2	0	93.3	6.7
Skills for developing a business plan for my tourism business	27	3	0	90.0	10.0	0
Financial management skills to operate the tourism business (knowledge of sources of finance, pricing, financial planning, profit and loss, cash flow, etc.)	27	3	0	90.0	10.0	0
Marketing skills (knowledge of 7 P's)	28	2	0	93.3	6.7	0
Market research skills (SWOT, Benchmarking, competitor analysis, etc.)	26	4	0	86.7	13.3	0
Management skills to run the business successfully	27	3	0	90.0	10.0	0
Skills for building partnerships	25	4	1	83.3	13.3	3.3
Networking and negotiation skills	28	2	0	93.3	6.7	0
Knowledge of laws and regulations of the sphere	24	5	1	80.0	16.7	3.3
Computer skills (MS office)	25	4	1	83.3	13.3	3.3
Digital marketing skills	30	0	0	100.0	0	0
Using web tools for business promotion (online booking, TripAdvisor, etc.)	29	1	0	96.7	3.3	0
Using social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) for business purposes (communication, marketing, networking, etc.)	29	1	0	96.7	3.3	0
Ability to use online tools for business promotion (placing adverts on the Internet, using emails, blogs, forums, etc.)	28	2	0	93.3	6.7	0
Ability to use mobile applications related to tourism	27	2	1	90.0	6.7	3.3
Knowledge of foreign languages	28	2	0	93.3	6.7	0
International marketing skills	29	1	0	96.7	3.3	0
Exploring and understanding customer needs and motivations	27	2	1	90.0	6.7	3.3
Understanding USP (unique selling point) and UBR (unique buying reason)	29	1	0	96.7	3.3	0
Skills of creating unique selling point	29	1	0	96.7	3.3	0
Tourism services providing skills	26	3	1	86.7	10.0	3.3
Communication skills (communication with a tourist, listening to him/her, understanding his/her problem, explaining or persuading him/her something, etc.)	25	4	1	83.3	13.3	3.3
Problem-solving skills	25	4	1	83.3	13.3	3.3
Administrative skills (making contracts, monitoring, etc.)	25	5	0	83.3	16.7	0
Risk-taking skills	26	4	0	86.7	13.3	0
Team-building skills	26	3	1	86.7	10.0	3.3
Time management skills	26	3	1	86.7	10.0	3.3
Decision-making skills	26	3	1	86.7	10.0	3.3
Knowledge of sustainable tourism principles	26	3	1	86.7	10.0	3.3
Knowledge of tourism ethics	27	2	1	90.0	6.7	3.3
Awareness of local culture and values	26	4	0	86.7	13.3	0
Ability to get involved in the local community programs, events	25	4	1	83.3	13.3	3.3
Knowledge on how to support the local economy and the ability to do it	26	4	0	86.7	13.3	0
Ability to engage local communities in business	26	3	1	86.7	10.0	3.3
Knowledge on how to build on local strengths	26	4	0	86.7	13.3	0
Academic knowledge in tourism	26	4	0	86.7	13.3	0
Knowledge on the tax policy of the sphere	25	4	1	83.3	13.3	3.3

Continued Table 24

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Skills for creating innovative tourism policy		27	3	0	90.0	10.0	0
Cooperation skills (with all stakeholders)		26	4	0	86.7	13.3	0
Fundraising skills		28	1	1	93.3	3.3	3.3
Knowledge of tourism statistics and statistical recording		27	3	0	90.0	10.0	0
Entrepreneurial skills		26	4	0	86.7	13.3	0
Knowledge of social entrepreneurship		26	4	0	86.7	13.3	0
Social entrepreneurship skills		27	3	0	90.0	10.0	0
Tourism product developing skills		28	2	0	93.3	6.7	0

Sources: developed by the author.

Besides, the Pearson Chi-Square test was done to evaluate any significant relationship between some factors (Table 25).

Table 25. Pearson Chi-Square test results

	Pearson Chi-Square test	
	Value	Significance
Current business situation * Computer skills (MS office)	10.483	0.03
Current business situation * Time management skills	10.833	0.02
Current business situation * Knowledge on how to support the local economy and ability to do it	9.213	0.05
Current business situation * Ability to engage local communities in business	9.213	0.05
Current business situation * Fundraising skills	9.684	0.04

Sources: developed by the author.

The results showed that people who have or plan to start a business mainly mentioned average these skills. Also, there was no significant relationship between the age of the participants and the level of their skills.

**Conclusions.** The survey results indicate that women have many problems with starting a business. Also, they have problems with business development, innovations, marketing, attracting tourists, etc. The survey also reveals that they rate their skills level at a medium-rare. The majority wants to improve their skills for doing business, marketing, communication, analytical, decision-making, and other skills. Based on the analysis, the following suggestions could be made to promote female entrepreneurship in the tourism sphere of Armenia:

- Organize learning courses for women who want to start a business in tourism or already have an established business, which would provide knowledge on tourism, business, marketing, management, innovations, finance, etc. Besides, it would help improve the skills mentioned above in Table 24.

- Create an institutional system that would promote female entrepreneurship in tourism. For example, the state could give subsidies or privileges to women in regions who want to start a tourism business, as it would contribute to the social-economic development of communities.

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**Промоція жіночого підприємництва в туристичній індустрії для забезпечення сталого розвитку**

У статті висвітлено особливості та проблеми розвитку жіночого підприємництва в туризмі. Жіноче підприємництво є рушійною силою економічного розвитку, тому політика низки країн спрямована на підтримку та заохочення жіночого підприємництва та скорочення гендерного розриву. За результатами систематизації наукових джерел з означеної тематики встановлено, що науковці проявляють значний інтерес до дослідження питань просування жіночого підприємництва, у тому числі в туристичній індустрії. Визначено, що туризм має суттєве значення для сталого розвитку Республіки Вірменія, впливаючи на її соціальний, економічний та екологічний розвиток. Однак, результати проведеного дослідження засвідчили, що при відкритті туристичного бізнесу в Республіці Вірменія, перед жінками постає низка труднощів, зокрема: недостатнє фінансове забезпечення, відсутність необхідних знань та навичок у сферах менеджменту, маркетингу, організації бізнесу тощо. Метою статті є визначення ключових компетенцій та потреб, необхідних для ведення сталого підприємництва, а також підприємницьких навичок жінок у сфері туризму. У ході дослідження застосовано наступну логічну послідовність: 1) аналіз наукового доробку з окресленої проблематики; 2) аналіз функціонування туристичної галузі Республіки Вірменія; 3) опрацювання отриманих результатів. З метою визначення релевантних підприємницьких навичок, автором розроблено анкету, яка складається з 50 питань. Детерміновану вибірку даних сформовано на основі результатів анкетування 30 жінок, які ведуть або планують відкрити бізнес у туристичній індустрії. Практичну реалізацію всіх етапів дослідження здійснено з використанням кількісних та статистичних методів аналізу. Отримані результати дослідження дають підстави стверджувати, що жінки оцінюють рівень своїх підприємницьких навичок як середній. При цьому переважна кількість опитаних прагне удосконалити свої навички у веденні бізнесу, маркетингових комунікацій, аналітики, прийняття рішень тощо. Результати дослідження мають практичне значення і можуть бути основою для формування стратегії розвитку сталого жіночого підприємництва у туристичній індустрії.

**Ключові слова:** туризм, жінка, підприємництво, навички, знання, Республіка Вірменія.