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The significance of women's cooperatives in promoting the sustainability of local gastronomic products: The case of Bor women's agricultural development cooperative

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ABSTRACT

Women's cooperatives are organizations that support women in taking an active role in production and economic structure. Local products, on the other hand, are important tourist attraction elements that express the cultural structure specific to a destination. Women's cooperatives make it possible to use local gastronomic products as sustainable and touristic attractions. It is important to include women in planning within the framework of tourism in order to provide economic returns by using the female workforce effectively and efficiently. In this regard, it is aimed at determining the awareness and views of the Bor women's cooperative operating in the province of Niğde on the production and marketing of gastronomic products. Secondary data was used as the research method, and the survey technique, one of the quantitative research methods, was applied in the study. As a consequence of the research, it was concluded that the women working in the cooperative supported the production and marketing of local gastronomic products within the context of tourism, and some recommendations have been presented accordingly.

Keywords: tourism; gastronomy; local product marketing; women's cooperatives; regional development

1. Introduction

Cooperatives are recognized as the business model adopted by individuals around the world in order to develop and support themselves, their families, and the societies they represent. Women's cooperatives, on the other hand, are a subjective partnership system with strong outputs such as the visibility of labor, the achievement of economic freedom, the activation of managerial skills in a democratic environment, and the acquisition of socio-cultural and psychological gains in the process of women taking an active role in the labor market^[1-4]. In other words, women's cooperatives are the cornerstones of regional development, enabling gender equality, enabling women to acquire economic benefits and various employment opportunities, as well

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as contributing to increasing household income^[5,6]. Therefore, women tend to join women's cooperatives, which enable the transition from unregistered employment to a lucrative employment process where economic income can be achieved, promote equality of opportunity and gender equality, provide opportunities to gain managerial status in a participatory and free environment, and have positive effects on the level of regional development^[4,7–10].

As in the rest of the world, there is a similar situation for Turkey. Women have been excluded from the development process and therefore need to be included in overall development activities by incorporating them into the system^[11]. Especially the needs that emerged after the 17 August 1999 earthquake and the economic situation in that period made it necessary for women to be included in the production and marketing processes. Within the framework of the “Turkish Cooperative Strategies and Action Plan” prepared by the Ministry of Customs and Trade in Turkey for the period covering the years 2012–2016, the strategic approach to employing women under the umbrella of women's cooperatives in the process of promoting women's organizations, encouraging cooperation, and making women entrepreneurs the main actor of the economy has further encouraged women^[6,12,13]. In 2012, within the scope of Article 88 of the Cooperatives Law No. 1163, the “Women Entrepreneur Production and Business Cooperative Main Contract” was signed, granting legal status to women's cooperatives and introducing obligations^[5,6].

Women's cooperatives are characterized as a sustainable employment and economic development model. The most effective application areas for women's cooperatives are the destinations with developed production and marketing networks. Women's cooperatives are functional mechanisms in terms of bringing local gastronomic products to the fore, decreasing the unemployment rate, increasing household incomes, and balancing development differences between regions^[13]. In this respect, it can be stated that women's cooperatives, playing an active role in the production and marketing process of local gastronomic products, will make significant contributions. Not every product offered to guests in restaurants is considered to have a local gastronomic taste. Attracting the attention of gastronomy tourists by introducing local gastronomic products increases the number of tourists visiting the destinations. The production and marketing of local gastronomic products under protection will ensure their sustainable touristic and commercial value and the women's cooperatives that undertake the task of producing these products are also gaining recognition. This situation also provides economic income to the cooperative members^[14,15]. While a local gastronomic product creates awareness in terms of destination, it also helps to establish cultural ties between local people and visitors. Along with these effects, gastronomic products provide a competitive advantage between destinations^[10,16–19]. It is apparent that the role of women's cooperatives is considered crucial in the production and marketing of local gastronomic products.

In this study, the effects of the Bor Women's Agricultural Development Cooperative operating in the Bor District of Niğde Province on the production and marketing of local gastronomic products have been examined.

2. Local gastronomic products—Concepts of cooperatives and women's cooperatives and relational dimensions

Local gastronomic products are foods and beverages that a society consumes by preparing them with certain production techniques from the past to the present. These foods and beverages have a consumption culture, which includes their production processes, presentation, and rituals. This consumption culture has been adopted by the society^[15,19–21]. Therefore, Hjalager^[22] stated that local gastronomic products should be examined in four stages. These could be listed as:

- Local development stage: Locally unique fruits and vegetables, raw materials produced and sold in the destination,
- Horizontal development stage: Secondary products produced by the destination with its own characteristics and standards and offered to consumers (bread from wheat, wine from grapes, olive oil from olives, cheese from milk, etc.),
- Vertical development stage: Bringing the gastronomic products of the destination to the service of consumers by combining them with other touristic products such as festivals and sightseeing tours,
- Cross-development stage: Bringing the local flavors of the destination to the market through social media, training courses, workshops and creating an opportunity to be experienced by consumers^[15,22].

If the local cuisines of the destinations are examined, it might be observed that each of them has different cooking techniques, application equipment and presentation styles. These preparation and presentation methods are the values that add characteristic features to local tastes and regional gastronomy^[23]. The gastronomic products of a destination offer its visitors the opportunity to experience the cultural heritage transferred from the past to the present. This allows visitors to establish a cultural and sensory connection with the destination. Some of the studies regarding intentions revealed that the positive effects of the established ties strengthens the guest's intention to choose the destination again^[24-27]. Gastronomic products contribute to the image and touristic attractiveness of the destination. In this context, it is important to ensure accessibility to the destinations where gastronomic products are produced. At the same time, these destinations should be supported by tourism businesses that will meet the needs of tourists^[19,28-30].

“Co-operation”, which is a Latin word in origin, corresponds to expressions such as working together, cooperation, feeling of acting together and economic power union. In other words, a cooperative is an autonomous structure formed by individuals coming together in a democratic environment in order to find answers to their economic demands and expectations within the society^[31]. Cooperative movements started in the 19th century with the development of technology and the adoption of the industrial lifestyle. It might be stated that cooperative movements, with their multi-participation-oriented structure exceeding 3 million today, are the locomotive of strong organizations in terms of commercial, socio-cultural and economic aspects^[6,13,32-36].

The women's cooperative can be expressed as a production, marketing, sales and income generation mechanism established and operated by women, where women's economic and social needs can be met, supervision and management are provided by women^[4,37-39]. The Union of Women's Cooperatives (SIMURG: <https://simurg.org.tr/>) defines women's cooperatives as “the structures formed by women as a specific group in order to produce, develop and bring services and products to the market within the scope of needs, demands and priorities”^[39,40]. Women's cooperatives can be defined as entrepreneurial ventures that provide employment opportunities for women who typically have low levels of education and need to earn a modest income. The concept of economic violence is used to describe the situation where women are unable to receive payment for their labor or work in their desired fields^[41]. Cooperatives offer new entrepreneurship opportunities to women in this regard^[42]. It can be said that women's cooperatives play an active role in the national economy with their positive contributions such as gender equality, poverty reduction, fair income distribution and social capital increase^[5,6,11,13,33,37,39,42,43]. Women's cooperatives, which are accepted as an effective development tool and model practice in the European Union, come to the fore with their socio-cultural, economic, environmental and psychological effects. For this reason, the European Union declared 2012 as the “International Year of Women's Cooperatives” due to the decisive role of women's cooperatives in reducing poverty, increasing employment and sustainability of socio-economic development^[13,44].

Women’s cooperatives in Turkey started as a women’s unity movement in order to meet the needs arising after the 17 August 1999 earthquake, to achieve economic gains and to establish a unity of socio-cultural activities. The women’s cooperatives, which were put into practice by being bound to the Articles of Association of the Women, Environment, Culture and Business Cooperative in 2011, spread throughout Turkey, especially in the provinces of Istanbul and Izmir^[3,4,6,35,40,45-47]. In 2012, within the scope of Article 88 of the Cooperatives Law No. 1163, the Articles of Association of the Women’s Entrepreneurship Production and Business Cooperative was prepared and a regulation was introduced for the establishment of women’s cooperatives. By means of this contract, arrangements were made to determine and expand the fields of activity of women’s cooperatives^[4-6,46]. Established and continuing their activities throughout Turkey, women’s cooperatives support women by providing a wide field of work with a democratic participatory partnership system. Women who do not have a job can also make economic gains and contribute to the family budget by producing products outside of their education field through women’s cooperatives. In addition to these positive economic developments, women’s cooperatives play an active role in helping women become individuals who socialize, manage and produce actively^[39,40].

Women’s cooperatives carry out activities in the fields of trade, health, information and communication technologies, handicrafts, production and marketing of local gastronomic products, especially in the field of agricultural production and sales. Women’s cooperatives, which can appeal to large masses with their production diversity, increase the number of organizations every day^[13,33].

Production and marketing of local gastronomic products by women’s cooperatives will contribute to the competitiveness of regions in terms of tourism. It is predicted that this situation will also support an increase in the level of regional development^[48]. As indicated in **Table 1**, the use of local products as a marketing tool is important in terms of reducing the level of economic poverty and increasing employment^[13,49]. In the light of this information, it is predicted that accelerating the efforts for sustainable production intensity and market supply of local gastronomic products will have positive effects for the region. Ensuring the sustainability of local gastronomic products will increase the recognition of the destination by potential visitors. At the same time, gastronomic products will be able to turn into a destination attraction. In this way, it is thought that the economic structures of women’s cooperatives, which take an active role in the production and marketing process of local gastronomic products, will also strengthen^[15,50].

Table 1. Main effects of evaluating local gastronomic products in the production and marketing process

Social effects	Cultural effects	Economic effects
Preventing migration	Ensuring cultural continuity	Sustainable economic development
Developing a sense of local belonging	Transfer of traditions and traditions to future generations	Employment effect
Changing the role of women and disadvantaged groups	Cultural development	Economic added value
Social development	-	Local or destination branding
-	-	Development of the tourism sector
-	-	Reduction of poverty

Source: Marescotti^[49]: 3; Colinet^[51]: 11; Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu^[52]: 15–16; Hoşcan^[13].

Recent studies suggest that the success of touristic destinations is attributed to the diversity of their gastronomic heritage, as well as their natural and architectural advantages. Additionally, the ability of local people to use destination-specific culinary elements in regional restaurants is also a contributing factor^[53]. As of the 2000s, the interest in local gastronomic products has been increasing. Participation rates in gastronomy tourism are increasing with the aim of experiencing gastronomic products on-site for local and foreign visitors. This situation contributes to the standardization and protection of local gastronomic products. At the same time, it will provide economic benefits for women’s cooperatives involved in the production of these products.

It is thought that by strengthening the destination image of gastronomic products, an increase in the rate of re-preferability by tourists will be achieved^[15,54]. Therefore, it can be said that it is important for destination marketing to bring sustainability to the production and marketing process of local gastronomic products with women's cooperatives, to protect the heritage of local gastronomic products and to transfer them to future generations with standard recipes^[15,55,56].

3. Legal foundations, financial resources and establishment purposes of cooperatives

Cooperatives established for the production and marketing of local gastronomic products must be subject to the permission of the Ministry of Customs and Trade, General Directorate of Cooperatives, according to the Cooperatives Law No. 1163^[13,33].

Women's cooperatives need to fulfill their financial obligations and create capital (building, material and equipment, fixed and current assets, etc.), as in businesses established to provide services within the framework of certain purposes and to obtain economic benefits. Factors such as the amount of gastronomic product to be produced, the need for material and equipment, the anticipated business volume, and the income-expenditure balance in the short-medium-long terms are the issues to be considered in the creation of the needed capital. The resources of cooperatives are classified as follows by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Customs and Trade, General Directorate of Cooperatives (2012)^[6,13,33]:

- Equity Resources; capital, dues, membership fees, reserves, funds, etc.
- External Resources; bank loans, financial support programs

The duties of women's cooperatives have been determined within the scope of the purposes in their regulations. Depending on these purposes, one of the duties of women's cooperatives is to ensure the production, marketing and sale of gastronomic products. In this context, the General Directorate of Cooperatives of the Ministry of Customs and Trade published the Production and Marketing Cooperatives Agreement in 2012 and determined a roadmap for cooperatives. According to the regulation, some functions of cooperatives might be listed as follows:

- Take an intermediary role in the supply of gastronomic materials and application equipment, which must be used by the cooperative partners in the production process, at affordable prices;
- Provide the necessary facilities in the process of researching the demand in the market, producing the products suitable for the demand and supplying the produced gastronomic products to the market and performs intermediary services;
- Provide packaging/packaging, stacking, storage and transportation of the gastronomic products produced by the partners in accordance with market quality standards and technical demands;
- Perform establishment activities by establishing cooperation and consortia with other cooperatives that are established and serve for similar purposes;
- Undertake pricing for gastronomic product, which is the determinant of market conditions;
- Stabilize economic fluctuations and undertake the guarantee in return for the loan requirements of its partners;
- Create funds within the scope of objectives, mediate product-oriented insurance transactions of partners producing gastronomic products suitable for the same purposes;
- Purchase or rent necessary vehicles, real estates, businesses in accordance with the purposes, establishing social facilities by developing a dealership network; maintains the operation by establishing maintenance and repair centers, liaison and sales offices;

- Make loan attempts by contacting financial institutions in line with the needs, manage the use of the loan provided in a suitable and purposeful way;
- Participate in production and marketing-oriented top organizations in order to be in a dominating position in market management;
- In line with the demands of the partners, they carry out the organization of trainings on the production and marketing process of gastronomic products, research and development studies and preparation of publications for production^[13,33].

4. Bor women's agricultural development cooperative and gastronomic products produced by the cooperative

Bor Women's Agricultural Development Cooperative was established in March 2021 with the joint participation of 15 individuals, including 7 founders and 8 members. As of 2023, it continues its activities with 20 partners. The major aims of the cooperative are; to create an environment for women to spend their free time by providing employment opportunities, to provide added value to the local economy, to reveal the forgotten values of Anatolia and Niğde province. The main field of activity of the cooperative includes drying all kinds of fruits and vegetables grown in the region, local home cooking and local carpet weaving (hand weaving) production and marketing. Some of the local products produced within the cooperative and their local names can be exemplified as follows. (Brief information about the products and their preparation was provided by the president of the cooperative.)

- **Noodle (Erişte)**

It is made by rolling the hard dough kneaded with flour, salt and egg, tempered on the plate (very lightly) and finely cut.

- **Kibbeh (İçli Köfte)**

Fist sized bulgur balls are filled with seasoned minced meat. Soft outer dough is prepared from bulgur, semolina, cırıř (a kind of cracked wheat), flour, eggs and tomato paste. Onion, minced meat, spices, walnuts and finely chopped parsley are thoroughly roasted for the filling. It takes its final shape in the hands of the women in the cooperative.

- **Meat pasty, Turkish dumplings (Mantı)**

Hard dough is kneaded with flour, egg and water and the dough is rolled out and divided into small squares. Onion, minced meat and spice mixture is prepared and put into it and shaped by hand.

- **Stuffed vine leaves (Yaprak Sarması)**

It is a dish prepared by putting a mixture of roasted rice, onion, pomegranate syrup, olive oil and spices in the stemless and thin leaves collected from the vineyards in the region, wrapped in finger thickness and cooked.

- **Thick soup with meatballs (Sulu Köfte)**

It is formed by adding ground beef, onion, bulgur, semolina, egg and spices and kneading, and then taking the form of small marbles in the hands of women.

- **Tandoor—Earth oven bread (Tandır Ekmeđi)**

It is a product made by cooking and drying phyllo dough prepared with whole wheat flour by hand in wood fire.

5. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to reveal the roles of Bor Women’s Agricultural Development Cooperative members in the production and marketing of local gastronomic products in Niğde province. The universe and sample of the study consists of 20 women who are joint members of the Bor Women’s Agricultural Development Cooperative. As the data collection method of the study, primary and secondary data were used within the scope of the research. In the first phase of the research, the literature was scanned, conceptual frameworks and previous studies were examined and compiled. In the second phase of the research, Bor Women’s Agricultural Development Cooperative was visited and the management and members of the cooperative were interviewed individually. After obtaining general information about the cooperative during the visit process, local gastronomic products produced within the cooperative were determined and recorded. In the third phase of the research, the semi-structured interview technique, one of the quantitative research methods, was used. Within the scope of the survey technique, specific questions were prepared by the researchers for the members of the cooperative by probing similar studies^[57–60]. 30-minute interviews were held with women who are members of the cooperative to fill out the study questionnaires and to evaluate the gastronomic products of the region. The questionnaire was sent to Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee for evaluation. With the ethics committee decision dated 28 July 2023 and numbered 6 October 2023, data collection was deemed appropriate. Between 28 July 2023 and 10 August 2023, the findings of the questionnaires filled in by 20 members of the Bor Women’s Agricultural Development Cooperative partnership were recorded, analyzed, and interpreted.

6. Findings and analysis

Demographic characteristics and the findings of the questions related to the study are consolidated as in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Demographic features.

		Frequency	Percent %	Cumulative percent
Age	18–25			
	26–33			
	34–41	4	20.0	20.0
	42–49	12	60.0	80.0
	50 and more	4	20.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0
Education	Primary school	4	20.0	20.0
	Secondary education			
	High school	10	50.0	70.0
	Higher education	6	30.0	100.0
	Master’s or PhD			
	Total	20	100.0	100.0
Income level	2.000–3.999	16	80.0	80.0
	4.000–5.999	4	20.0	100.0
	6.000–7.999			
	8.000–9.999			
	10.000 and more			
	Total		100.0	100.0
Term of office in the cooperative	1–6 months			
	7–12 months	4	20.0	20.0
	13–18 months	8	40.0	60.0
	19–24 months			
	25 and more months	8	40.0	100.0
	Total		100.0	100.0

Based on the information presented in **Table 2** and examining the data regarding the ages of the participants in the study, it can be observed that all of the participants were women over the age of 35. If the

educational status of the participants is examined, it is evident that a big majority of them are women who graduated from high school and above, and only 20% of them are women who are primary school graduates. Looking at the income status of the participants in the study, it was concluded that all of the participants were earning less than 6,000,00 TL. Regarding the service period of the individuals participating in the study in the cooperative, it was observed that 80% of them have been working for more than 12 months, and only 20% of them have been working in the cooperative for less than 12 months.

Responses gathered revealed that a big majority of cooperative members are generally middle-aged women. It is apparent that most of the women who are members of the cooperative have a high school or higher education level. This situation can reveal the interpretation that the awareness of having local culinary culture increases with education. When the income situation is examined, it can be said that women in the economically low-income group contribute to their family budgets by producing handcrafted products through cooperatives. Regarding to the tenure of the women participating in the study, it might be stated that the study suggestions were responded by people who have experience in cooperatives.

In **Table 3**, it can be observed that all participants in the study responded strongly to the propositions “I support the process of production and marketing of local gastronomic products” and “production and marketing of local gastronomic products contribute to increasing women’s employment”. According to the answers given to the proposition “I share my knowledge and experience with others during the production and marketing of local gastronomic products”, it was concluded that 40% of the participants could share their knowledge and experience with others, while 60% were undecided about sharing their knowledge and experience with others. According to the responses given to the propositions “I believe that the projects prepared and implemented for the production and marketing process of local gastronomic products are sufficient” and “I think that local governments and NGOs fulfill their duties in the production and marketing process of local gastronomic products”; It was concluded that 20% of the participants reported positively, while 80% reported negatively. All of the participants responded positively to the propositions “Local gastronomic products should be kept alive by establishing a Gastronomy House in cooperation with women’s cooperatives and local governments in the process of production and marketing of local gastronomic products” and “Festivals should be organized in cooperation with women’s cooperatives and local governments in the process of production and marketing of local gastronomic products.”

Table 3. Study suggestions and answers on local gastronomic products.

			Frequency	Percent %	Cumulative percent
1	I support the production and marketing of local gastronomic products.	Absolutely I agree	20	100.0	100.0
		I agree			
		I'm undecided			
		I do not agree			
		I strongly disagree			
		Total	20	100.0	100.0
2	The process of production and marketing of local gastronomic products contributes to increasing female employment.	Absolutely I agree	20	100.0	100.0
		I agree			
		I'm undecided			
		I do not agree			
		I strongly disagree			
		Total	20	100.0	100.0
3	I share my knowledge and experience with others during the production and marketing of local gastronomic products.	Absolutely I agree	4	20.0	20.0
		I agree	4	20.0	40.0
		I'm undecided	12	60.0	100.0
		I do not agree			
		I strongly disagree			
		Total	20	100.0	100.0

Table 3. (Continued).

		Frequency	Percent %	Cumulative percent
4	I believe that the projects prepared and implemented for the production and marketing of local gastronomic products are sufficient.	Absolutely I agree		
		I agree	4	20.0
		I'm undecided		
		I do not agree	8	40.0
		I strongly disagree	8	40.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0
5	I think that local governments and NGOs fulfill their responsibilities in the production and marketing of local gastronomic products.	Absolutely I agree		
		I agree	4	20.0
		I'm undecided		
		I do not agree	8	40.0
		I strongly disagree	8	40.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0
6	In the process of production and marketing of local gastronomic products. local gastronomic products should be established by establishing a "gastronomy house" in cooperation with women's cooperatives and local governments.	Absolutely I agree	20	100.0
		I agree		
		I'm undecided		
		I do not agree		
		I strongly disagree		
	Total	20	100.0	100.0
7	During the production and marketing of local gastronomic products. festivals should be organized in cooperation with women's cooperatives and local governments.	Absolutely I agree	20	100.0
		I agree		
		I'm undecided		
		I do not agree		
		I strongly disagree		
	Total	20	100.0	100.0

Considering the data of the first two propositions, it can be thought that women who are cooperative workers support the production and marketing of these products due to their economic and social contributions. It is seen that the region is in a rapid development process in terms of infrastructure and superstructure. This process also affects social and cultural values. The emergence of awareness about gastronomic products has supported the increase in production in cooperatives. However, a professional team, equipment, and support are needed for mass production and marketing. Financial inadequacies, equipment deficiencies, and the need for professional support in marketing emerge as important problems of cooperative members in the production and marketing process. Eliminating these problems will provide economic advantages by increasing gastronomic awareness in the region. At the same time, it can be concluded that the production and marketing of local products has emerged as an important additional source of income for women in the region. The findings of the third proposition reveal that individuals who have the knowledge about the production of local delicacies are hesitant to share this knowledge. This situation may create a disadvantage in the marketing and promotion of gastronomic values. In order to prevent this situation, it should be ensured that the information shared with the members of the cooperative will reach the relevant people through reliable sources. The members are reluctant to share their food production skills, which they have developed through their own knowledge and experience, directly with others. They think that providing all the information about the preparation processes of these dishes and the ingredients used in them will negatively affect product sales. Sharing information about the meals with the participants in a single workshop training may have an effect on reducing the rate of product demand from the cooperative. This situation creates hesitations about cooperative member women sharing information about gastronomic products. In order to prevent this situation, economic guarantees may be considered to ensure the sustainability of gastronomic product production of member women, and regular monthly income guarantees may be given. Regular purchases of products produced in cooperatives by public institutions (such as municipal cafes and cafeterias) and guaranteeing this situation with contracts can help eliminate member women's hesitations about organizing events such as workshops and sharing information. At the same time, producers should be provided with financial gain in return for the information they share. The result in the fourth proposition shows that the expectations of the producer women

about the proper and correct evaluation of the products they produce are not met. When the results of the fifth proposition are examined, it is concluded that the cooperative producers cannot receive sufficient support from the local governments in the production and marketing of the products. It might be thought that this situation is also the source of the indecision about information sharing in the third proposition. Producers who receive sufficient support and encouragement will not hesitate to share their knowledge and experience. Based on the answers provided in response to the sixth proposition, it is evident that the participants support the idea of ensuring that products are securely delivered to future generations and gastronomy enthusiasts through the use of the ‘Gastronomy House’ platform. From the seventh proposition, it is understood that the participants support and cooperate with the activities to be held for the marketing of the local products they produce.

It is apparent that all the participants in the study responded strongly to the proposition “Local gastronomic products can be brought into the economy at a high rate through women’s cooperatives.” The responses given by the individuals participating in the study to the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th propositions in **Table 4** were positive, in the form of agree and absolutely agree.

Table 4. Propositions and responses for women’s cooperatives.

		Frequency	Percent %	Cumulative percent	
1	Local gastronomic products can be brought into the economy at a high rate through women’s cooperatives.	Absolutely I agree	20	100.0	100.0
		I agree			
		I’m undecided			
		I do not agree			
		I strongly disagree			
		Total	20	100.0	100.0
2	The process of production and marketing of local gastronomic products through women’s cooperatives will ensure the protection of local gastronomic products.	Absolutely I agree	16	80.0	80.0
		I agree	4	20.0	100.0
		I’m undecided			
		I do not agree			
		I strongly disagree			
		Total	20	100.0	100.0
3	The process of production and marketing of local gastronomic products by women’s cooperatives is important for the promotion of Niğde province and Bor district.	Absolutely I agree	16	80.0	80.0
		I agree	4	20.0	100.0
		I’m undecided			
		I do not agree			
		I strongly disagree			
		Total	20	100.0	100.0
4	The production and marketing of local gastronomic products by women’s cooperatives ensures the development of gastronomic tourism in Niğde province and Bor district.	Absolutely I agree	16	80.0	80.0
		I agree	4	20.0	100.0
		I’m undecided			
		I do not agree			
		I strongly disagree			
		Total	20	100.0	100.0
5	The process of production and marketing of local gastronomic products by women’s cooperatives brings more tourists traveling for the purpose of gastronomy to Niğde province and Bor district.	Absolutely I agree	16	80.0	80.0
		I agree	4	20.0	100.0
		I’m undecided			
		I do not agree			
		I strongly disagree			
		Total	20	100.0	100.0

The propositions presented in **Table 4** and the responses provided by the cooperative members indicate that women believe the products they create through women’s cooperatives will enhance the gastronomy of

the city and the region. It can be inferred that their focus is on ensuring the continuity of these products through cooperatives to assess the gastronomic potential of the region and pass it on to future generations.

The cooperative's management and members were unwilling to share their economic gains from the products directly, as they fell within the scope of the cooperative's trade secrets. However, they stated that the demand for gastronomic products such as pastries and desserts increases significantly during Ramadan, holidays, and summer months when events such as weddings and meetings are more common. Additionally, it was noted that during the summer months, vegetables and fruits are dried and stored for winter consumption, and during the winter months, the dishes made from these products are in high demand.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

Specific and focused examinations regarding the inclusion of women's cooperatives and women's workforce in the production and marketing of gastronomic products have been conducted through this study. When the findings of the study are analyzed, it is obvious that the members of women's cooperatives support gastronomic production and are open to cooperation at the marketing level. It is also among the findings of the research that they expect support from local governments and NGOs in the process of promoting gastronomic products. It has also been observed that the members are hesitant to share their knowledge and experience about gastronomic products. At this point, the establishment of gastronomy houses and the support provided by local governments become important. The members, who expect to receive production and marketing support as a result of the information they share, are of great importance for sustainable local gastronomy and tourism.

The use of the products of the members of women's cooperatives in the promotion of the region in terms of gastronomic support not only supports sustainable gastronomy and tourism but also allows women to create additional income for their households. It might be clearly stated that this situation creates social, cultural, and economic benefits by encouraging local production.

Recommendations based on these conclusions might be listed as follows:

- Establishing economic units or various types of entities to promote gastronomic products to be produced by local governments and non-governmental organizations through women's cooperatives;
- Supporting the promotion of local gastronomic products with festivals, workshops, and social organizations;
- Ensuring that the gastronomic knowledge and experiences of the members of the women's cooperative are transformed into written sources and transferred to future generations and gastronomy followers;
- Involving women more in the production process in the organizations to be held in the region;
- Establishing Gastronomy Houses and ensuring that the products offered here are produced by women's cooperatives.

8. Limitations and future research directions

This study entails several limitations and implications for future research. The current research was conducted in the province of Niğde. The research was conducted on the Bor women's cooperative, as it is an organization operating in the region based on gastronomic products. In this respect, it may be difficult to generalize the research findings as they reflect the cultural, social, and economic structure of the region. In future studies on the subject, the data can be expanded by taking into account the regional economic development level and cultural infrastructure, and a more general structure can be created for the results. By

conducting similar studies on the units established in different regions, it is possible to reach more general conclusions.

Moreover, future studies that will record the number and content of the products produced in cooperatives can be carried out to contribute to the literature on sustainable gastronomic products.

Institutional review board statement

Not applicable due to the use secondary data sets.

Informed consent statement

Not applicable.

Data availability statement

The data analyzed during this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Author contributions

Conceptualization, HA and KAA; methodology, AA and ISC; validation, HK and AK; investigation, KAA and ISC; resources, HA, KAA and HK; data curation, AA and AK; writing—original draft preparation, HA, KAA and HK; writing—review and editing, HA, AA and HK; visualization, HK and AK; supervision, HA and HK All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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