

# Barriers challenging social gastronomy entrepreneurs

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*The world has experienced significant changes in recent years, leading to the rise of social issues such as social exclusion, poverty, hunger, unemployment, and climate change, which threaten not only humanity but also the future well-being of societies. Social gastronomy entrepreneurship bridges these challenges and their solutions by acting as a catalyst. As a changemaker, chefs or professionals are more conscious than before and dedicate themselves to discover social needs, pursue opportunities, solve complex problems, and impact the broader social systems through the transformative and healing power of gastronomy. Despite these valuable contributions, social gastronomy entrepreneurship remains limited in reach and entrepreneurs face significant challenges when operating in the social domain. Therefore, this study aims to address the challenges in social gastronomy entrepreneurship and their hierarchical relationships. Using inductive content analysis, interpretive structural modeling, and MICMAC methods, the study identifies “cultural issues” and “social pressure” as the primary challenges. These barriers significantly influence other challenges and should be prioritized for effective resolution.*

**Keywords:** *Social entrepreneurship, Social sustainability, Social inequality, Hunger, Social gastronomy, UNSDG*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Humanity experiences numerous social, economic, and environmental problems as the years go by. Although some glimpses of hope still can be found all around the globe, coordinated and holistic activities are still in their infant stages. Poverty, unemployment, lack of basic human rights, environmental issues, inequalities, discriminations, and exclusions that are encountered in society are still known as the main pressing

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problems of the world. Additionally, food insecurity and food waste present even bigger problems not only in undeveloped or developing countries but also in developed ones in recent years. Similarly reported by United Nations, a third of the world's food is wasted while many people struggle with poverty and do not have access to sufficient food (FAO, 2020). Although such problems remain from the past to the present, they still maintain their importance, and the variety of these problems is gradually increasing. In this regard, dealing with these pressing problems requires a systematic approach undoubtedly.

Social entrepreneurship has emerged as one of the most effective approaches to addressing such neglected issues, especially those unmet by government or private sector initiatives (Santos, 2012; Zahra et al., 2009). More precisely, social entrepreneurship is a fresh notion that refers to an innovative tool for tackling society's most pressing and troubling social problems or unmet socio-economic needs. According to Brouard and Larivet (2010), social entrepreneurs play a crucial role in society and identify practical and long-term solutions to large-scale societal problems by combining innovation and opportunity. Their meaningful contributions can be seen in many different sectors like health care and well-being, education, food, information and communication, tourism, and finance (Elkington and Hartigan, 2008; Roslan et al., 2022; Basar, 2018; Aruch et al., 2014; Laeis and Lemke, 2016; Yunus, 1999).

Recently, the gastronomy sector has joined these efforts and is considered a new way of addressing social issues through the efforts of social gastronomy entrepreneurs. Gastronomy, as a cornerstone of the service industry alongside tourism, hospitality, and recreation, has chefs as its primary drivers. Compared to the past, chefs have become more visible and started to be more conscious of problems that endanger social welfare. Navarro-Dols and González-Pernía (2020) assert that chefs have recently begun to act as social innovators and changemakers. In this regard, some chefs position themselves as a special bridge between social problems and their solutions by taking the role of a catalyst and they are willing to transform the plate that they prepare into a social benefit. Additionally, chefs with this mindset aim to destroy existing non-functional food systems and replace them with newer, beneficial, and more suitable ones (Pereira et al., 2019). To put it in a nutshell, the new version of chefs or gastronomy professionals uses their entrepreneurial principles to develop innovative ideas for social inclusion and wide-scale change in society (Mendini et al., 2019). Thus, they have started to utilize the already-known transformative force of gastronomy to develop the social welfare of the society they live within.

Undoubtedly, this transformative and healing power of gastronomy is closely associated with the scope of social entrepreneurship (Navarro-Dols and González-Pernía, 2020). However, despite the importance of the valuable efforts of social gastronomy entrepreneurs, the reflections of social entrepreneurship on the gastronomy industry are relatively few and scattered in both practice and existing literature due to a limited number of social gastronomy entrepreneurs. Increasing the number of social gastronomy entrepreneurs is only possible through the creation of new multipliers. However, the various challenges faced by social gastronomy entrepreneurs appear to be the biggest obstacle to the creation of new multipliers. These challenges create dissatisfaction among social gastronomy entrepreneurs and cause them to give up over time. From this point of view, the identification of these challenges and the examination of the relationship between these constitute the objective of this study and attempt to answer the research gap hidden in the existing literature.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Social gastronomy entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship emerged as a subdiscipline or sub-domain of entrepreneurship and aimed to improve the well-being of societies or communities (Kevin and Urdan, 2022; Celebi et al., 2020). As a relatively new phenomenon, social entrepreneurship has gained increasing popularity and recognition, especially in recent years. According to Mair and Marti (2006), social entrepreneurship is a value creation process that includes innovation and resource combination to pursue opportunities to offer unique, appropriate, and sustainable solutions for global problems such as unemployment, poverty, health-related issues, illiteracy, educational inequality, gender inequality, child abuse, social exclusion, disability, sickness, diseases, human rights, terrorism, discriminations, and environmental issues (Seelos and Mair, 2005; Dees, 2007; Zahra et al., 2009; Short et al., 2009).

Furthermore, social entrepreneurs can be defined as key actors of the social entrepreneurship phenomenon who perform to address the social challenges, problems, issues, or inequalities that emerge within the borders of society or social sphere (Peredo and McLean, 2006). In other words, social entrepreneurship comprises many activities of a social entrepreneur who innovates in the social field by taking a considerable risk to improve the social problems that they try to develop. As summarized by Ozdevecioglu and Cingöz (2015), social entrepreneurship is a nonprofit action of a social entrepreneur that aims to create social value by addressing individuals' unmet needs.

Using the well-known quote of Bill Drayton, the founder of Ashoka, the scope of social entrepreneurship and the significant role of social entrepreneurs are described in detail (Barendsen and Gardner, 2004; Daru and Gaur, 2013). According to Drayton, "*Social entrepreneurs are not content just to give a fish or teach how to fish. They will not rest until they have revolutionized the fishing industry*" (Leviner et al., 2006: 93). In this context, "giving a fish to someone" represents a charitable act that offers temporary relief to the problem of poverty. "Teaching someone how to fish" is a more impactful approach that provides sustainability and empowerment but still falls short of fully addressing the poverty problem. Finally, "revolutionizing the fishing industry" refers to creating radical, systematic changes that deliver lasting solutions to the root causes of poverty. In this sense, revolutionizing the fishery sector may involve significant changes to the economic structure of the fisheries, lowering the barriers of entry for new coming entrepreneurs, bringing down the monopolies, providing equal profit opportunities for every actor in the sector, and increasing the overall production and distribution efficiency, which in turn substantially adding value and increasing wealth for every stakeholder, such as producers, wholesalers, and, most importantly, consumers. Thus, it is evident that social entrepreneurship prioritizes systemic, long-term changes over temporary solutions.

Existing literature demonstrates that social entrepreneurship is closely related to various sectors due to their shared fields of activity (Lortie and Cox, 2018). For instance, social entrepreneurs have begun to play a distinctive role in the food industry. Their main contributions are revealed in the production of food, the distribution of local food, and the ability to access not only affordable but also nutritious food (Van Royen et al., 2022). As a science of flavor and vital part of the food industry, gastronomy and its reflections have risen in recent years (Santich, 2007; Arslan, 2020). Compared to the past, there has been a substantial increase in the number of social entrepreneurs operating within the gastronomy industry. For instance, chefs or professionals such as

Ebru Baybara Demir, Anthony Myint, Ays,e Tükrükçü, David Hertz, Manu Buffara, and Massimo Bottura have significantly advanced gastronomy while introducing themselves as social gastronomy entrepreneurs (Eris et al., 2022).

This rise in social gastronomy entrepreneurs can be attributed to two influential organizations: (1) Basque Culinary Center (BCC) and (2) Social Gastronomy Movement (SGM). Widely considered as one of the biggest gastronomy associations, Basque Culinary Center aims to change the various aspects of society via gastronomy since 2016 (Balderas-Cejudo et al., 2022). To encourage chefs all around the world to be more conscious of social problems, BCC holds a chef-exclusive competition called the Basque Culinary World Prize (BCWP), also dubbed as the Nobel of Gastronomy. Award of the BCWP is one hundred thousand euro, which is given to the winner to support their endeavor of developing their communities in various areas such as education, environment, supporting local products, and producers as well as developing more abstract areas such as innovation of the culinary, developing food industry, and many other areas (Navarro-Dols and González-Pernía, 2020). The main goal of the BCWP can be derived from its finalists' social objectives, such as providing food for the disadvantaged population, completely reducing the waste of food, and providing support for the local products and producers.

Social Gastronomy Movement (SGM) is another crucial reflection of social entrepreneurship within gastronomy. SGM is a human-centered movement that was found by David Hertz with an aim to address social inequalities, eliminate food waste, reduce food insecurity, fight hunger, improve nutrition-based education opportunities, train disadvantaged young chef candidates, empower others, and create sustainable job offerings for those who live in the pariah of society and recognized as disadvantaged segments of the population (Gastromotiva, 2019; Eriş et al., 2022; Damasceno et al., 2023; Forman, 2024). Through SGM chefs aim to transform society and, eventually, the world, using food as a tool for change rather than as an end in itself (De Albeniz, 2021). King (2018) pointed out that this movement positively impacts society by leveraging food's transformative potential, leading to greater awareness about food and related issues.

To sum up, today chefs are more conscious than ever and they act as change-makers to address unmet social needs and social problems through the transformative power of gastronomy (Erbas, 2022; Eris et al., 2022). Social gastronomy entrepreneurship plays a vital role in promoting social sustainability by addressing issues related to food waste, food insecurity, and social inequality. Moreover, social gastronomy entrepreneurs can create businesses that focus on using locally sourced and sustainable ingredients, reducing food waste by repurposing surplus food, and providing affordable and nutritious meals to underserved communities. Moreover, social gastronomy entrepreneurship can also provide employment and training opportunities for individuals from marginalized communities, helping to promote economic and social inclusion. For all this to rationalize, understanding how chefs have taken the role of gastronomic innovators or change-makers, what drives them to engage in social gastronomy entrepreneurship, and their ability to transform society through the altering power of gastronomy is quite crucial.

## 2.2 Main challenges of social entrepreneurs

Social entrepreneurs face an array of challenges when they act in the social environment. In the existing literature, diverse scholars proposed that different types of challenges can affect social entrepreneurs in a negative way (Short et al., 2009; Sivathanu

and Bhise, 2013; Braga et al., 2014; Malunga et al., 2014; Terziev and Arabska, 2017). As determined by Terziev and Arabska (2017), many factors affect both the development of social entrepreneurship and the ability of social entrepreneurs. In other words, these factors act as a strong barrier for social entrepreneurs within the borders of the social stage. According to scholars, “funding” is the first barrier that is positioned in front of the entrepreneurial activities of social entrepreneurs. As second, the same scholars asserted that “policies that made by government” are significant as well. Moreover, “lack of knowledge” creates another big challenge for social entrepreneurs, which prevents them and their activities respectively. In addition to these, “lack of legal structure” stands for a vital challenge that faced by social entrepreneurs (Chandra et al., 2021). Undoubtedly, the legal framework or legal structure is a critical requirement for each enterprise, no matter if it is social or commercial. Without any legislative framework, social entrepreneurs are regarded as hybrid social entrepreneurs (Dees, 2007) who are forced to act as members of nonprofit organizations. As claimed by Malunga et al. (2014), this situation creates a big challenge for social entrepreneurs in terms of dealing with social enterprises independently and finding adequate support that they need. In other words, the lack of legislative framework builds an invisible wall (known as a barrier) in front of social entrepreneurs which prevents their real potential, capacity, ability, and operations. According to their study results, these findings pursued by other essential challenges such as “conditions of local environment,” “access to credit and market,” “perceptions of the public,” “absence of consultants,” “heavy bureaucratic environment,” “lack of desire,” and “lack of entrepreneurial culture.”

Moreover, Sivathanu and Bhise (2013) also listed many types of challenges faced by social entrepreneurs when they fight against major social problems in society. Similarly asserted by themselves, “funding related issues” (e.g. financial support, getting fund, or raising money) and “approval of government” are referred to as similar common social issues that create a strong challenge for social entrepreneurs in their working area. Besides, they also mentioned other issues that can create challenges among social entrepreneurs. These problematic issues are “conveying the business idea,” “attracting donors,” “lack of time,” “working remotely,” “supports of others,” “maintaining product quality,” “hiring (skilled) employees,” “sustaining employees,” “competition,” “promoting/increasing awareness,” and “acquiring technologies.”

Furthermore, Malunga et al. (2014) stated that “lack of legal framework,” “poor or inadequate business models,” “lack of sustainability,” and “premature scaling up” are known as other threatening challenges that are tackled by social entrepreneurs within the social environment. It is seen that the lack of legal framework is mentioned similarly by other scholars. Differently, scholars claimed that poor or inadequate business plan also creates a big problem for social entrepreneurs in terms of hindering their potential (Do Adro et al., 2021). In this regard, finding the right and appropriate business plan is highly essential to combat social issues. Sustainability is another key challenge for not only social but also commercial entrepreneurs (Presenza et al., 2017). In this direction, the determination of sustainable solutions is required to create social value eventually.

According to Braga et al. (2014), there are many challenges, difficulties, or obstacles that are faced by social entrepreneurs when they not only create but also develop a social enterprise. As claimed by the same scholars, these obstacles are emerged due to the unfulfilled expectations. These founded similar obstacles can be listed as “the mobilization of human resources,” “the mobilization of financial resources,” “time management,” “communication management,” “the process of decision making,” “lack of credibility,” “lack of experience,” and “bureaucracy.”

### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 The importance and aim of the research

As aforementioned, social entrepreneurship has received increasing interest in the literature in recent years (Zahra et al., 2009). Similarly, the gastronomy industry has also rapidly evolved and expanded its borders over the past few years. According to Navarro-Dols and González-Pernía (2020), an emerging and versatile social tool is a heterogeneous field that aligns well with the principles of social entrepreneurship. However, a review of the existing literature reveals that the integration of social entrepreneurship and gastronomy is a relatively new area of study. To date, only a limited number of studies have explored social entrepreneurial practices within the gastronomy industry (Ozden et al., 2018; Mendini et al., 2019; Pereira et al., 2019; Celebi et al., 2020; Navarro-Dols and González-Pernía, 2020; Erbas, 2022; Eris et al., 2022). This indicates a research gap between these two critical topics from an academic perspective. On the other hand, it is an undeniable fact that social gastronomy entrepreneurs face many difficulties while operating in the social domain. This situation inevitably creates obstacles for the entrepreneurial efforts of social gastronomy entrepreneurs and prevents their numbers from increasing. The research gap in this study pertains to the lack of exploration and identification of the challenges faced by social gastronomy entrepreneurs in the existing literature. In this regard, the objective of this study is to identify the challenges encountered by social gastronomy entrepreneurs and to examine the interrelationships between these challenges.

#### 3.2 Research sample

The population of this research comprises chefs or professionals who play a meaningful role in taking gastronomy further and additionally introduce themselves as a social gastronomy entrepreneur in the gastronomy scene. To identify the sample of this study, snowball sampling was selected as one of the most widely preferred sampling techniques in qualitative research (Kozak, 2014: 119). The sampling process was ended by the researchers when the data were saturated. Through the objective of research, this study addresses the gap in the literature by proposing a detailed framework derived from findings of six social gastronomy entrepreneurs: Ebru Baybara Demir, Anthony Myinth, David Hertz, Manu Buffara, Ayşe Tükrükçü, and Massimo Bottura, who have radically changed the rules of the existing game within the scope of the gastronomy industry.

Respectively, Ebru Baybara Demir is a well-known Turkish chef, social gastronomy entrepreneur, and culinary researcher in the field of gastronomy (Eris et al., 2022). Her popularity has been rising in the gastronomy market over the past few years. She was recognized as a candidate for Basque Culinary World Prize for two consecutive years (Ensari, 2017: 121). In addition to this, she has conducted many successful projects such as “Soil to Plate Agricultural Development Cooperative Project,” “Harran Gastronomy School Project,” “Living Soil,” “Local Seed,” and “Let’s Talk Soil” (Erbas, 2022; Eris et al., 2022). With these social efforts, she won various types of awards with her social entrepreneur identity such as “Turkey’s Successful Women Award,” “Turkey’s Social Entrepreneur Award,” and “Turkish Female Entrepreneurs Creating a Difference in Their Regions Award” (Basan, 2019).

Anthony Myinth was determined as the second member of the sample who is known as a chef, environmental activist, restaurateur, and the winner of the Basque Culinary

World Prize in 2019 (Barth, 2019). He is also known as a co-founder of the Zero Foodprint organization (Oatman, 2021). Zero Foodprint (ZFP) is a nonprofit organization that aims to fight climate change through a kind of environmentalism within the field of the gastronomy industry.

David Hertz was added to the sample as being a winner of the 2019 Charles Bronfman Prize (Sokol, 2019) and a leader of *Gastromotiva*, which was founded as a nonprofit organization in 2006. David Hertz is an internationally recognized chef and social entrepreneur who was born in Curitiba, Brazil. He is commonly known as a social leader in the gastronomy industry and a supporter of an equitable society for each member of the population.

Similarly, another Brazilian chef, Manu Buffara was selected as the fourth member of the sample. She has been involved in many social projects to know her state, city, and the producers around. In addition, she conducted a significant project (Manu Project) to create a social community to provide food in Curitiba. In this project, sustainability and nature came into prominence. She has changed strikingly her hometown through social projects that aimed to feed the disadvantaged population with a better environment, better nutrition, and waste reduction (Kotthoff, 2020).

Additionally, Ayşe Tükürkçü is a woman who was born in Gaziantep, Turkey. She has many traumatic experiences in her early childhood. Immediately after she tried to make a difference for homeless people by touching their lives. She acted as a leader of a project titled “Soup Kitchen for Homeless” and takes part in the Sabanci Foundation Turkey’s Changemakers Program. In this project, she cooked a soup every night and served it with other volunteers to the more than a hundred homeless who lived in the borders of Taksim province. But then she realized this is not a long-term solution to alleviate their problems permanently. To create a valuable chance for the homeless people, in 2017 she founded Hayata Sarıl Association and Hayata Sarıl Restaurant respectively in Beyoğlu İstanbul (Ozden et al., 2018).

Lastly, Massimo Bottura is an Italian chef who was born in Modena, Italy. He is also known as co-founder of *Refettorio Ambrosiano*, which stands for the idea of changing the way of a soup kitchen. During the time of Expo 2015, Massimo and other celebrity chefs came together to fight against food waste and cook gourmet meals for disadvantaged groups (homeless, refugees, etc.) through the effective usage of leftover foods that gathered from Expo 2015, Milan (Massimo Bottura’s Expo Project, 2014).

### 3.3 Research methodology

The research steps of the study were presented in Figure 1. The process includes three types of methods. First, an inductive content analysis method was applied to define the challenges that occur in social gastronomy entrepreneurship. Second, interpretive structural modeling (ISM) was utilized to describe the interrelationships among challenges. Third, MICMAC analysis was conducted to identify the challenges in respect to their driving and dependency power.

Inductive content analysis is a method of qualitative content analysis that has a crucial role in the classification of a large amount of data into an efficient number of categories (Weber, 1990). Inductive content analysis begins with open coding, which creates subcategories (codes) at first. Then these subcategories lead to the creation of categories, which are also known as generic categories. And finally, these generic categories constitute the main categories (themes) as well (Kyngäs, 2020).

Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) is a methodology that was first coined into the literature by Warfield in 1974 to analyze the complex structure of socioeconomic

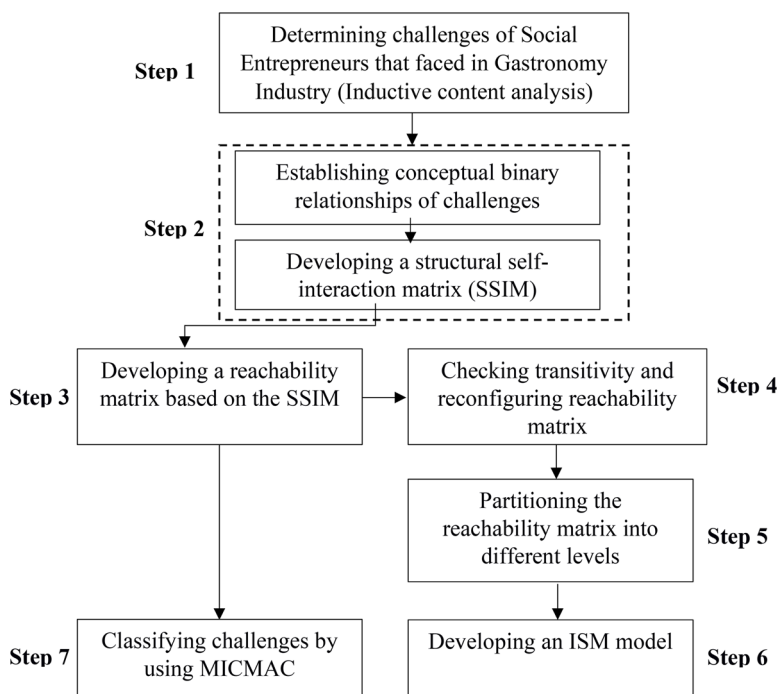


Figure 1 Research process

systems (Dewangan et al., 2015). This well-developed method has been used to clarify undefined or unspecified complex systems, problems, and also issues through identifying relationships among variables or specific items. Therefore, ISM is a very useful qualitative method that is used to make visible the invisible, the unclear models of systems (Mathiyazhagan et al., 2013). As indicated by Caliskan (2020), ISM is generally used for the analysis of negative factors that cause a specific problem, issue, challenge, or complexity. With the help of this beneficial method, the hierarchical ordering can be systematically modeled at the end of the methodology process (Bag and Anand, 2014). This modeling approach enables clarification of factors that represent the mutual relationships based on hierarchy.

MICMAC analysis (also known as Cross Impact Matrix Multiplication Applied to Classification) was developed by Duperrin and Godet in 1973. It is used to create detailed understandings about the role of diverse components of a complex system (Jha and Devaya, 2007). The foremost objective of MICMAC analysis is to evaluate both the driving and dependence power of variables (Bag and Anand, 2014).

#### 4 RESULTS

As shown in Figure 1, the research process comprised seven different stages. These stages were explained in detail as follows:

**Step 1:** Social entrepreneurship has several sub-types. None of the studies on the difficulties experienced in the field of social entrepreneurship are in the field of

gastronomy. Therefore, in order not to ignore the differences in the challenges based on industry, in addition to the difficulties obtained from the literature, an inductive content analysis was conducted through the secondary data collection tools (such as published articles, books, book chapters, reports, documents, news (from newspapers or portals), interview transcripts, documentaries, speeches (which held in summit, meeting, event, forum, or conference), podcasts, internet articles, blogs, and web pages) of the six people who introduced themselves as a social entrepreneur in gastronomy. Sample details are presented in Table 1.

In terms of data collection, 28 sources for Ebru Baybara Demir, 20 sources for Anthony Myinth, 29 sources for David Hertz, 13 sources for Manu Buffara, 21 sources for Massimo Bottura, and lastly 26 sources for Ays,e Tükürükçü were collected throughout the secondary data collection process during summer 2020 to summer 2021, thus updated in 2024. The data collection process was concluded by the researcher when the data were saturated for each member of the sample. Then, obtained data were grouped respectively, translated in English (if required), and transformed into written texts. At the end of the process, the unit of analysis was created to use in the content analysis process.

Six different factors, which create challenges for social gastronomy entrepreneurs, were determined through the qualitative inductive content analysis as follows:

- *Challenge 1:* Security issues
- *Challenge 2:* Cultural issues
- *Challenge 3:* Social pressure
- *Challenge 4:* Lack of support
- *Challenge 5:* Hard working conditions
- *Challenge 6:* Demanding people

As listed in Table 2, 47 codes effectuate these mentioned challenges within the scope of this research.

**Step 2:** In the second step of ISM, the establishment of contextual relationship was required for the challenges that were determined in the beginning of process. In this regard, expert interviews were conducted with five different academicians who have required qualifications and related studies about the issue (as demonstrated in Table 3).

*Table 1 Description of sample*

Name/Surname	Owner/Founder/Leader/Project Coordinator	Scope	Gender	Nationality
Ebru Baybara Demir	Cercis Murat Mansion, Harran Gastronomy School, Living Soil, Local Seed, Let's Talk Soil	Local	Female	Turkish
Anthony Myinth	Zero Foodprint	International	Male	US
David Hertz	Refettorio Gastromotiva, Social Gastronomy Movement	Both Local and International	Male	Brazil
Manu Buffara	Restaurant Manu, Manu Project	Local	Female	Brazil
Ayşe Tükürükçü	Hayata Sarıl Foundation, Hayata Sarıl Restaurant	Local	Female	Turkey
Massimo Bottura	Refettorio Ambrosiano, Food for Soul Foundation	Both Local and International	Male	Italy

Source: Adopted from Eris et al. (2022).

Table 2 Open coding results for challenges

	Open coding results for challenges	Sub-challenges from literature review Terziev and Arabska (2017) Sivathanu and Bhise (2013) Malunga et al. (2014) Braga et al. (2014)	
Challenges	Hard working conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Prohibitions</li> <li>■ Limitations</li> <li>■ Refuse to collaborate</li> <li>■ Complex high qualifications</li> <li>■ High mental effort</li> <li>■ High physical effort</li> <li>■ Required courage</li> <li>■ Required flexibility</li> <li>■ Required leadership</li> <li>■ Required creativity</li> <li>■ Long working hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lack of knowledge</li> <li>■ Heavy bureaucratic environment</li> <li>■ Hiring employees</li> <li>■ Sustaining employees</li> </ul>
	Lack of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Low tourism income</li> <li>■ Alienation of farmers</li> <li>■ Disapproved by others</li> <li>■ Low investments</li> <li>■ Loss of governmental support</li> <li>■ Sounded utopian</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Funding</li> <li>■ Lack of governmental policies</li> <li>■ Lack of legal structure</li> <li>■ Absence of consultants</li> <li>■ Lack of public interest</li> <li>■ Attracting donors</li> </ul>
	Social pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Disparaging talks</li> <li>■ Negative WOM</li> <li>■ Negative opinions</li> <li>■ Set a bad example</li> <li>■ Overthinking about comments</li> <li>■ Protests</li> <li>■ Despising the disadvantaged people</li> <li>■ Prejudgments</li> <li>■ Career expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Perceptions of the public</li> <li>■ Communication management</li> </ul>
	Cultural issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Status of women</li> <li>■ Role of women</li> <li>■ Family structure: patriarchal</li> <li>■ City culture</li> <li>■ Single women</li> <li>■ Divorced women</li> <li>■ Employed women</li> <li>■ Western women</li> <li>■ Serves alcohol</li> <li>■ Clothing style</li> <li>■ Lifestyle</li> <li>■ Habits</li> <li>■ Norms</li> <li>■ Rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conditions of local (business) environment</li> <li>■ Lack of entrepreneurial culture</li> </ul>

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Demanding people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Endless expectations</li> <li>■ Made them lazier</li> <li>■ Goodwill abuse</li> <li>■ Taking advantage of people</li> </ul>
Security issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Terrorism</li> <li>■ War</li> <li>■ Middle East</li> </ul>

Table 3 Expert interviews for ISM

Interviewee	Gender of interviewee	Age of interviewee	Area of expertise	Interview date	Interview duration (minutes)
Expert 1	Male	48	Tourism, gastronomy	08.06.2020	15
Expert 2	Male	42	Entrepreneurship, management, and organization	08.06.2020	18
Expert 3	Female	45	Tourism, gastronomy, management, and organization	09.06.2020	11
Expert 4	Female	41	Gastronomy	10.06.2020	21
Expert 5	Female	40	Gastronomy	10.06.2020	14

According to these expert opinions, the contextual relationships between two challenges were expressed by four different symbols. Then, a structural self-interaction matrix (SSIM) was developed according to relationships of variables, as indicated in Table 4:

- **V:** If challenge  $i$  affects challenge  $j$
- **A:** If challenge  $j$  affects challenge  $i$  (one-way relationship)
- **X:** If two of challenges affect each other (two-way relationship)
- **O:** If two of challenges are unrelated (no relationship)

**Step 3:** Based on the structural self-interaction matrix (SSIM), V, A, X, and O symbols were assigned numeric values and demonstrated as initial reachability matrix in Table 5.

**Step 4:** Based on the initial reachability matrix, transitivity rule was checked and then final reachability matrix was created as indicated in Table 6. The way of transitivity checking and applying can be explained with an example. Normally there is no direct relationship between C1 and C6. But there is a relationship between C4 and C6, in addition there is a relationship between C1 and C4. So, according to the transitivity rule of ISM, we can conclude in the final reachability matrix that there is also (indirectly) a relationship between C1 and C6 by depending on the relationship between C4 and C6.

**Step 5:** In the next step, challenges shown in the reachability matrix were partitioned based on their dependence and driving powers as demonstrated in Table 7.

Table 4 Structural self-interaction matrix (SSIM)

		C6	C5	C4	C3	C2
C1	Security issues	O	V	X	O	O
C2	Cultural issues	V	V	V	X	–
C3	Social pressure	O	V	V	–	–
C4	Lack of support	X	X	–	–	–
C5	Hard working conditions	X	–	–	–	–
C6	Demanding people	–	–	–	–	–

Table 5 Initial reachability matrix

	C6	C5	C4	C3	C2	C1
C1	0	1	1	0	0	1
C2	1	1	1	1	1	0
C3	0	1	1	1	1	0
C4	1	1	1	0	0	1
C5	1	1	1	0	0	0
C6	1	1	1	0	0	0

Table 6 Final reachability matrix

	C6	C5	C4	C3	C2	C1	Driving power
C1	1*	1	1	0	0	1	4
C2	1	1	1	1	1	1*	6
C3	1*	1	1	1	1	1*	6
C4	1	1	1	0	0	1	4
C5	1	1	1	0	0	1*	4
C6	1	1	1	0	0	1*	4
Dependence power	6	6	6	2	2	6	

Revised values after application of transitivity rule.

Table 7 Level partition

Variable	Reachability set	Antecedents set	Intersection set	Level
C1	C6, C5, C4, C1	C6, C5, C4, C3, C2, C1	C6, C5, C4, C1	I
C2	C6, C5, C4, C3, C2, C1	C2, C3	C2, C3	II
C3	C6, C5, C4, C3, C2, C1	C2, C3	C2, C3	II
C4	C6, C5, C4, C1	C6, C5, C4, C3, C2, C1	C6, C5, C4, C1	I
C5	C6, C5, C4, C1	C6, C5, C4, C3, C2, C1	C6, C5, C4, C1	I
C6	C6, C5, C4, C1	C6, C5, C4, C3, C2, C1	C6, C5, C4, C1	I

**Step 6:** In the last step, based on the level partition process (partition of reachability matrix into different levels), an interpretive structural model was developed regarding the challenges that faced by social entrepreneurs in the gastronomy industry. As demonstrated in Figure 2, challenges of “security issues,” “lack of support,” “hard working conditions,” and “demanding people” are located in the first level of this hierarchical model. Moreover, other challenges, “cultural issues” and “social pressure” are positioned in the second level of interpretive structural model.

**Step 7:** After completing all the steps of Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM), MICMAC analysis was conducted to analyze and better understand the roles of different components. In order to determine this, required data were gathered from the final reachability matrix that identified both dependence power (X) and driving power (Y) of variables. Then MICMAC analysis diagram was created based on the position coordinates of identified variables (Table 8).

The results of MICMAC (Matriced’ Impacts Croise’s Multiplication Appliquée a UN Classement) analysis indicate that (Figure 3) two challenges (C2 and C3) were found within the borders of group IV, which stands for driving variables. Besides this, the remaining challenges (C1, C4, C5, and C6) were located in the group III and named as linkage variables.

ISM findings revealed that “cultural issues” and “social pressure” are major barriers that challenge social entrepreneurs within the gastronomy environment. As indicated in Figure 2, these two challenges affect not only other challenges but also affect each other too. Also shown that “security issues,” “lack of support,” “hard working conditions,” and “demanding people” are referred to as other challenges that are located in the first level and also mutually affect each other.

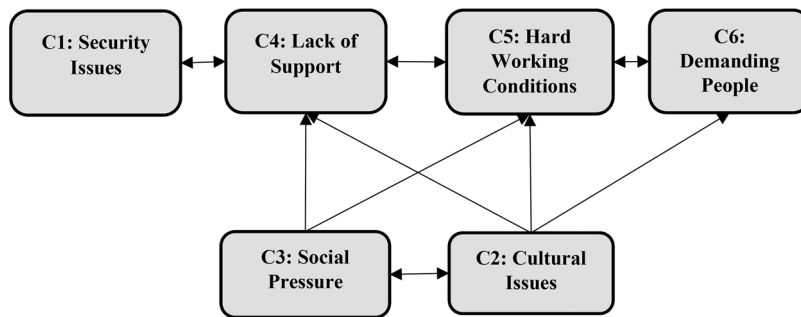


Figure 2 ISM model

Table 8 Position coordinates of identified variables

Variables	Dependence power (X)	Driving power (Y)
C1	6	4
C2	2	6
C3	2	6
C4	6	4
C5	6	4
C6	6	4

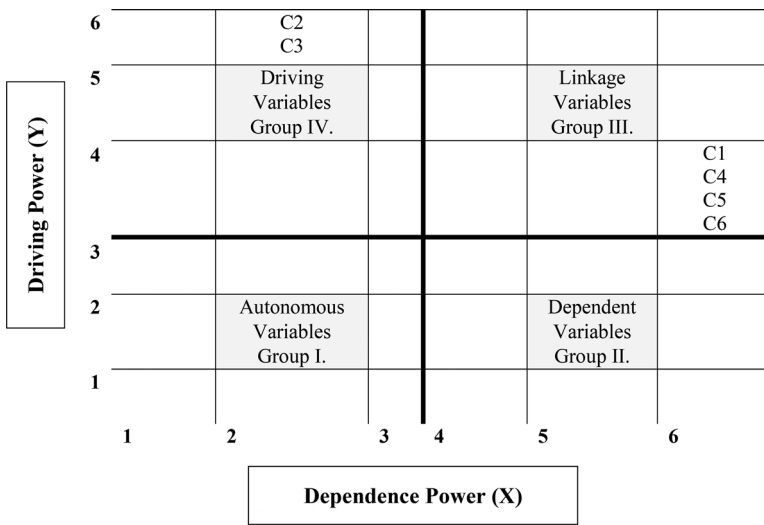


Figure 3 MICMAC analysis

The results of MICMAC analysis supported and validated the ISM findings. According to MICMAC results, the following inferences can be made:

- (1) C2 (cultural issues) and C3 (social pressure) were referred to as driving variables that have a strong drive power but weak dependence power oppositely. In other words, these two challenges possess the highest driving power but the lowest dependence power. This barrier thus has the strongest capability to influence other barriers and should be placed as the highest priority to address (have low dependency power and high driving power).
- (2) C1 (security issues), C4 (lack of support), C5 (hard working conditions), and C6 (demanding people) were referred to as linkage variables that have a strong drive power and strong dependence power as well. This result indicates that any action directed at these four barriers can affect other barriers and have a feedback influence on themselves (have high dependency power and high driving power).

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to study results, cultural issues affect the challenge of a lack of support. This is because culture-based issues such as the status of women, the role of women, marital status of women, different family structures, city culture, lifestyles, clothing style, and habits can affect the degree of support received by social entrepreneurs. Lack of support involves disapproval of others such as family, society, and the local community, lack of governmental support, low investments, low tourism income, and alienation of farmers. It is not unusual then for difficulties in the cultural context to affect possible supports and eventually entrepreneurship success. Because cultural shape impacts the public interest, public interest promotes support in terms of employment

and investment. Similarly, cultural issues cause social entrepreneurs to work under brutal conditions.

Hard-working conditions are subject to challenging situations such as prohibitions, limitations, refusal of collaboration, complex and high qualifications, high mental and physical effort, and long working hours. Another challenge that cultural issues come with is the demanding human nature with endless expectations, prone to laziness, and goodwill abuse while searching for a moment to take advantage of people. Another main obstacle, social pressure, affects similarly two challenges: lack of support and hard-working conditions. Some negative word of mouth, negative opinions of others, overthinking about the comments people made, protests, prejudgments, high career expectations of others, and despising the disadvantaged groups within the society can reduce the degree of support received by social entrepreneurs. Moreover, these mentioned social pressures may also cause social entrepreneurs to work in undesired conditions. The result of the research also shows that the security problem stands in a more independent position than other difficulties. This can be explained by the geographical pattern of where entrepreneurship occurs.

According to the MICMAC analysis results, it can be said that cultural issues and social pressure were referred to as driving variables with strong drive power but weak dependence power. These two challenges possess the highest driving power but the lowest dependence power. These barriers thus have the strongest capability to influence other barriers and should be placed as the highest priority to address. In this context, this result proves and reinforces the findings of ISM. In addition to this, security issues, lack of support, hard working conditions, and demanding people were referred to as linkage variables that have a strong drive power and strong dependence power. So, this result indicates that any action directed at these four barriers can affect other barriers and have a feedback influence on themselves.

Unlike general social entrepreneurship, where barriers such as “funding,” “government policies,” and “lack of legal structure” (Terziev and Arabska, 2017; Chandra et al., 2021) dominate, social gastronomy entrepreneurs are uniquely affected by the interplay of cultural issues and societal pressure. These challenges are amplified by the gastronomy industry’s reliance on interpersonal connections, community engagement, and cultural acceptance, which are less pronounced in other social entrepreneurship domains.

Furthermore, while social entrepreneurship literature often cites “lack of entrepreneurial culture” and “public perceptions” as significant barriers (Malunga et al., 2014), the findings of this study emphasize the role of “demanding people.” This barrier, which refers to the exploitation of goodwill, excessive expectations, and opportunistic behaviors from beneficiaries or stakeholders, is particularly acute in the gastronomy sector, where entrepreneurs work closely with diverse groups in highly interactive and service-oriented environments.

Another unique finding of this study is the impact of “security issues” in social gastronomy entrepreneurship, which was found to operate independently from other barriers. While prior studies have discussed “conditions of the local environment” and “access to credit and market” (Short et al., 2009; Braga et al., 2014), the focus on security challenges in gastronomy reflects the sector’s distinct exposure to safety risks, which may arise from the physical nature of operations, interactions in public spaces, and the handling of perishable goods.

In addition to these distinctions, this study highlights the hierarchical relationships among the identified barriers. Cultural issues and social pressure are identified not only as standalone challenges but also as driving variables that significantly influence

other barriers such as “lack of support” and “hard-working conditions.” This interdependence underscores the complexity of social gastronomy entrepreneurship compared to general social entrepreneurship, where barriers are often analyzed in isolation.

## 6 IMPLICATIONS

This study utilized interpretive structural modeling (ISM) and MICMAC analysis to explore and categorize the challenges faced by social gastronomy entrepreneurs, identifying six primary barriers: “hard working conditions,” “lack of support,” “social pressure,” “cultural issues,” “demanding people,” and “security issues.” The findings highlight that cultural issues and social pressure have the strongest driving power, influencing other challenges significantly.

The study contributes to the field of social entrepreneurship by emphasizing the sector-specific challenges unique to gastronomy. Existing frameworks on entrepreneurial barriers are extended with new insights into how cultural dynamics and societal pressures uniquely shape the operations of social gastronomy initiatives. By identifying “demanding people” and “security issues” as new challenges not previously emphasized in the literature, this study broadens the understanding of barriers in the context of gastronomy entrepreneurship.

The study’s findings suggest several practical implications for addressing the challenges faced by social gastronomy entrepreneurs. To mitigate cultural issues, managers can implement diversity training programs, engage with local communities to align initiatives with cultural expectations, and foster cross-cultural understanding through team-building activities. Addressing social pressure requires strengthening public relations efforts, engaging in community dialogues to promote awareness, and collaborating with local influencers to counter societal biases. To overcome a lack of support, entrepreneurs should establish partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations for funding and policy backing, advocate for supportive policies, and develop mentorship programs for emerging entrepreneurs. Hard-working conditions can be alleviated by prioritizing employee well-being through flexible schedules and mental health support, as well as adopting labor-saving technologies to improve efficiency. For managing demanding individuals, clear communication protocols and staff training can help navigate challenging interactions effectively. Finally, security concerns can be addressed through risk assessments, enhanced security measures, and the strategic selection of safer operational locations. These actionable strategies aim to create a more supportive and sustainable environment for social gastronomy ventures.

## 7 FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

With the results of this research, exciting new research opportunities have emerged. As mentioned earlier, cultural issues and social pressures were found to be the most powerful challenges in social gastronomy entrepreneurship. An in-depth examination of these challenges from the perspective of different disciplines, separately or together, will yield some fascinating studies. These challenges, which can be addressed in the axis of sociology, psychology, geography, and gastronomy, may have the possibility to be pioneers in minimizing the difficulties in social gastronomy entrepreneurship.

Social change cannot be separated from geography. For example, gender discrimination is very intense in underdeveloped or developing geographies. Therefore, the

discourses of two women entrepreneurs in this study also shaped the result of the research. Because Ebru Baybara Demir and Ayşe Tükrükçü strongly emphasized that cultural and social pressure makes their job difficult, mainly because they are women. Therefore, future studies on social gastronomy entrepreneurship can conduct a challenging study by comparing the geographies.

Current research is a qualitative study that stands out with its exploratory nature. Next studies can examine the challenges addressed in this study more in-depth and in a measurable way. For example, the model's validity can be tested by measuring the strength of the relations between the difficulties addressed in this study with such analyses as the structural equation modeling.

In this study, two actors of the social gastronomy movement were used as the sample: entrepreneurs and academics. Although the sample of academics is sufficient for the ISM analysis, the sample used in determining the challenges is the main limitation of this study due to the scarcity of known social gastronomy entrepreneurs worldwide. Thus, further studies may benefit from other network members in the social gastronomy movement, such as farmers, companies, and grassroots organizations who use the power of food for social change.

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