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Yasin AKKUŞ
PhD (Business Administration), Uzunköprü Vocational College, Trakya University, Uzunköprü, Edirne, Turkiye, postal code 22030 (yasinakkus@trakya.edu.tr)

ORCID: 0000-0003-3225-4251

Kıymet ÇALIYURT
PhD (Accounting & Finance), Professor, Faculty of Business Administration and Economics, Trakya University, Edirne, Turkiye, postal code 22030 (kiymetcaliyurt@trakya.edu.tr)

ORCID: 0000-0002-4662-8878

Ясін АККУС
доктор філософії (бізнес-адміністрування), Професійний коледж Узункопру, Тракійський університет, м. Узункопру, провінція Едірне, Туреччина, індекс 22030 (yasinakkus@trakya.edu.tr)

ORCID: 0000-0003-3225-4251

Кимет КАЛІЮРТ
доктор філософії (облік і фінанси), професор факультету ділового адміністрування та економіки, Тракійський університет, м. Едірне, Туреччина, індекс 22030 (kiymetcaliyurt@trakya.edu.tr)

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PROFILE OF ENTREPRENEURS IN THE CLASSICAL AGE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE ACCORDING TO *MUHIMME*[1] REGISTERS (1558 – 1597)

Abstract. The purpose of the article *is to uncover the profile of entrepreneurs in the Ottoman Empire's classical age. The Ottoman Empire's entrepreneurial history is usually considered as a single period and a whole. Without taking into account the archive data, evaluations illustrate the Ottoman Empire's entrepreneurial characteristics in the after 18th century. Muhimme records are supposed to provide crucial clues concerning the Ottoman Empire's entrepreneurship prior to the 18th century.* ***The methodological basis*** *of the research is content analysis with MaxQDA. The muhimme registers between the years 1558 – 1597 (according to hijri[2] calendar: 966 – 1005) were evaluated using content*

[1] *Muhimme* records or *muhimme* registers are records in which the decisions taken by the Sultan and the Government Assembly *(Divan-i Humayun)* in the Ottoman Empire are written. The word *mühimme* has the same origin as the Arabic word *mühim*, which means important. Kütükoğlu, M. S. (2020). Mühimme Defteri. In *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi.

[2] It is a calendar system that considers the migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina (20 September 622) as the beginning and is based on the orbit of the Moon around the Earth. 1 year is 354 days and consists of 12 months. Unat, Y. (2004). İslâm'da ve Türklerde zaman ve takvim. In O. Öcal (Ed.), *Türk Dünyası Nevruz Ansiklopedisi* (pp. 15–24).

analysis. A total of 68 muhimme registers were examined and rated in areas of entrepreneurship, partnership, entrepreneur belief, and currency. ***Conclusions.*** *In the study, strong conclusions are reached that Muslim Turkish entrepreneurs played an important role in the region in the mentioned period. According to the research, there are several reasons why the time between 1558 and 1578 in the muhimme registers are more intense than the period between 1579 and 1597. The Ottoman Empire and European countries (particularly Portugal and Spain) fought for political and commercial control in the Mediterranean and North African coasts from 1558 to 1578, which is perhaps the most important of these causes. According to the findings, statements that there were no or a small number of Muslim Turkish entrepreneurs in the Ottoman Empire throughout the era studied are false. On the contrary, evidence suggests that Muslim Turkish traders are engaged in brisk business in the MENA region, the Black Sea, and the Adriatic Sea. There are also indicators that the Muslim Turkish businesspeople named have a significant quantity of money. Given that the study in question merely gives a prognosis for the time period under consideration (1558 – 1597), muhimme registers are expected to offer numerous further research opportunities to academics interested in studying Ottoman entrepreneurs. Muhimme registers from the 17th and 18th centuries which were not included in the study because they were regarded outside the classical period, can be used as an example.*

Key words: *Entrepreneurship; Muhimme Registers; Ottoman Empire; Classical Age; Content Analysis.*

ПРОФІЛЬ ПІДПРИЄМЦІВ КЛАСИЧНОЇ ЕПОХИ ОСМАНСЬКОЇ ІМПЕРІЇ ЗА РЕЄСТРАМИ МУГІММЕ (1558 – 1597)

Анотація. Метою статті *є розкриття профілю підприємців класичної доби Османської імперії. Історію підприємництва Османської імперії зазвичай розглядають як єдиний період і як єдине ціле. Не беручи до уваги архівні дані, оцінки ілюструють підприємницькі характеристики Османської імперії після XXVIII ст. Уважається, що записи Мугімме надають ключові підказки щодо підприємницької діяльності Османської імперії до XXVIII ст.* ***Методологічною основою дослідження*** *є контент-аналіз за допомогою MaxQDA. Реєстри Мугімме між 1558 – 1597 рр. (згідно з календарем хіджри: 966 – 1005) були оцінені за допомогою контент-аналізу. Загалом було досліджено та оцінено 68 реєстрів Мугімме у сферах підприємництва, партнерства, віри підприємця та валюти.* ***Висновки****. У дослідженні зроблені переконливі висновки, що турецькі мусульманські підприємці в згаданий період відігравали у регіоні важливу роль . Згідно з дослідженням, є кілька причин, чому час між 1558 і 1578 рр. в реєстрах Мугімме є більш інтенсивним, ніж період між 1579 і 1597 рр. Османська імперія та європейські країни (зокрема, Португалія та Іспанія) боролися за політичний і комерційний контроль на узбережжі Середземного моря та Північної Африки з 1558 до 1578 р., що є, мабуть, найважливішою з цих причин. Відповідно до висновків, твердження про те, що підприємців-мусульман-турків в Османській імперії протягом всієї досліджуваної епохи не було або їх було небагато, є неправдивими. Навпаки, дані засвідчують, що турецькі мусульмани ведуть активний бізнес у регіоні MENA, Чорному та Адріатичному морях. Також є ознаки того, що названі мусульманські турецькі бізнесмени мають багато грошей. Враховуючи, що дослідження, про яке йде мова, лише дає прогноз на аналізований період (1558 – 1597), очікується, що реєстри Мугімме запропонують численні подальші дослідницькі можливості для науковців, зацікавлених у вивченні османських підприємців. Як приклад можна використати реєстри Мугімме з XXVII та XXVIII ст., які не були включені в дослідження, оскільки розглядалися поза класичним періодом.*

Ключові слова: *підприємництво; реєстри Мугімме; Османська імперія; Класична епоха; Аналіз вмісту.*

Problem Statement. When assessing the history of entrepreneurship in Anatolia and its environs, the time before to the 20th century was practically overlooked (Kamaç, & Kişma, 2020, p. 136), and it was believed that non-Muslims dominated entrepreneurship throughout the Ottoman Empire (1299 – 1922) (Aşkın et al., 2011, p. 62). It has long been stated that Muslim prefer farming, military service, and civil service to the business (Bailey, 1942,

pp. 78–79; Çakırer, 2016, pp. 13–14; Durukan, 2006, p. 27; Geyikdagi, & Geyikdagi, 2011, pp. 376–377; Tutar, & Altınkaynak, 2014, pp. 9–10). The expansion of the 18th and 19th century period, in which foreigners and non-Muslims had a say in enterprise in the Ottoman Empire (Vlami, & Mandouvalos, 2013, p. 99), to preceding centuries without the foundation is regarded to be due to two things. One of these, it could be claimed, is that business history research is limited in comparison to other areas of business. Another factor is that researchers have yet to thoroughly analyze the Ottoman Empire archives pertaining to entrepreneurial operations in Anatolia and its environs (Akkuş, & Menteş, 2018, p. 170). While many scholarly studies have been conducted on the Ottoman Empire's trade with Europe (İnalcık, 2000a; Köse, 2005; Mantran, 1987; Şenyurt, 2013; Turan, 1968), the Ottoman Empire's internal trade and foreign trade with Egypt, Iran, and India have been overlooked. The plethora of comprehensive reports from European traders and officials is one of the reasons behind this. Another factor is that academics prefer European-language reports to those produced in other languages. With the rise of research based on Ottoman Empire sources, foreign trade and domestic trade outside of Europe began to be comprehended (Quataert, 2006, p. 943).

By analyzing the *muhimme* registries in which the Ottoman Empire's *Divan-i Humayun* (government assembly) decisions are penned, this study aims to expose the profile of a 16th century entrepreneur working in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This profile assesses the entrepreneurs' styles of entrepreneurship, partnership models, beliefs, and currencies, as well as their interpersonal ties.

The aim of this research is to find answers to the following research questions:

What are the prominent types of entrepreneurship in the classical era of the Ottoman Empire (16th century)?

Which partnership structures do entrepreneurs prefer?

How do entrepreneurs relate to the currencies used?

What kind of profile do entrepreneurs draw according to their beliefs?

Is it possible to provide evidence from the classical age to the claim that Muslim Turks did not prefer entrepreneurship in the Ottoman Empire?

By answering these research questions, it is aimed to eliminate the deficiencies in the literature evaluating entrepreneurship in the Ottoman Empire. In particular, it is aimed to bring an alternative to the evaluation of entrepreneurship in the Ottoman Empire as a single dimension. By examining the archive records of the period, it will be possible to evaluate entrepreneurship in the Ottoman Empire under different dimensions. It is thought that the archive records provide first-hand and direct information, like the *muhimme* registers, is very important in explaining the entrepreneurship of the period. By revealing the profiles of the entrepreneurs in the classical period, important contributions will be made to the history of business.

Review of Research and Publications.

Literature evaluating entrepreneurship in the Ottoman Empire. In the studies dealing with entrepreneurship in the Ottoman Empire, it is striking that the empire, which has more than 6 centuries between its establishment and abolition, is evaluated as a whole. Selected quotations as examples of this are presented below:

The most cursory study of Turkish commerce proves that the Turks as a people were not a nation of traders. That as individuals they drove shrewd bargains, no traveler in Turkey would dispute; but collectively, when compared with some of the western states, they appear most uncommercial (Bailey, 1942, p. 463).

While the Greeks, Jews and Armenians took over the trade in the Ottoman Empire, the Turks were directed to jobs such as military service, academician, bureaucracy, agriculture and animal husbandry (Durukan, 2006, p. 27).

It is striking that the period evaluated in some studies has been extended to include other periods as well:

Ottoman Empire's decantralization process started in the 17th century and peaked in the 18th century… On the other hand it was reached that necessary basic conditions (market and the profit/loss motive) did not occur for the development of an entrepreneurial class (Güven, 2016, p. 63).

In addition to all these, it is possible to see different approaches to the classical period of the Ottoman Empire from the historians who examine the archive records:

... Significant amounts of food and manufactured goods, especially textiles, were coming to Crimea from various Anatolian cities. These goods were usually brought by Anatolian Muslim traders (Faroqhi, 2014, p. 360).

When the quotations, examples of which are shared above, are evaluated, it is seen that there are two different approaches to entrepreneurship in the Ottoman Empire. The first approach is a holistic view that there was no Muslim Turkish entrepreneurial class in the Ottoman Empire and that entrepreneurship was mostly done by non-Muslims and foreigners. The second approach is evaluations based on archival records. However, it can be said that the first approach is mostly encountered in studies dealing with the history of business and entrepreneurship. It would be appropriate to say that the second approach is limited (Akkuş & Menteş, 2018, p. 170).

Entrepreneurship in the 16th Century. The definition of entrepreneurship has evolved over time, moving through various stages to arrive at its current meaning. While Richard Cantillon (2010, pp. 29–30) described entrepreneurship as a person who seeks out possibilities and takes risks in order to generate money, Joseph A. Schumpeter (2000) interpreted this within the context of innovation and coined the term "destructive entrepreneurship". When the term "entrepreneurship" is used in the twentieth and twenty-first century, concepts similar to Schumpeter's are understood (Hagedoorn, 1996, pp. 883–886). However, it is believed that the definition of innovation-based entrepreneurship represents today's perspective and will not adequately encompass the 15th and 17th centuries, which predate the industrial revolution. In this context, it is thought that evaluating from Cantillon's standpoint, which is thought to better reflect the period's entrepreneurship concept, will yield a better outcome (Döm Tomak, 2015, p. 3). In addition, the terms Entrepreneur and bourgeois are often used interchangeably in the economic sciences (Özer, 2001, p. 166). With this popular perception, the entrepreneur is usually regarded as well-to-do and a member of the top class. Those Cantillon (2010, p. 31) who buy/produce things from the provinces, on the other hand, are mentioned as entrepreneurs and traders who bring them to the town's market once or twice a week and sell them. As a result, it is incorrect to describe an entrepreneur as a person who only belongs to a specific social class. Large entrepreneurs were in the minority in 18th century England, with the exception of a few cloth merchants and dealers interested in overseas commerce. It is also reported that in the 18th century, the largest firms in Amsterdam employed no more than 30 workers (Braudel, 2017, p. 431). Based on this, entrepreneurship between the 15th and 17th centuries can be defined as modest economic entities that try to make a profit by taking a risk, and whose operations are primarily carried out by family members, engaged in crafts or local or foreign trade.

Entrepreneurial Structure in the Ottoman Empire During the Classical Age. Trade, one of the characteristics of entrepreneurship, is evident throughout the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic States it inherited (İnalcık, 2000b). In fiqh books, commercial rules, prohibitions, restrictions, and legal implications are all detailed. The presence of debtors and travelers in the consumption of zakat-eligible commodities improves the entrepreneurs' bravery (Kallek, 2012). The merchant would be supported and protected, and this trade would provide prosperity and cheapness to the country, according to the advice given to the Ottoman Emperor in the second half of the 15th century (Braudel, 2017, p. 556).

It is clear that traders were an essential part of the Ottoman Empire's local economy. Furthermore, their actions can raise the price of raw materials and have a negative impact on the activities of local traders. Controlling the merchants is another responsibility that the central authority values just as much as safeguarding them. It is thought that whereas the Ottoman authority had little trouble regulating artisans, merchants were more difficult to regulate (Pamuk, 2005, pp. 8–9).

When it comes to overseas trade, the Ottoman Empire's merchants are known to have dealt directly with European governments. Even the participation of Turkish and Iranian merchants at Italian fairs reached a level that threatened Venice's trade (İnalcık, 2014, p. 274). The concessions between the Ottoman Empire and Venice are the cause of this. The concessions that were initially unilateral and in Venice's favor were later negotiated as joint concessions. The stipulations indicate that Ottoman merchants should not be prohibited from using the free trade advantages provided to Venetians in any way and that no customs duty should be paid on goods sent for sale (Uzunçarşılı, 2011, p. 684). As a result, Turkish tradesmen were allowed to trade throughout the region, from the Aegean islands to Venice. The merchants that are traveling to Venice can be classified into two categories: The first group is the private traders *(hassa tacir)*, who are sent to deliver the orders of the palace members (Bozpinar, 2021, p. 352). The second group consists of other traders who band together to avoid piracy and high freight expenses. Both the sea and land routes from Istanbul to Spalata (Split) port, as well as the Adriatic railway, are employed in these commerce (Köse, 2005, p. 106). When Turkish merchants stayed in Venice for longer periods of time, they began to establish companies throughout the city. As a result, the Fondaco Dei Turchi (Fondoko of Turks) was established in Venice as a business inn (trading center) where Turkish merchants could collaborate (Turan, 1968, pp. 249–261). Another intensive maritime trade took place on the Black Sea coast. Turkish and Muslim merchants carried out their trade with Eastern Europe through ports on the Black Sea. The Ottoman Empire built castles to control these ports and went to war when necessary (Turanly, 2019, pp. 49–52).

The Ottoman Empire's tradesmen and artisans were controlled and managed by guilds *(lonca)* during its classical age. Aside from keeping track of the organization's and tradesmen's general position, the guild serves as a link between the state and the tradesmen (Uzunçarşılı, 2011, p. 689). In Istanbul, there were between 126,000 and 260,000 artisans organized into 1109 guilds, according to reports. Except for vocations that are prohibited by sharia, such as pub management, no guilds comprised wholly of Muslims or totally of non-Muslims have been discovered. The leaders of mixed guilds, on the other hand, are primarily Muslims (Faroqhi, 2006, pp. 713–714).

In the Ottoman Empire's Anatolia region, there was a thriving weaving industry during the classical period. Textile manufacturing was in a position to compete with Europe. Even Europe's high-end clothes are coloured in Bursa dyehouses. During the reign of Murat III

(1574 – 1595) it is known that weaving and dyeing techniques was exported to England (Tabakoğlu, 2008, p. 250). The leather industry was reported to be ahead of Europe. Processed and dyed leather was one of the principal exports (Akdağ, 1949, p. 509).

Materials and Methods. The study relied on *muhimme* registers, which were used to record the decisions made at *Divan-i Humayun* sessions throughout the *Ottoman Empire's* classical age. After the sultan's assent, the decisions made in the *Divan-i Humayun* are recorded in the *muhimme* registers (Kütükoğlu, 2020). There are 419 *muhimme* registers in the Presidency of the State Archives of the Republic of Turkey that include records from 961 – 1333 AH to 1553 – 1915 Gregorian calendar. These registers contain state-related political, economic, cultural, social, and military choices. (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi, 2010, p. 7).

Two distinct sources provided transcribed versions of the *muhimme* registers from the Ottoman Empire's classical age (1300 – 1600). The Presidency of the State Archives of the Republic of Turkey published ten of the *muhimme* registers discussed in the study, which were transcribed from the Arabic alphabet to the Latin alphabet. Within the purpose of the master's thesis, 65 *muhimme* registers from the classical age were transcribed into the Latin script. Because 3 of the 75 *muhimme* transcripts were from the same *muhimme* register, they were eliminated from the study.

The content analysis approach and the MaxQDA tool were used to examine the *muhimme* registers. The texts that are the subject of the research are handled through several components in content analysis, and a solution to the research question is sought. These components are listed as uniting, sampling, coding, reducing, inferring and narrating. The first two stages of the specified components are considering and assessing *Muhimme* registers as a whole, sorting them according to their dates, and deleting duplicates. Later in the study, the remaining four components are implemented in stages (Krippendorff, 2004, pp. 82–83).

Content analysis, descriptive, inferential, psychometric, and predictive methodologies are all widely accepted (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 53). As a result, this study is thought to be closer to descriptive content analysis.

Coding was done in *muhimme* registers to reveal entrepreneurship in the Ottoman Empire's classical period, which established the research subject. In these codings, the attribute coding approach, which is typically classed under grammatical methods, was used (Saldaña, 2016, p. 83). While these codings were being created, text search engines were used to find the word sequences defining the code in the text, and the provisions of the *muhimme* clauses were assigned to the applicable code as a paragraph (Woolf & Silver, 2018, pp. 83–84). As a result of the automatic coding, multiple codings for the same paragraph were created, necessitating the employment of the simultaneous coding approach (Saldaña, 2016, p. 94).

Results. As a consequence of the *muhimme* register coding addressed in the study, it has been discovered that some *muhimme* registers documents lack a code under the entrepreneurship upper code, which forms the basis of the research topic. The *Muhimme* Registers numbered 2, 8, 11, and 50, which do not contain any of the codes under entrepreneurship, were eliminated from the study in order to display the results of the content analysis in a healthy way. As a result, 68 *Muhimme* register were included in the analysis. Table 1 shows the encodings used in the documents as well as the frequency of these encodings.

Under the entrepreneurship upper code, traders are coded more clearly than other types of entrepreneurship, as shown in Table 1. There is a very apparent coding frequency difference between the merchant ship (*mudaraba* contracts) and other partnership models under the entrepreneurship model higher code. The majority of the views of entrepreneurs remain unnoticed and tagged as unknown in the coding on their beliefs. When unknowns are removed, Muslim entrepreneurs are found to be more coded than non-Muslim entrepreneurs. When it comes to currencies or sorts, the *akce* (silver coin) appears more frequently in the text than the others.

Table 1

Code Frequencies

Upper Code	Sub Code	Code Frequency
Entrepreneurship	Merchant	649
	Middleman	53
	Artsan	34
	Loom	5
	Coffee Maker	5
	Fruit Seller	2
Partnership Model	Trade Ship (*Mudaraba* Contracts)	267
	Classic Partnership (*Mufavada* Contracts)	28
	Murabaha Contracts	8
Religion	Muslim	163
	Non-Muslim	99
	Unknown	471
Money	*Flori* (Gold Ducat)	506
	Kurus (Piastre)	267
	Akce (Silver Coin)	8458
	Altin Sikke (Gold Coin)	921

Table 2

Code Frequencies According to Date Ranges

Upper Code	Sub Code	Hijri Dates Range (Gregorian)			
		966 – 976 (1558 – 69)	977 – 986 (1570 – 78)	987 – 995 (1579 – 88)	996 – 1005 (1589 – 97)
Entrepreneurship	Merchant	234	226	76	113
	Middleman	28	18	4	3
	Artsan	9	12	3	10
	Loom	4	1	0	0
	Coffee Maker	3	0	0	2
	Fruit Seller	2	0	0	0
Partnership Model	Trade Ship (Mudaraba Contracts)	84	123	18	42
	Classic Partnership (*Mufavada* Contracts)	8	3	16	1
	Murabaha Contracts	4	4	0	0
Religion	Muslim	67	57	22	17
	Non-Muslim	42	32	15	10
	Unknown	163	162	49	97
Money	*Flori* (Gold Ducat)	140	215	81	70
	Kurus (Piastre)	22	54	75	116
	Akce (Silver Coin)	1561	2600	2721	1576
	Altin Sikke (Gold Coin)	322	320	155	124

The *Muhimme* Registers are organized into clusters based on the dates on which they were written. Table 2 shows the code frequencies of *muhimme* registers clustered according to similar year intervals in Hijri. For practically all codes, the coding on *muhimme* rules is concentrated in the periods 966 – 976 and 977 – 986 Hijri, as seen in the table. In the third (*987 – 995)* and second *(977 – 986)* eras, the codes for the classical partnership *(Mufavada Contracts)* are prevalent, whereas the *akce* (silver coin) codes are dominant in the second (977 – 986) and third (987 – 995) periods.

Table 3

Code Relationships

Upper Code	Sub Code	Religion			Money			
		Muslim	Non-Muslim	Unknown	*Flori* (Gold Ducat)	*Kurus* (Piastre)	*Akce* (Silver Coin)	*Altın Sikke* (Gold Coin)
Entrepreneurship	Merchant	163	101	430	26	9	149	47
	Middleman	7	0	47	0	0	17	1
	Artsan	9	0	22	1	0	9	3
	Loom	0	3	2	0	0	1	1
	Coffee Maker	1	0	4	0	0	0	0
	Fruit Seller	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Partnership Model	Trade Ship (Mudaraba Contracts)	13	14	58	6	1	44	4
	Classic Partnership (*Mufavada* Contracts)	1	1	0	0	1	6	0
	Murabaha Contracts	0	0	0	1	0	4	2

The code relations scanner was used to see the possible relationships between the sections coded in the studied *muhimme* registers, and the information in Table 3 was retrieved. When considering the relationships between entrepreneurship and belief, it becomes clear that belief cannot be predicted in practically all types of entrepreneurship. However, it is discovered that Muslims are more coded in all sorts of entrepreneurship, with the exception of those who create fabric, when evaluating individuals whose faith is determined. When considering the partnership models in terms of beliefs, it is clear that Muslims and non-Muslims are nearly equal. When evaluating entrepreneurs in terms of money, it is clear that the *akce* (silver coin) has a strong link to all sorts of entrepreneurship. Similarly, the *akce* (silver coin)'s advantage in partnership models is apparent.

Figure 1 depicts the code co-occurrence model, which shows the links between the conflicting codes. Because the relationships are weak, the *murabaha* contracts code, which is included under the partnership models higher code, is not included in this model. When entrepreneurs whose faith cannot be ascertained are eliminated from this model, it can be concluded that the Muslim code is connected with a greater number of entrepreneurship

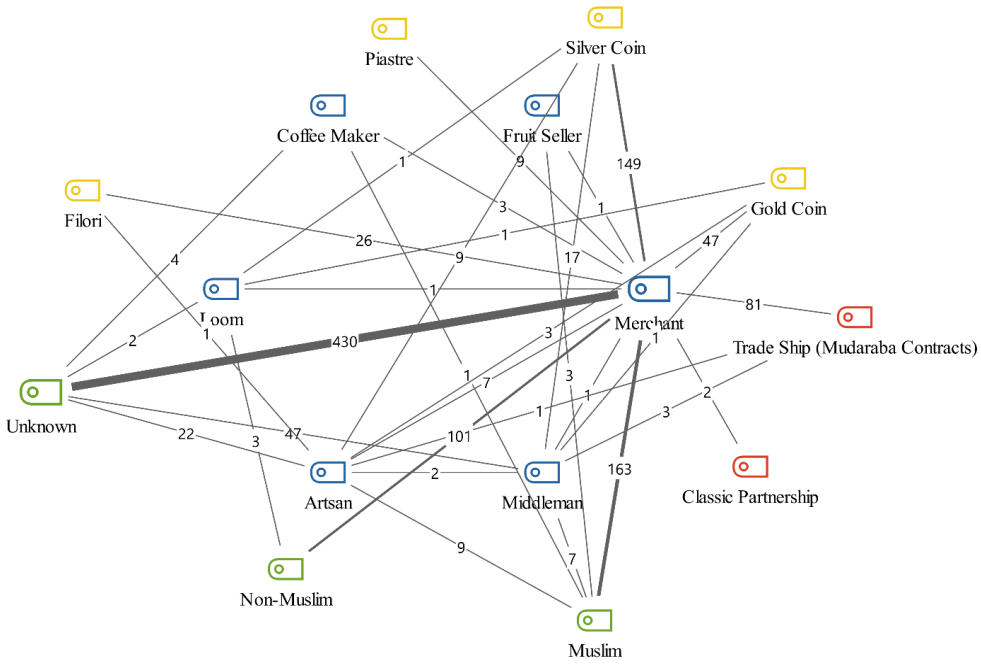

Fig. 1. Model of Code Co-occurrence (Conflicting Codes)

categories and that these relationships are more intense. It is possible to say that the *akce* (silver coin) code has a similar density.

Following the evaluations of the codes' frequencies and co-occurrences, the goal is to analyze the research issues in greater depth by moving on to the research's inferential analysis. Inferential analysis handles and interprets weighted expressions (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 53; Patton, 2015, p. 1015). This study focuses on the sorts of entrepreneurship that run counter to the belief upper code that is manually coded.

Merchants who cannot be categorized as Muslims or non-Muslims are often considered under the *muhimme* rules without identifying their name or belief:

Now, as you think fit for your reason, I directed the distribution of shares to the towns, and I commanded: Let the towns that are said to be accessed, as well as the other merchants in the well-built cities, be divided into shares and quickly transformed into gold and sent. – Muhimme No 19 Rule No 443 (Bostancı, 2002).

The cities of Tripoli, Damascus, Antep, and Antakya are developed and have plenty of traders, thus it is regarded desirable to finish the gold required for the treasury from these places, according to the *muhimme* rule. It is thought that trade between the eastern coastlines of the Mediterranean and the nearby region, which was ruled by the Ottoman Empire during the classical period, was particularly intense. In fact, it is understood in the first half of the provision that foreign merchants could not arrive or go since their access to the Mediterranean's western side was closed. However, it is believed that the gold required can be obtained through local dealers in the cities named (which are mostly Muslim) rather than from foreign traders. This remark can be seen as indicating the robust structure of the Muslim entrepreneur elite in the Mediterranean's east.

"Ships, merchants, and other temporary ships in Basra were chartered and sent as per your command to deploy the military, which was transferred from Baghdad to Lahsa by sending a letter. – Muhimme No 3 Rule No 260 (*3 Numaralı Muhimme Defteri (966 – 968 / 1558 – 1560)*, 1993).

The governor of Egypt ruled that; ... not to harm the merchants and other seasides in the sea.... – Muhimme No 3 Rule No. 781 (*3 Numaralı Muhimme Defteri (966 – 968 / 1558 – 1560)*, 1993).

The merchant ships in the Persian Gulf were chartered to assure the deployment of soldiers in the first *muhhimme* rule above, but the number of ships arriving from the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea was restricted due to traffic congestion on the Basra route. The provision stated that grain-carrying ships should not be hampered throughout the dispatch procedure. The second article mandates the protection of the coasts of Rhodes and North Africa, as well as the ships that trade there. These provisions set a precedent for the Ottoman Empire's efforts to ease and safeguard entrepreneur trade in the MENA region, both by land and by sea.

The following are some weighted provisions pertaining to Muslim entrepreneurs:

When Elvanzade Mustafa, the head of Zekiye, sent a letter and the men of the Hodja Huseyin Elvan, one of the Mosul merchants, took the ship with eight thousand gold ducats they sent to the scholars of Baghdad and came to the city… – Muhimme No 21 Rule No 379 (Çelik, 1997).

Hacı Bali, a Darende resident, came forward and stated that when he was a trader and living in Adilhan, which was affected by the Gallipoli disaster, his money was stolen with a basket and chest containing one hundred thousand silver coins owing to the night. – Muhimme No. 7/1 Rule No. 58 (*7 Numaralı Muhimme Defteri (975 – 976 / 1567 – 1569) Özet-Transkripsiyon- indeks I*, 1998)

...The merchant known as Kara Mustafa came to my capital with some traders; "While going to Venice for trade during the last peacetime and returning with goods, the non-Muslims named Uskok gathered in the city of Sin, raided the ships, plundered their sustenance and captured their men. – Muhimme No 7/3 Rule No 2729 (*7 Numaralı Muhimme Defteri (975 – 976 / 1567 – 1569) Özet-Transkripsiyon- indeks III*, 1999)

It is obvious that the businesspeople mentioned in the preceding quotations had Muslim names. Furthermore, the absence of a son *(bin)* or father *(ibn)* decorations comparable to Arabic names in their names, as well as the use of Turkish nicknames, show that the business people are Muslim Turks. These Muslim Turkish merchants have substantial capital, as evidenced by the eight thousand *flori* (gold ducats) and one hundred thousand *akce* (silver coin) indicated in the first two stipulations. Muslim Turkish entrepreneurs trade with ships and potentially with a *mudaraba* contract, according to the first and third provisions. It is assumed that the merchant named Kara Mustafa described in the third provision traveled by sea to Frangistan, i.e., Venice, and returned to purchase goods. It can be assumed from this that the entrepreneurs in the cited provisions trade with significant capitals via land or sea.

It is believed that merchants specially chosen by the Ottoman Empire were included in certain of the terms of the *muhimme*, which were coded as Muslims. These traders are mentioned in the texts by using the term "private trader" (*hassa tacir*) to refer to them.

Mustafa, a Sipahi kid and a private trader, was said to be on his way from Moscow to buy tin, iron, and cloth for the state when his ship was wrecked in the Ahyolu battle, and the items within were lost. Now, I commanded;… –Muhimme No 3 Rule No 623 (*3 Numaralı Muhimme Defteri (966 – 968 / 1558 – 1560)*, 1993).

The passages above plainly illustrate that the state appoints private traders. It should be noted, however, that these merchants should not be regarded as civil servants, and that they have legitimate jobs outside of private trade. Furthermore, it is clear from the third provision's inheritance expectations that private traders have substantial holdings.

During the coding of the forms of entrepreneurship according to their beliefs, entrepreneurs who were clearly acknowledged to be non-Muslims were coded with the non-Muslim code.

To the people of Venice; When one of the traders of Istanbul, Yasef, the son of Salamon, and other Jews named Yakob, the son of Salamon, gave a letter to our government, and sent a merchant named Tan Antonyonoski Tel, Lorilçoski Tel, and Loriço Kirardo, one of the Venetian merchants, and Kirardi, the son of Antoni, one of their relatives, to Istanbul for trade with his own ship...Muhimme No 27/1 Rule No 310 (Döşemetaş, 2014)

The merchant is plainly identified as a non-Muslim in the first quotation. It is possible to deduce from the complaint's text that the merchant was an Ottoman Empire citizen. Two groups of merchants from Istanbul and Venice had a conflict, according to the second excerpt. The merchants from Istanbul were clearly Ottoman Empire residents who were also Jewish. In the third provision, it is said that in the Peloponnese city of Balyabadra, there was a dispute between British merchants and Muslim Turkish merchants.

Discussion and Conclusion. According to the *muhimme* registries reviewed, entrepreneurship was highly valued by the Ottoman Empire administration during the classical age. As cities such as Istanbul, Gallipoli, Antakya, Antep, Diyarbakir, Damascus, Aleppo, Baghdad, Mosul, Tripolitania, and Egypt, which are explicitly specified in the provisions, demonstrate, entrepreneurship activities are quite active in the MENA region. Furthermore, the clauses of the *muhimme* registers show that Muslim Turks dominate trade in the MENA region. It is clear that Muslim Turks who are Ottoman Empire citizens, as well as foreigners and non-Muslims, are involved in trade with countries like England and Venice. Another example of this predicament is a business inn in Venice dedicated to Muslim Turkish traders (Turan, 1968, pp. 249–261). Similarly, Muslim Turks, particularly individual traders, are thought to have influenced commercial activities along the Black Sea beaches. It states, for example, İnalcık (2014, p. 273) that Muslims make up 82 percent of the merchants that visit Crimea's ports. It is also stated that the Ottoman Empire built castles in ports such as Kafa, Taman and Akkerman to strengthen trade in the region and facilitate its merchants' trade with Eastern Europe (Turanly, 2020, pp. 39–40).

Entrepreneurs formed partnerships with mudaraba agreements, which are usually preferred in ship trading, according to muhimme registers. The reason for this is said to be that the provisions on entrepreneurs in the books largely apply to those with a lot of money. *Divan-i Humayun* usually targets relatively large businesspeople who deal mostly by sea under the *mudaraba* agreement. Micro and small-scale entrepreneurs, such as tradesmen and craftsmen, are rarely subject to the provisions of the *muhimme* laws, and even when they are, they are treated as a community. The cause of this scenario is assumed to be that micro and small businesses prefer to address their legal issues to local courts rather than the *Divan-i Humayun*. Individual legal applications are most commonly seen in local courts, however when the matter affects a larger group, it may be brought before the *Divan-i Humayun* (Çeken, 2020, pp. 330–332).

It is thought that *akce* (silver coin), *altin sikke* (gold coin) and *kurus* (piastre), which are among the basic currencies of the Ottoman Empire, are frequently mentioned in the *Muhimme Registers*. Furthermore, it is thought that the *flori* (gold duka), Venice's currency, was widely used in the Ottoman Empire.

According to the research, there are several reasons why the time between 1558 and 1578 in the *muhimme* registers are more intense than the period between 1579 and 1597. The Ottoman Empire and European countries (particularly Portugal and Spain) fought for political and commercial control in the Mediterranean and North African coasts from 1558 to 1578, which is perhaps the most important of these causes (Ceran, 1996, pp. 271–388).

According to the findings, statements that there were no or a small number of Muslim Turkish entrepreneurs in the Ottoman Empire throughout the era studied are false. On the contrary, evidence suggests that Muslim Turkish traders are engaged in brisk business in the MENA region, the Black Sea, and the Adriatic Sea. There are also indicators that the Muslim Turkish businesspeople named have a significant quantity of money.

Given that the study in question merely gives a prognosis for the time period under consideration (1558 – 1597), *muhimme* registers are expected to offer numerous further research opportunities to academics interested in studying Ottoman entrepreneurs. Muhimme registers from the 17th and 18th centuries which were not included in the study because they were regarded outside the classical period, can be used as an example.

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