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Exploring the Behaviours of Small Business Entrepreneurs in the Gastro-Dining Industry: Risks, Relationships and Gourmet Chefs in Action

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Abstract: A growing number of chefs are setting up their own businesses to offer a gastro-dining experience in places without an extensive gastro-dining tradition. In this context, our purpose is to explore the behaviours of entrepreneurs of small businesses in the newly developing Turkish gastro-dining market. We adopted a qualitative research design to gain insight into the perceptions of ten entrepreneurs. Our findings demonstrate that the participants' entrepreneurial behaviour can be explained through effectuation logic. This manifests itself through control over consumption, learning and improvising within the flow of life as well as the exchange of informal and positive relationships with stakeholders. Furthermore, we discovered that those entrepreneurs with gastronomy training also exhibited entrepreneurial behaviour in terms of aiming to become a brand, with a causation logic along with effectuation.

Keywords: entrepreneurial behaviour; qualitative techniques; effectuation; causation; gastro-dining

JEL Classification: J14; L26

1 Introduction

A couple of decades ago, it was almost unimaginable that people living in countries where there was little gastro-dining tradition would pay high prices at chef-owned restaurants. Yet, in recent years, such restaurants have been attracting considerable attention of customers outside the borders of France (Petruzelli and Svejenova 2015).

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Thus, a growing number of chefs are opening their own restaurants and becoming successful entrepreneurs of small businesses. Hence, the behaviours of small business entrepreneurs in gastro-dining industry drew our attention as an interesting and new phenomenon in a setting without a long gastro-dining tradition, in our case Turkey.

We focused on the behaviours of small business entrepreneurs in the gastro-dining industry for two reasons. First, there has been limited research on this type of entrepreneur in the mainstream entrepreneurship literature. The extant entrepreneurship literature has been mainly focused on food entrepreneurs, without recognising small business entrepreneurs in the gastro-dining industry as having a distinct profile, with their own quintessential characteristics (Svejenova, Slavich, and Abdelgawad 2015). These entrepreneurs can also be described as gastro-entrepreneurs, who take considerable action to fulfil their intention of selling an extraordinary gourmet-dining experience (Lane 2014) and thus, they depict unique types of behaviour. Second, gastro-entrepreneurs' popularity has spread beyond France, into new settings without strong and long gastro-dining traditions. Yet, despite this growing market, gastro-dining is still in its emerging phase in many countries, including Turkey (Yılmaz and Şahin 2021). It is apparent that only a handful of gastro-entrepreneurs reject the conventional path with higher profits, such as opening a street food restaurant in a busy area. These gastro-entrepreneurs seek ways to transform the dining sector by changing – if not revolutionising – the orthodox dining habits in their home countries and thereby, disseminating gastro-dining (Navarro-Dols and Gonzalez Pernia 2020). This type of behaviour also involves a lot of risk, since a new offering, such as a gastro-dining experience, is a kind of product where demand for it is almost impossible to ascertain. In this regard, examining different types of entrepreneurial behaviours in distinctive industries (Hovig, Pettersen and Aarstad 2018; Parker et al. 2021), especially in profoundly uncertain settings, is salient, given the different types of risks and challenges faced by entrepreneurs in nurturing their small businesses (Zahra, Wright, and Abdelgawad 2014). In distinctive industries, entrepreneurs can engage in idiosyncratic entrepreneurial behaviours (Morrish 2009) that would provide us with an optimum setting to explore the constant interplay between the entrepreneur' behaviour and context (Alvarez, Barney, and Anderson 2013). This perspective is also consistent with the argument that the apparent recognition and research of context will promote the advancement of entrepreneurship literature (Zahra, Wright, and Abdelgawad 2014). Indeed, contextualisation can serve multiple purposes in studying entrepreneurship. Notably, it could help to delineate important phenomena that deserve studying and related research questions (Wiklund and Shepherd 2005), whilst also further generating alternative explanations of the existing entrepreneurship theories, thereby spurring researchers to

study it in greater depth and identify key contingencies that influence their form and effect (Rousseau and Fried 2001). Contextualisation can open the proverbial 'black box' underlying entrepreneurial phenomena within and across individual and organisational levels of the analysis (Hjorth, Jones, and Gartner 2008). We set out to address the following research question: How do entrepreneurs of small businesses make sense of their behaviours when venturing into the gastro-dining industry in Turkey?

To address our research question, we adopted a multiple case study approach based on ten individual cases to understand small business entrepreneurs' behaviour in the gastro-dining industry, according to individuals' subjective reality (Lecuna 2021) regarding the specific social contexts in which their experiences take place (Creswell and Poth 2016). We regard multiple case study approach as appropriate for attaining our aim and objectives as it facilitates responding to our "how" questions; comprehending the world from the perspective of those studied (Pratt 2009) and also allows us for analysis of a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context and systematic examination of commonalities and differences across cases (Eisenhardt 1989). By conducting a highly intensive and detailed analysis of the accounts produced by a small number of participants, we also managed to the catch the subtle nuances among diverse interpretations of small business entrepreneurs' behavior when operating in the gastro-dining industry in Turkey (Neergaard and Leitch 2015).

Our study contributes to the entrepreneurship literature by contextualising small entrepreneurs' behaviour and provides rich insights regarding this behaviour within a profoundly uncertain setting, which signals that within the context of small business entrepreneurs in gastro-dining industry the vocational training and specifically gastronomy training may influence the entrepreneurial choice as to whether to adopt a sole effectuation logic or a combination of this with a causation perspective.

To report our findings and contributions, we have composed our paper as follows. In the first part, we provide the literature review and then, we explain the research methods in detail, which is followed by presentation of the findings. Finally, we discuss our findings and contributions.

2 Literature Review

Entrepreneurial behaviour is described as "*enterprising human action in pursuit of the generation of value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets*" (Teague and Gartner 2017, p. 74). Entrepreneurial behaviour pertains to the enactment of entrepreneurial

processes by individuals, who passionately believe they have identified a unique solution to an unmet need or unresolved problem, and are willing to expend great effort in order to satisfy these demands. Accordingly, entrepreneurial behaviour is directly associated with seizing and/or creating opportunities, making decisions and social skills (Kirkley 2016).

In recent years, entrepreneurial behaviour in unfamiliar and fragile environments, such as in new and underdeveloped sectors, has drawn the attention of many scholars (Cavusgil 2021). Research has shown that, entrepreneurs in new and small firms often improvise and 'muddle-through' (Covin and Slevin 1989; O'Toole et al. 2021; Welter and Smallbone 2003; Yan and Manolova 1998). Small business entrepreneurs usually improvise by using a decision-making method of successive, restricted comparisons, where decision-making and acting occur simultaneously (Welter 2005). This would also imply that they have a high tolerance for risk-taking, uncertainty and ambiguity (Baker and Welter 2020). Under uncertain conditions, entrepreneurs have to organize resources, take decisions, negotiate, and compete in an unanticipatable market, where the possible outcomes of the decisions are not known when the decision is made (Alvarez and Barney 2005) and outcome is contingent on responses of other individuals including customers, suppliers, partners etc(Holm, Opper, and Nee 2013). In particular, in new and unfamiliar markets, where the basic strategic options are limited, small business entrepreneurs have to adopt a trial and error process, use their understanding of the industry, market and business environment along with their expertise and abilities and build informal relationships (Welter 2011). For example, Parker et al. (2021) found that entrepreneurs operating in uncertain and fast changing environments usually acquire the skills of existing employees for project development that is associated with the commitment of internal stakeholders. In a similar vein, Daniel, Domenico, and Sharma's (2015) research on home-based online business entrepreneurs and Morrish's (2009) study on portfolio entrepreneurs are also important in terms of providing examples and explanations on how small business entrepreneurs muddle through, by simultaneously decision-making and acting, rather than planning their business development in the longer term in uncertain settings.

3 Methodology

We used multiple case study methodology, as it is appropiate when (a) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context and (b) proposing how questions (Yin 2009). Multiple case study methodology is used for in-depth investigations into a central phenomenon to facilitate an understanding of complex

issues According to Eisenhardt (1989), Maxwell et al. (1998) and Yin (1994), cases should be selected according to how well they represent the phenomenon under consideration and as emphasized by Bickman, Rod, and Hedrik (1998), there is no aim here of trying to determine causal links or to generalize. In this connection, as we seek to explore the phenomenon of behaviors of small business entrepreneurs in gastro-dining industry within a real life context and proposed how research question for this aim and used in depth investigations to facilitate the understanding of complex behaviors of small business entrepreneurs in gastro-dining industry with no intention to make generalization, we select the multiple case study methodology.

3.1 Context of the Analysis and Sample Selection

Despite the scarcity of the data available for the numbers of ventures in the food industry, it is reported that the out-of-home food consumption industry has been growing in recent years in Turkey (Özdemir, Çalışkan, and Yılmaz 2015). The food industry, which had an economic volume of 55 billion TL in 2015 increased by roughly 2.3 times to reach 125 billion TL by the end of the 2019. It has also been reported that the growth of the food industry has led to approximately a 5 % increase in the numbers of restaurants per year (Deloitte 2020).

Nonetheless, these statistics only reflect the number of restaurants and fail to register the number of gastro-dining restaurants owned by chef entrepreneurs, who have the aim of selling the extraordinary gourmet-dining experience (Yılmaz and Şahin 2021). According to the data of Deloitte Turkey (2020), the number of gastro-dining restaurants is included in that for luxury restaurants, although not all of the latter are owned by a chef seeking to sell a gourmet-dining experience by using seasonal and local products (Top and Yarmacı 2021).

So, the access to the actual data regarding to the numbers of gastro-dining restaurants and also the entrepreneurs owning these restaurants was challenging. Indeed, the gastro-dining industry is a newly emerging sector in Turkey where there is no strong and long gastro-dining traditions and unlike in settings with stronger gastro-dining tradition such as in Europe, the number of entrepreneurs of small businesses in the gastro-dining industry in Turkey are unknown (Navarro-Dols and Gonzalez Pernia 2020; Top and Yarmacı 2021). For this reason, we relied on Incili Gastronomi Rehberi (published first in 2017), an equivalent of the Michelin Food Guide for Turkey, which identifies the gastro-dining restaurants owned by chef entrepreneurs in addition to other luxury restaurants. According to the Incili Gastronomi Rehberi, there were only 16 chefs, who were the entrepreneurs of small businesses in the gastro-dining industry in 2017. Among these 16, we approached

10 chefs based on three criteria. The first was that all of our participants must be both chefs and entrepreneurs, who ventured their small businesses in the gastro-dining industry. Our second criterion was that participants' restaurants must be located in Istanbul. Third, was that all participants had to hold a minimum of two pearls (like two stars in the Michelin Guide) by Incili Gastronomi Rehberi. All of these criteria meant that our participants belonged to a fairly homogenous group.

As a result, our purposive sample selection also aligns with our methodological approach as small sample sizes and fairly homogenous group participants are usually preferred in qualitative studies to perform a rich and detailed analysis for exploration of the "dynamics present within given settings" (Eisenhardt 1989, p. 534; Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2013).

3.2 Participants

Our small sample size enabled us to ensure the uniformity of the group based on entrepreneurial and profession-related characteristics as well as to explore the variability within the group from various perspectives. As such, we gained a more comprehensive understanding of the key themes of interest around the small business entrepreneurs' behaviour in the gastro-dining industry (Larkin, Shaw, and Flowers 2019), with no intention of seeking generalisation. Below, in Table 1, we depict the information regarding our participants.

As depicted on Table 1, three of the ten participants were female, they were all Turkish and six of them held a bachelor degree, while four of them had completed gastronomy education, either with a bachelor or masters degree. Their ages ranged from 40 to 70 and their experience in restaurant venturing spanned between 19 and 40 years. All of the participants' restaurants were located in the European part of İstanbul and the age of the restaurants range from two to five years. While three of the participants had a local scope of action, for seven of them, this was both local and international. Their number of employees spanned between four and 14. Two of the participants had three pearls awarded by Incili Gastronomi Rehberi, while the other eight had two.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

We collected our data between 2017 and 2019 in Istanbul. Our in-depth interviews lasted 60 min on average and they were conducted and recorded by the first author. In order to enable our participants to explain the topics in their own words, we used an unstructured question at the beginning of each interview

Table 1: Participants' personal background.

Name	Nur	Cenk	Kaya	Cudi	Sarp	Bade	Duru	Mert	Selim	Musa
Age	67	70	40	48	70	40	42	44	41	50
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Male	Male	Male
Expertise	40 years	42 years	18 years	27 years	33 years	19 years	21 years	23 years	20 years	29 years
Education	No University Education	No University Education	No University Education	No University Education	Bachelor: Military Academy Masters Degree: Economics	Bachelor: Industrial Design	Bachelor: Psychology Masters Degree: Culinary School	Bachelor: Tourism, Gastronomy and Hotel Management	Bachelor: Tourism, Gastronomy and Hotel Management Masters degree: Gastronomy	Bachelor: Culinary Arts
Restaurant Location	Nişantaşı	Beyoğlu	Halkalı	Sirkeci	Bebek	Yeniköy	Levent	Galata	Kuruçeşme	Beyoğlu
Age of the restaurant	2	3	2	3	4	2	4	5	4	5
Scope of Action	Local	International & Local	Local	International & Local	International & Local	Local	International & Local	International & Local	International & Local	International & Local
Number of Employees	5	6	6	4	10	5	6	10	12	14
Number of earned pearls	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3

(Creswell and Poth 2016). That is, first, we asked our participants "Can you tell us your experience of venturing a gastro-dining industry in İstanbul? Subsequently, we asked four follow up questions. They were: What is your predisposition towards risk?", How do your personal attributes influence this predisposition?, How do your knowledge and skill sets influence your decisions whether to enter a venture or not? and With whom do you collaborate and how do you engage these people to have a direct impact on your business? Overall, we asked our participants minimum number of semi-structured questions in order to gain a first-person description of some specified domain of experience, where the participant largely sets the course of the dialogue (Cope 2005).

After each interview, the first author kept field notes and transcribed the recorded data (Phillippi and Lauderdale 2018). We also collected secondary data from other channels, including archival documents in the form of internet blogs as well as newspaper and TV coverage, prior to each interview, to address concerns about our small sample size. In order to conduct respondent validation, after each transcription of the tape recording, we showed these to our respondents (Annells 2006). Below in Table 2, we present a brief review of our data analysis consisting of five stages consistent with the qualitative research design used by Kempster and Cope (2010).

As depicted in Table 2, our data analysis was qualitative (Gibbs 2018). Moreover, an iterative process was performed that involved moving between the data and the emerging findings. As suggested by Neergard and Leitch (2015), we started by examining the data in the interviews, observations and documents independently. We used MAXQDA Analytics Pro 12, which is a qualitative software program that simplifies the analysis of qualitative data. In this way, we created descriptive codes based on a description regarding what the small business entrepreneur behaviour meant for our participants in their social context. We compared each other's coded files on an ongoing basis, aiming to identify potential conceptual patterns. Overall, we created 55 descriptive codes at the end of the first-order coding process. Later, by collapsing the similar descriptive codes into higher order nodes, we generated 12 themes, such that each would reflect a distinct experience. Finally, by finding commonalities between themes, we managed to collapse these 12 themes into four higher-order categories.

Below in Table 3, we provide the full list of emergent themes. As above explained, a total of 12 themes were identified and allocated across four higher-order categories.

As can be seen from Table 3, two of these 12 themes were found to be especially significant and common across the ten individual cases: "learning by doing" and "having support of an entourage". Whilst there is a relatively irregular distribution of themes among participants, the first three higher-order categories are common to all of our cases.

Table 2: Stages of data analysis.

Stages	Analysis process	Analysis level	Description
Stage 1	Familiarisation with the data	Reading of the case	Reading and re-reading of the transcripts and so gaining insight into the personal accounts (Senior et al. 2002). Memos were recorded as notes on the key issues (Patton 2002).
Stage 2	Identification of meaning attachment for each transcript	Case diagnosis	Drawing on Hycner's (1985) technique, what units of meaning were attached to the small business entrepreneurial behaviour in gastro-dining industry were identified. These units were then grouped to form our descriptive codes. We used MAXQDA Analytics Pro 12, which is a qualitative software program that simplifies the analysis of qualitative data. By comparing each other's coded files on an ongoing basis, we created 55 descriptive codes.
Stage 3	Categorisation	Developing themes from descriptive codes	Associating the holistic descriptive analysis with clusters of meaning. The similar descriptive codes were collapsed into higher order nodes for each account (Smith et al. 1999). As such, we obtained 12 themes. For example, comments such as, "not wanting bank loans due to high interest rates" or "going to a bank will be more costly" collapsed into a theme marked as "coping with limited funds".
Stage 4	Identification of patterns	Developing higher-order categories	A meta-level analysis was conducted to catch similar patterns across individual cases (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021). The themes were contrasted and compared to detect similarities and differences. As such, we generated four higher-order categories out of 12 themes. For instance, the themes of "coping with limited funds", "overcoming promotion challenges" and "slow transitions" were categorised into a higher-order category as "control over consumption".
Stage 5	Theoretical explanation	Theoretical explanation through abstraction of higher order categories	The literature was drawn upon to generate a theoretical explanation at higher level abstraction of our higher order categories (Eisenhardt 1989). An iterative process was performed that involved moving between the data and theory, whilst being sensitive to the experiential claims of the participants (Yanow 2004). For instance, the higher-order categories "control over consumption" was theoretically explained in the discussion by the affordable loss principle of effectuation.

Table 3: Emergent themes derived from gastro-entrepreneurs' experiences.

Higher-order categories	Emergent themes	Nur	Cenk	Kaya	Cudi	Sarp	Bade	Duru	Mert	Selim	Musa
Control over consumption	Coping with limited funds	•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•
	Overcoming promotion challenges	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
	Slow transitions	•	•	•	•	•		•			
Learning and improvising within the flow of life	Learning from and making use of traumatic events	•		•	•			•			
	Learning by doing	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Leveraging meaningful coincidences		•	•	•						
	Using adaptation capabilities	•	•	•	•			•		•	•
Exchange of informal and positive relationships with stakeholders	Familial relations with employees		•			•	•	•			
	Collaborating with local food suppliers					•		•		•	•
	Having support of an entourage	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Aiming to become a brand	Having Foresight							•	•	•	•
	Reliance on financial knowledge								•		•

4 Findings

We explain our higher order categories and subsequent themes that belong to these higher-order categories below in detail.

4.1 Higher Order Category 1: Control Over Consumption

This higher-order category reflects that our participants' predisposition towards risk is shaped by their careful, cautious and parsimonious character attributes, which trigger a drive for control over consumption. Whilst our participants are taking the high risk of transforming the dining sector, they tend to balance this through controlling over consumption. This higher-order category consists of the following themes: "coping with limited funds", "overcoming promotion challenges" and "slow transition".

4.1.1 First Theme: Coping with Limited Funds

The first of these is common to eight participants. The participants avidly expressed how they had to cope with limited funds, relying on savings or borrowing to start up their restaurants. For example, Duru told us:

> I borrowed money from my father, but it was not much and I could have failed. So, I had to use it wisely. I made it very convenient. So makeshift.

In a similar vein, another participant Kaya stated that:

> I had a few savings, so I had to be very careful in opening up a place. And this was the only place I could afford even though I did not like the location.

A sense of cautiousness towards risk is quite clear in both of the accounts above. Both of the participants had to cope carefully with little money for their entrepreneurial journey, since only by being frugal could they avoid overspending and getting into debt. We can also see that what little money there was to be risked was not enough for the optimum conditions and they had to make do with what they had. This was clearly depicted in Nur's account *"the money was even not enough to open a restaurant, so we converted our caravan into a diner"*. The theme coping with limited funds was identified in other participants' accounts, such as *"the only capital that I could afford was to open up a small place"* (Cudi), *"the only money that I could risk to lose"* (Cenk), "*the spare money for an entrepreneurial adventure*" (Selim), *"the little pension fee that I could afford to risk losing"* (Sarp) and *"little family capital"* (Musa).

These scarce funds were usually invested without expecting any projected returns and because they were small, the potential risk of substantial financial loss was under control.

4.1.2 Second Theme: Overcoming Promotion Challenges

Our second theme in this higher-order category is "overcoming promotion challenges", which was shared by eight accounts. According to these participants, allocating extra budget for promotion in the first years of their start-up was nigh on impossible. For example, Bade expressed that:

> You have already limited capital, that is not enough for marketing. If you cook delicious food, people know your name and they come and they promote you to others.

Cenk, in particular, believed that making aggressive marketing plans cost a lot and that they were not a priority. When asked how his restaurant became famous, he answered:

> Promotion was not my priority and I had no money for it. Instead, I did a good word of mouth. I still don't have a web site. But, customers are calling us from London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles.

Both accounts above illustrate that they opted for whisper marketing to earn a reputation since they had no budget for promotion. Sarp's commitment to whisper marketing is exemplary when stating that: *"The money spent for marketing is costly in terms of time and money. Word of mouth is the best"*. This perspective was not only shared by Cudi, who believed that *"explaining yourself to customers saves your money and time"*, but also, by Duru, Nur, Kaya and Mert, who similarly shared these phrases in common, thus showing that not only money, but also, time was limited for marketing purposes.

4.1.3 Third-Theme: Slow Transitions

Our last theme that forms our first higher order category is "slow transitions", which was evident in six individual accounts. This theme reflects the participants' gradual transition from very small diners to full-fledged restaurants. Regarding which, Nur mentioned that:

> When I first open my gourmet-restaurant, a gourmet-dining restaurant, I had only four tables and eight chairs; we grew later slowly.

Slow transition was illustrated as *"starting with only a few people and hiring new employees with increased earnings"* (Cenk), *"growing very slowly as the number of*

customers are increasing" (Kaya) or *"doing everything on your own in the first years"* (Cudi). Duru was even more explicit, when she explained that:

> In the first four months, my restaurant was empty. Later, we grew slowly. Until then, I did not employ unnecessary personnel or buy unnecessary equipment.

Sarp also had a similar approach, stating that:

> At first, there was me and two more people. Later, we grew slowly and also, moved to a more spacious place.

All six participants' accounts demonstrate that they aimed to lower the risk that could stem from investing in unnecessary equipment and personnel. They had gradually transformed their business, which evidenced their cautious character attribute, thus indicating a drive for control over growth related consumption. By doing so, they had not risked more resources than they could afford before being sure that they had enough customers.

4.2 Higher Order Category 2: Learning and Improvising Within the Flow of Life

This higher-order category relates to the process of entrepreneurs' building up their knowledge and skills trajectory within the flow of life, subsequently using them as a resource for entrepreneurial decision making. Most participants explained how they had acquired their knowledge and skills, eventually leading up to their restaurant start-up when the opportunity arose. This higher order category consists of the following four themes: "learning from and making use of traumatic events", "learning by doing", "leveraging meaningful coincidences", and "using adaptation capabilities".

4.2.1 First Theme: Learning from and Making Use of Traumatic Events

The first of these is "learning from and making use of traumatic events", as revealed in four accounts. This theme tends to illustrate that one can turn negative incidents in life to one's advantage. Regarding which, Cudi stated that:

> I was very young when my father died. I went to Europe, where I found a job in a restaurant and discovered my talent. I was totally on my own. Likewise, opening up my second restaurant in Istanbul was due to my mother's sudden illness. I had to take care of her, so I closed my first restaurant in Europe and returned to Turkey.

In a similar vein, Nur expressed her feelings about when she lost her mother at five years old. She said:

> I lost my mother when I was child, So, I had to enter into the kitchen at a young age, but I liked it afterwards and recognised my cooking abilities, I later decided to do it as a job; I opened several restaurants.

As can be seen from both of the accounts above, traumatic events forced Nur and Cudi to become a chef first and later an entrepreneur. Loss of parents made them not only strong, but also, able to sense their own talent in cooking. Eventually, early experiences in cooking helped them to gain extensive knowledge about cooking and later, they drew on this when establishing their ventures. Whilst the traumas might not have been as extreme as those of Cudi and Nur, traumatic events steered the life of Duru and Kaya. Duru explained that she owed her talent exploration in cooking to the divorce of her parents. She revealed that:

> My parents divorced when I was 10 and I had to move with my father to another city. When my friends visited me, I entered into the kitchen and cooked for them. They told me I was talented and I liked it. I later decided to convert it into money.

Similar to Nur, we can also see in Duru's account the absence of a mother figure in childhood. However, this challenge helped them to realise their talent and also guided them to know more about cooking by forcing them to practise a lot of cooking at a young age. Later, both of them decided to use their talent and know-how for creating their venture.

Whilst Kaya's story was:

> I had a dispute with my family, I left them and came to Istanbul, where I had to work in various restaurants as busser, waitress or assistant chef. I learned a lot during this process that I used to open up my first restaurant.

This shows that, like Cudi, the negative incident of detaching from family pushed him into finding his feet, becoming first a chef and later, an entrepreneur. All of the four accounts reveal that these participants learnt something from traumatic events in the form of self-discovery, exploration of talent and/or acquisition of knowhow about gourmet cooking, which served them well in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

4.2.2 Second Theme: Learning by Doing

The second theme, "learning by doing", is the one of the two shared by all participants. This was depicted as *"doing fast-food in the first couple of years"* (Nur), *"cleaning lambs' heads and trotters, planting the crops and harvesting"* (Kaya),

"*cooking burgers for military personnel during military years*" (Sarp),*"doing catering for two years"* (Mert) *or "doing pastry, despite that not being my intention"* (Bade). These phrases demonstrate that participants tried many things before they specialised in a certain type of cuisine and that it took some time to become a reputable chef. In particular, Bade emphasised how she even made pastry even though she owns a meat restaurant now. The same is true for others as well. Subsequent to their engagement with fast-food, such as burgers (Sarp) and toast (Nur), both of these participants now specialise in seafood and assorted hors d'oeuvres, respectively. Participants usually learnt cooking during temporary jobs, such as Cenk working on a cruise ship as busser or sommelier for five years, Kaya working as sous-chef in a five star hotel in South America, Cudi's assistance to a Michelin Star Chef for three years in Europe and Musa's stay in the North America for four years, where he studied gastronomy, working in various restaurants. All of these situations reveal that our participants had various temporary job experiences that lasted for some years in some cases, where they learnt the key cooking skills through much practice and also discovered their favourite cuisine. They later used these experiential skills and knowledge to start up their restaurants.

Yet, this was just a gastro side of "learning by doing". In our interviews, we also explored the entrepreneurial side of this theme. Regarding which, Selim stated that:

> I failed dreadfully with my first restaurant. The main foundation stones of my current restaurant were formed from the mistakes there. I can count fifty things from wrong financing to the wrong location selection, from equipment to wrong investment. It cost me a lot of time, but I learned.

Likewise, Duru mentioned how she learned from her mistakes in her first restaurant that stayed open for three years, where she, in particular, implemented a flawed reservation system. Even though Musa did not fail in his first restaurant, he also mentioned that *"realising that after five years doing international cuisine this had not attracted customers, so I turned towards eastern Mediterranean cuisine"*. In a similar vein, Mert told us that he gave up selling *foie gras* after having learned that local fresh dishes were of more value to customers. Having learned from their mistakes, these participants opened new restaurants.

4.2.3 Third Theme: Leveraging Meaningful Coincidences

Our third theme in this higher-order category is "leveraging meaningful coincidences", which refers to participants' capacity to seize unexpected opportunities when starting-up their restaurants. This theme was found in three accounts and it

reflects the participants' skills of being in the right place at the right time. For example, Cudi told us that:

> While I was passing by I saw suddenly this place. It was not very suitable for opening up a gourmet-dining restaurant, but I had that calibre to convert it into a nice restaurant, so I rented it.

A similar experiential claim was also made by Cenk, who stated that:

> It was a bit of coincidence that the current place was located across from my old workplace. I trusted my instincts that I could open up here a gourmet-dining restaurant.

These two respondents' accounts demonstrate the coincidence of finding a place for their restaurants. Indeed, both entrepreneurs did not have any criteria for a particular place and they stumbled across the location for their business. From the moment they saw the places, both entrepreneurs knew they had the skills to use them as their gastro-dining restaurant locations.

In other accounts, leveraging coincidences refers not only the skills of converting the locations into gourmet-dining restaurants, but also, identifying the people to conduct business with. For example, Kaya explained how he came across his future business partner in his previous workplace and how he understood that he could go into business with him, stating that:

> One day, I met there a wealthy customer, who offered me partnership. But when I saw him, I thought this is someone one can open up a restaurant with. You could not do it with everyone. But it was also my ability to differentiate the right type of people from the wrong in terms of doing business.

This account stresses the importance of the coincidence of running into the right type of people. However, it was Kaya's skill to sense that he had met someone he could do business with. Here we see again the ability of an entrepreneur in leveraging meaningful coincidences.

4.2.4 Fourth Theme: Using Adaptation Capabilities

Our last theme in this higher-order category is "using adaptation capabilities", which was shared by seven participants, referring to the utilisation of participants' capabilities to adapt the attributes of gastro-dining to the local setting. Regarding which, Cudi stated that:

> At first, I also included kebabs on my menu besides gourmet dishes. This is important, because you have to fit in with the environment here first to pay your bills.

Likewise, Nur referred this theme by saying:

> My first restaurant was a caravan, since the municipality at that time was allowing only mobile vendors on the beach to work. So, I had no option but to fit in with the environment.

By using their adaptation capabilities both of the entrepreneurs controlled their risk that their gourmet-dining dishes might not be liked by local customers, by continuing to sell conventional food until the innovative dishes were appreciated by customers. Using adaptation capabilities was variously explicated as *"being flexible to fit into the context"* (Musa), *"at least, I adapted the presentation of the dishes"* (Duru), *"making a lot of adaptation"* (Kaya), *"being resilient"*, (Cenk) or *"you have to adapt every flavour to the people of the country"* (Selim).

4.3 Higher-Order Category 3: Exchange of Informal and Positive Relationships with Stakeholders

Our third higher-order category is "exchange of informal and positive relationships with stakeholders", which is associated with the participants' interaction with other people in integrating them into the business through such relations. In this regard, it can be argued that participants co-create the business of selling the gourmet-dining experience with their employees, entourage and suppliers as their stakeholders. This category consists of the following three first-order themes: "familial relations with employees", "having the support of an entourage" and "collaborating with suppliers".

4.3.1 First theme: Familial Relations with Employees

Among these three first-order themes, "familial relations with employees" is shared by four participants and it is often depicted as using the employees as an asset that yields a long-term contribution to the restaurant. In this respect, the participants' attitudes towards their employees are positive and informal, such as seeing them as part of their family and making them teammates. For example, Sarp told us that:

> My employees are like my family. We celebrate the birthdays of our employees here. Take their pictures and print them on the birthday cake.

A similar approach was also evident in Bade's account, who stated that:

> Well, my employees are like my siblings. They have been here with us for a very long time. We love them a lot. They are part of our restaurant.

Both of the accounts above show that employees are seen like family members, rather than just the workforce. In other examples of this theme, special emphasis is given to the long-term relationships and loyalty. For example, Duru's focus was on the long-term relationships with employees. She said that:

> I have usually long-term employees. I never recruit someone who has spent three months in each restaurant.

Cenk, on the other hand, put the emphasis on loyalty by mentioning that, *"I have loyal employees, who have been here with me since I opened this place".* Overall, all four entrepreneurs sought to control the risk of low service quality working through long lasting familial relationships with employees.

4.3.2 Second Theme: Collaborating with Local Food Suppliers

The second theme of this higher-order category is *"collaborating with local food suppliers"*, which was reported on by four participants. As the access to fresh, organic and seasonal ingredients is essential for gastro-dining, participants seek to collaborate with local food suppliers. For example, Duru told us how she has built a good relationship with her egg supplier. She said:

> I always build special relations with local food sellers. They are essential in our business since better ingredients make better food. I always buy from the same suppliers.

A similar approach was also articulated by Sarp, who told us that:

> I have very good relations with my suppliers, pay their money always on time and never not paying the debts. Therefore, the best suppliers work with us. This is important since you need the best ingredients.

As both of the accounts illustrate, the best suppliers are indispensable for the gourmet-dining sector and thus, through informal relations both of these entrepreneurs have striven to build strong collaboration with them. A special emphasis is given to the length of this good relationship in the case of Selim, who stated that:

> "I don't like changing suppliers. I have suppliers that I have worked with for a long time. They also know what quality product I want and act accordingly".

A similar approach was also followed my Musa, stating that:

> When we find them, we capitalise on these relationships for several years.

Overall, it can be concluded that all of these four accounts resemble a struggle for minimisation of the risk of having low quality ingredients by strongly engaging with the best suppliers.

4.3.3 Third Theme: Having Support of an Entourage

The last theme that constitutes this higher-order category is *"having support of an entourage"*, which was pertinent to all of the participants. Here, the entourage generally refers to the family members and friends as network providers for the entrepreneurial action. For example, Duru underlined the importance of his father's contribution to her entrepreneurial journey, when she told us that:

> When I decided to become a chef, my father set up an internship for me. I borrowed money from my father to open up my first restaurant.

In a similar vein, Bade told us of her brother's support:

> My brother is my partner here. I am in the kitchen; he is conducting the other operations.

Similar to Duru and Bade, Nur also appreciated the support of her son in helping her to run the restaurant outside of the kitchen. All three accounts here show us the valuable contribution of family men to the women participants. Yet, the help of family members is not just restricted to family men helping female participants. For example, Musa also admitted the assistance of his father and uncle in starting up his first restaurant. He said: *"My father and uncle assisted me financially"*. Similarly, Cudi went to Europe, where he started his gastronomy career under the roof of his uncle. In addition, some participants also attached importance to the support of their friends. Mert stressed the importance of the contribution of his friends, when he told us:

> My partner today was a friend of mine, who I knew earlier and he was someone I dreamt about doing business with some day.

In the same vein, Kaya said that *"My friend arranged for me a job in a five-star hotel chain in South America, where I learn the necessary skills I use in my restaurant here"*. The support of friends was expressed often in such as *"A friend of ours built a farm in Çatalca, he raises everything we demand"* (Bade), *"my friend's uncle introduced me to the famous chef, who taught me a lot"* (Selim), *"one of my ex-colleagues is now my meat supplier"* (Sarp) or *"my friends in my home village provided me some of my employees" (Cenk).*

Overall, it can be seen that the exchange of informal and positive relations with stakeholders is not limited to employees or suppliers, for it is also associated with utilising the entourage.

All the three above discussed higher-order categories, consisting of ten themes, depict muddle-through process. However, our interviews with entrepreneurs also reveal that participants with gastronomy training also engage in planned process in

addition to muddle-through process. Regarding which, during our interviews we managed to capture a final higher-order category, namely *"Aiming to become a brand"*.

4.4 Higher Order Category 4: Aiming to Become a Brand

This higher-order category is only evident in four accounts. It represents a causation logic since it pertains to generalised pre-set goals with clear and consistent vision that also determines the action. In this regard, *"Aiming to become a brand"* consists of the two following themes: *"having foresight"* and *"reliance on prior knowledge"*.

4.4.1 First theme: Having Foresight

Among these, *"having foresight"* was shared by four entrepreneurs and it was exhibited as making the correct estimations of the participants about the future of their restaurants or about the future of the gourmet-dining market. As Musa told us:

> I have designed so far four restaurant brands. We are operating in Turkey now, but I am sure that they will also become a global brand.

In another account Mert asserted that:

> If you want to be a gourmet-dining restaurant brand, you need to achieve a rate of return of about 10–15 %, since you have plenty of expenses to cover.

Both of the accounts illustrate that some entrepreneurs consider it vitally important to make accurate future estimations. On the other hand, having foresight is often expressed in Duru words in making correct estimation for the location of a gastro-dining restaurant brand. She said:

> If you want to become a brand, you need to open up your restaurant in the vicinity of a fashionable neighbourhood, so that people will notice you.

Like Musa and Mert, she was able to predict the ideal location of a restaurant that could become a brand. Furthermore, Selim held that the gastro dining market in an emerging economy was dependent on the return of overseas tourists, stating that:

> I have created a restaurant brand. Yet, this will only grow with tourism. When the political instability is over, I believe that foreign tourists will come here again and this will eventually increase our brand equity.

4.4.2 Second Theme: Reliance on Financial Knowledge

Reliance on financial knowledge is our second theme of this higher-order category, which is evident in two accounts. This theme pertains to the ability to make precise calculations and/or undertake financial analysis in order to increase the restaurant's profits. As Musa asserted:

> Making financial planning is a part of preserving brand. We are reading reports; calculating EBITDA. This way you can see the end from the beginning in this way.

Regarding this matter, Mert stated that:

> In times of economic crises, for example, to keep the brand alive we managed to cut down our labour costs; we lowered our perishability costs. In this way, you know better how the things are going to end up.

In this respect, it can be argued that both entrepreneurs focused on finance to conduct more precise financial estimations and increase the expected return, which is integral to protecting the brand. Moreover, reliance on financial knowledge helped them to envision the end from the very beginning.

Below in Figure 1, the main results of the findings were summarised to present the observed experiences of small business entrepreneurs in the gastro-dining industry.

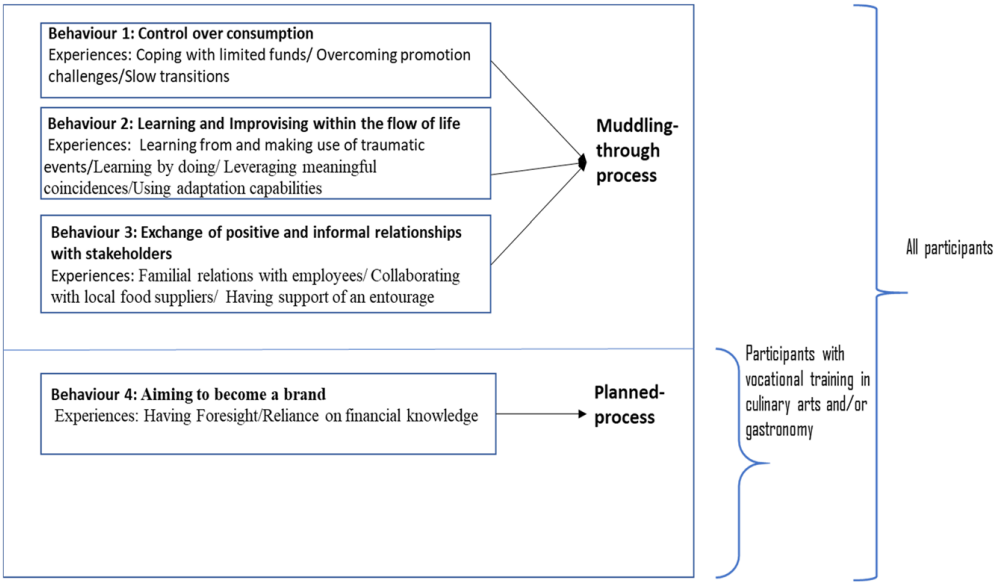

Figure 1: Observed experiences of small business entrepreneurs in gastro-dining industry.

As it can be inferred from Figure 1 that all small business entrepreneurs in gastro-dining industry engage in muddling-through process by retaining control over consumption, learning and improvising within the flow of life and exchanging positive and informal relationships with stakeholders, while small business entrepreneurs with vocational training also engage in planned process in addition to muddling through process.

5 Discussion

In employing a qualitative research design, we were able to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the behaviour of small business entrepreneurs in the gastro-dining industry from their own reported accounts (than we could have obtained through a quantitative survey). Specifically, our study provided the opportunity to reveal the intricate nuances of these entrepreneurs' individual situations, expectations, and actions, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the complexity of a gastro-entrepreneurial journey in a temptingly niche but precariously unpredictable market. Our participants demonstrated behaviour as small business entrepreneurs in the gastro-dining industry by retaining control over consumption, learning and improvising within the flow of life, exchanging informal and positive relationships with stakeholders and aiming to become a brand. Our research design along with the memos and field notes were incorporated into the identification of 12 themes that were then collapsed into four higher-order categories that addressed our research question.

The findings reveal that by keeping the resource utilisation in control, going with the flow and relying on positive connections with entourage, small business entrepreneurs in gastro-dining industry, indeed, "muddle through" to sell the extraordinary gourmet-dining experience (Lane 2014), as articulated in the entrepreneurship literature. This can be explained through an entrepreneurial effectuation perspective (Sarasvathy 2001), which is defined by Sarasvathy as *"a logic of entrepreneurial expertise, a dynamic and interactive process of creating new artefacts in the World"*. Effectuation theory assumes that, under uncertain circumstances, entrepreneurs apply a decision logic that is different from a traditional and rational model of entrepreneurship termed "causation" (Sarasvathy 2009). As opposed to causation decision logic, which involves envisioning the end from the beginning, maximising expected returns and undertaking competitive analyses to predict an uncertain future (Chandler et al. 2011), effectuation logic relies on experimenting with alternatives, where potential losses in the worst-case scenario are affordable, engaging pre-commitments and strategic alliances in an attempt to control an unpredictable

future and remaining flexible for taking advantage of changing environmental contingencies (Fisher 2012).

In this connection, keeping the consumption in control, can be related with the "affordable loss" principle of effectuation logic (Read, Song, and Smith 2009). This principle is defined as what entrepreneurs can afford and what they are willing to lose in entrepreneurial investments (Dew et al. 2009). Whilst our participants appeared to be risk takers, they were also precautious and parsimonious as they had only restricted resources. This frugal approach towards resource utilisation meant "affordable economic loss" to the most of our participants. In this connection, we argue that even if these resources would go away, those participants would be prepared to live without these assets and they somehow come to grips with worst case scenarios on what could go wrong and come up with creative ways to reduce potential loss as indicated by the affordable loss principle in effectuation literature (Dew et al. 2009). As such, entrepreneurs intend to lessen the impact of possible failure, because it makes failure clearly survivable by constraining the loss to something that the entrepreneur regards as affordable and is willing to lose in order to pursue the entrepreneurial journey (Dew et al. 2009). Yet, parsimony in resource utilisation also meant "affordable time loss" for some participants. By retaining control over consumption of time these participants did not risk expending more time than they could afford. For example, frugal approach towards time was observed, when participants did not invest their time on promotion and rather rely on "word of mouth". At this point, we challenge the extant literature on effectuation by suggesting that for some entrepreneurs "time" can also be considered as a further type of affordable loss (Cai et al. 2017).

Furthermore, learning and improvising within the flow of life in the gastro-dining industry can be explained through the "flexibility" and "experimentation" (Perry, Chandler, and Markova 2012) Some participants resonate with the experience "learning from and making use of traumatic events", where they built their knowledge and skill corridor within the flow of life, by also learning from the bitter aspects of life. As such, we identified an association between entrepreneurial resilience and flexibility notion of effectuation, which also exists in the entrepreneurship literature (D'andria, Gabarret, and Vedel 2018). The gastro-entrepreneurs, who faced the traumatic events managed to show the presence of emotional resilience to cope with the stressful situations and converted the bitter lemons into lemonade (Prashantham et al. 2019). Moreover, flexibility was also evidenced when the participants were leveraging the meaningful coincidences when they coincidentally find a suitable restaurant place or when they accidentally find a business partner. This would indicate the influence of "taking a chance", which we regard as pertinent to the flexibility notion of effectuation benefiting from the unplanned opportunities as they emerge (Chandler et al. 2011). So, it can be also contended that luck as a factor in

the gastro-entrepreneurial journey might be also influential on starting a business signalling that entrepreneur's journey might be the result of any one of a wide variety of serendipitous events as articulated by the effectuation literature (Sarasvathy 2001). The flexibility principle of effectuation was also evidenced when our participants were initially, making changes to their menu to adapt to the local environment and thus, serving to local taste and also sometimes modifying the means at hand into a restaurant to start up the business. At this point, our findings confirm the extant literature on effectuation contending that flexibility also helps entrepreneurs in transforming the resources at hand to creatively address to market demand (Wiltbank et al. 2006).

On the other hand, participants also utilise the experimentation principle of effectuation (Perry, Chandler, and Markova 2012), where they learn cooking and entrepreneurship by doing. Gastro-entrepreneurs performed a lot of experimentation in the kitchen until they specialised in a certain type of cuisine. This indicates that it takes some time to become a reputable chef, which would also imply endurance. This hands-on learning also involved temporary job experiences for our participants and it also meant failure for some of them in their first attempt in entrepreneurship. This would imply that despite some experimentation being painful, these powerful learning outcomes could be future-oriented and increase the entrepreneur's level of entrepreneurial preparedness for further enterprising activities. Overall, a series of trial and error approach was evidenced, where the participants conduct experiments with as many strategies as possible with the given limited means. This is typical within the effectuation logic, where experimentation is of great importance to create and pursue profitable opportunities, particularly in underdeveloped market environment (Cai et al. 2017). However, we also identified that trial and error can be also conducted over longer periods of time in addition to a relatively short period of time as contended by the effectuation literature (Sarasvathy 2001).

Besides that, the exchange of informal and positive relationships of our participants with stakeholders can be explained by the notion of "building pre-commitments and/or strategic alliances with stakeholders" principle of effectuation (Read and Sarasvathy 2005). This notion is usually applied by entrepreneurs to decrease the level of uncertainty and cope with the resource constraints (Sarasvathy 2009). Our participants deliberately seek for long lasting informal relationships built around "trust and goodwill" with their employees, local food suppliers, family members and close friends to overcome the difficulties in an uncertain setting, where formal contracts do not completely function. At this point, we challenge the extant effectuation literature, where the pre-commitments/strategic alliances rest on formal contracts. We further suggest that the notion of pre-commitments and/or strategic alliances with stakeholders, particularly in uncertain settings could be

extended beyond the formal pre-commitments and/or strategic alliances (Daniel, Domenico, and Sharma 2015).

Finally, "aiming to become a brand", can be explained through a causation logic, which regards opportunities to be objective and pre-existing, where the targeted outcome is already known (Dutta and Thornhill 2014). This planned behaviour, was not shared by the participants without a formal gastronomy training. Four participants with a gastronomy training tried to predict the future of the gastro-dining market also capitalised on their financial knowledge by collecting data and conducting various financial analysis to minimise the risks of damage to the brand. This resembles a causation principle in terms of concentrating on optimal scenarios as a part of planned process, such as estimating their restaurant's rate of return (An et al. 2019). This finding is somewhat interesting as we identified here that the gastronomy training can influence the entrepreneurial preference towards to effectuation or to a combination of effectuation with causation. This can be also explained by the role of human capital on entrepreneurial decision making (Schmidt and Heidenreich 2018).

6 Theoretical and Practical Contributions and Future Research Directions

In line with the arguments in the discussion section, our qualitative research design enabled us to add several important nuances to the existing entrepreneurship literature regarding the theoretical framework of effectuation-causation. First, having identified "time" as an affordable loss, we made our first contribution to the entrepreneurship literature. Previously, the affordable loss principle of effectuation logic has been predominantly associated with "affordable economic loss" (Morrish 2009), which is also confirmed by our research as well as with "affordable reputation and status loss" (Daniel, Domenico, and Sharma 2015). However, different from the extant literature on the effectuation framework, we also identified that some of our participants considered "time" in terms of affordable loss.

Second, the extant literature usually assumes that the experimentation principle of effectuation logic is associated with trials and error changes pursued over a relatively short period of time (Nicholls-Nixon et al. 2000). Yet, within the context of small business entrepreneurs' behaviour in the gastro-dining industry, we found evidence that experimentation can also be conducted over relatively longer time periods, as it takes some time to understand the customer preferences, which is evident from the gastro-entrepreneurs' statements within the experience "learning by doing". Hence, we suggest a second contribution to the effectuation theory by

challenging the assumption that effectual experiments are conducted over a relatively short period of time. We further extend the effectuation theory by providing evidence that the "push factors" as the notion of negative contingencies, taking the form of traumatic events, such as the loss of a parent, other than termination of employment (Daniel, Domenico, and Sharma 2015), can push entrepreneurs into becoming flexible.

Third, the entrepreneurship literature on effectuation emphasises the role of formal contracts between suppliers, co-investors, venture capitalists and entrepreneurs in building pre-commitments and strategic alliances with key stakeholders (Hovig et al. 2018). Regarding which, Hovig et al. (2018) and Parker et al. (2021) found formal collaborations between the entrepreneur and other firms, incubation centres (Hovig et al. 2018) or internal employees as facilitating coping with higher levels of uncertainty. By contrast, within the context of entrepreneurs of small businesses in the gastro-dining industry in Turkey, we found that some of our participants built informal relations with their stakeholders, which was apparent from their statements within the experiences "familial relations with employees", "collaborating with local food suppliers" and "having support of an entourage". At this point, we suggest a third contribution to the effectuation theory by revealing that pre-commitments with key stakeholders can also rest on informal relations.

Fourth, we found evidence that personal background factors, such as gender and education, also influence the instrumentalisation of effectuation logic in the entrepreneurial process. For example, women participants in our study followed different ways of pre-commitment and forming strategic alliances to their male counterparts, where they solely integrated their family members in the entrepreneurial process. Moreover, participants with no formal education were more likely to rely on contingency factors than those with a formal education in leveraging the flexibility principle of effectuation. Hence, we extend the literature on the personal traits on effectuation framework (Cowden et al. 2022) by contending that, small business entrepreneurs with different personal backgrounds can differ from one another in using the principles of effectuation.

Fifth, we found that four of our ten participants, who had had a gastronomy training, also followed a causation logic in addition to effectuation. The fundamental behaviour, "aiming to become a brand", was not shared by the six participants, who did not have a gastronomy training. Also, those who had had other forms of training, such as military or industrial design, would appear to have only utilised effectuation logic. Indeed, all four participants with a gastronomy training experienced "having foresight", such as predicting the future of the gastro-dining market, which resembles a causation principle in terms of concentrating on optimal scenarios, such as estimating their restaurant's rate of return or concentrating on an optimal scenario

(An et al. 2019). Two of them had relied on their financial knowledge to conduct financial analysis on how to reach the pre-set goals (Peng et al. 2020), such as becoming a brand, which can also be associated with causation logic that. At this point, our findings confirm the extant literature on the effectuation-causation framework, which holds that some entrepreneurs can mix causation with effectuating (Agogue, Lundqvist, and Middleton 2015; Reymen et al. 2015; Yu et al. 2018) depending on the different knowledge and skill sets (Arvidsson et al. 2020; Baron 2009). In this regard, we extend the effectuation-causation framework by providing evidence that, within the context of small business entrepreneurs in the gastro-dining industry the vocational training and -specifically in the field of gastronomy – may influence the entrepreneurial choice as to whether to adopt a sole effectuation logic or a combination of this with a causation perspective.

The study findings also have one practical implication. They suggest that those small business entrepreneurs with a vocational training, that is, gastronomy training in our case, use both effectuation and causation logic in dealing with risks and challenges in an uncertain and ambiguous business environment, thus implying that they would have more tools to survive in such a context. Hence, we suggest gastro-entrepreneurs not only learn the key points of gastro-entrepreneurship through improvising, but also, acquire these key points through formal vocational training.

For this study, we focused on individuals themselves and sought to understand what gastro-entrepreneurs' behaviour meant to them. In every case, we delved into a unique experience. We explored their beliefs, motives, and aspirations, as well as their understanding of their own circumstances in a particular market where demand is unpredictable, and the industry is still in its infancy. Small business entrepreneurial behaviour in the gastro-dining industry has its own dynamics and through this study we have shown that it is a phenomenon in its own right as much as it could be associated with other forms of entrepreneurial behaviour and theories in the literature. Future studies could replicate our findings using by different groups, with respect of age, gender, ethnicity, cultural background as well as across countries to provide further evidence to better explain the phenomenon of small business entrepreneurial behaviour in the gastro-dining industry. Scholars could also adopt a longitudinal study to explore the gastro-entrepreneurs' behaviour beyond the first generation and advance family business research through context theorising (Krueger et al. 2021).

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