

## The Role of Television Cooking Programs in the Development of Culinary Students' Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes

**Zeynep ATEŞ**

Sakarya University of Applied Sciences, Graduate Education Institute,  
Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts  
Trakya University, Arda Vocational School, Department of Hotel,  
Restaurant and Catering Services  
zeyneptuc@trakya.edu.tr  
ORCID: 0000-0002-3838-0876

**Şevki ULEMA**

Sakarya University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Tourism,  
Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts  
ulema@subu.edu.tr  
ORCID: 0000-0002-5874-8797

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### Abstract

Television is one of the leading traditional media tools that encompasses multiple functions. One of its most powerful functions is providing entertainment; while doing so, it also plays an important role in the promotion and dissemination of cultural values. This study examines the effects of these programs on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of culinary students. A qualitative research approach was adopted. Data were collected through focus group interviews with 12 gender-balanced students at Trakya University Arda Vocational School and analyzed using MAXQDA. The findings show that television cooking programs go beyond information transfer. They also influence students' behaviors and in-kitchen practices as effective learning tools. Gender-based differences were identified. Male students tend to adopt a more critical and opportunity-oriented perspective. In contrast, female students emphasize technical learning, recipe sharing, and professional development. Differences were also observed in how students are inspired by chefs. Female students focus on the instructional qualities of chefs, whereas male students report no specific source of inspiration.

**Keywords:** *Media, gastronomy, cooking shows, culinary students*

## **Televizyon Yemek Programlarının Aşçılık Öğrencilerinin Bilgi, Beceri ve Tutum Gelişimindeki Rolü**

### **Öz**

Televizyon, birden fazla işlevi bünyesinde barındıran geleneksel medya araçlarının başında gelmektedir. Bu işlevlerin en güçlülerinden biri eğlence sağlamasıdır; bunu yaparken aynı zamanda kültürel değerlerin tanıtılması ve yayılmasında da önemli bir rol üstlenir. Bu çalışma, söz konusu programların aşçılık öğrencilerinin bilgi, beceri ve tutumları üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektedir. Nitel araştırma yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir. Veriler, Trakya Üniversitesi Arda Meslek Yüksekokulu'nda öğrenim gören, cinsiyet dengesi sağlanmış 12 öğrenciyle gerçekleştirilen odak grup görüşmeleri aracılığıyla toplanmış ve MAXQDA yazılımı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, televizyon yemek programlarının yalnızca bilgi aktarımıyla sınırlı olmadığını göstermektedir. Bu programlar aynı zamanda öğrencilerin davranışlarını ve mutfak içi uygulamalarını şekillendiren etkili öğrenme araçları olarak da işlev görmektedir. Cinsiyete dayalı farklılıklar tespit edilmiştir. Erkek öğrenciler daha eleştirel ve fırsat odaklı bir bakış açısı benimserken, kadın öğrenciler teknik öğrenme, reçete paylaşımı ve mesleki gelişime daha fazla önem vermektedir. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin şeflerden nasıl ilham aldıkları konusunda da farklılıklar gözlemlenmiştir. Kadın öğrenciler şeflerin öğretici yönlerine odaklanırken, erkek öğrenciler belirli bir ilham kaynağına sahip olmadıklarını ifade etmektedir.

*Anahtar kelimeler: Medya, gastronomi, yemek programları, aşçılık öğrencileri*

### **Introduction**

In recent years, the number of programs produced through visual media has been steadily increasing. One of the countries where this growth is particularly evident is Türkiye. Mass media serve many functions, including accessing news, obtaining information, and providing entertainment (Aldemir et al., 2020; Görkem & Ertopçu, 2019). One of the most important features of mass media is their ability to rapidly influence societies, which are defined as masses (Erdoğan, 2009; Savaş, 2011). Television is considered to have the potential to shape society's perceptions and perspectives on events. In this context, it plays a significant role in the process of constructing images directed at individuals. Some studies suggest that programs broadcast on television also have the potential to transform viewers' attitudes and values (Shrum, 2009).

Television and visual media have established a strong connection between gastronomy and popular culture, particularly with the increasing number of food-related broadcasts. The proliferation of such programs has enabled both television and gastronomy to reach wider audiences through visual content (Aldemir et al., 2020; De Solier, 2005; Erzurum, 2018; Kurtçu, 2015).

Food-related content across television and other media platforms makes culinary cultures more visible and contributes to the development of gastronomic awareness. In Türkiye, as in many other countries, food channels and programs fulfill social and cultural roles while appealing to broad audiences (Bellman, 2004; Çaycı & Aktaş, 2018; De Solier, 2005; Kurtçu & Avcı, 2021).

Cooking shows hold their place among the pioneering content of the modern broadcasting

era. Due to their subject matter, these types of broadcasts have reached broad communities and have generally emerged as the most-watched programs among television content (Çinay & Yılmaz, 2019).

The primary objective of this study is to reveal the impact of the personalities featured in television programs and the subjects covered in these broadcasts on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of culinary students. Specifically, the research focuses on culinary students' motivations for choosing this profession and the shifts in their perceptions after making that choice. In doing so, student gender was taken into account, and participants were selected to include both those with and without prior kitchen experience. This approach has enabled the acquisition of data that allows for a comparative analysis within this context.

Although previous research in Türkiye has examined television cooking programs mainly in terms of popular culture perceptions and their influence on students' educational and career preferences (Aldemir et al., 2020; Görkem & Ertopçu, 2019), the present study shifts the focus to the micro-level learning processes of culinary students. This study aims to examine the contribution of television cooking programs to the development of students' knowledge, technical skills, and in-kitchen practices. It also explores how professional attitudes are shaped from a gender perspective through MAXQ-DA-based qualitative analysis.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Previous studies have also highlighted that the content of cooking shows represents engaging formats in modern broadcasting (Çinay & Yılmaz, 2019). When the relationship between gastronomy and the media is examined, it is observed that traditional media tools play a significant role in shaping our understanding of gastronomy. The primary reason for this influ-

ence is the high capacity of these tools to appeal to both visual and auditory senses. This is because such programs, or contents like food advertisements, present a performance aimed at increasing the appetite of individuals toward specific foods (Povlsen, 2016; Şeyhanlıoğlu et al., 2023).

Cooking shows first appeared globally in the 1930s. In 1937, Marcel Boulestin became the first television chef through a broadcast on the BBC. A decade later, James Beard became the first television chef in the United States with the program *I Love to Eat*. Following World War II, as television became more widespread, cooking programs evolved into a form of entertainment. During this period, chefs emerged as popular culture figures, and cooking shifted from an ordinary household task to a pleasurable activity (Bonner, 2009; De Backer & Hudders, 2016; Rousseau, 2012).

In recent years, the development of modern media has increased the visibility of cooking programs. Gastronomy content has frequently secured a place within television formats. Today, this interest has not only treated nutrition as a part of daily life but has also enabled it to be evaluated as a cultural value. Particularly over the last 20 years, media attention has shifted significantly toward culinary content (Çelebi Öncü & Atay, 2009; Şenel & Yılmaz, 2017; Tuç & Özkanlı, 2017). However, an unresolved debate in the literature is whether cooking programs truly contribute to culinary education. Critics argue that these programs have lost their educational functions (Caraher et al., 2000; De Backer & Hudders, 2016; De Solier, 2005).

The proliferation of food-themed channels such as Food Network, Cooking Channel, and Cuisine TV has made gastronomy an object of ever-increasing international interest. The celebrity chefs featured in these programs have emerged as role models by sharing their knowl-

edge and experience with the audience (Boyle & Kelly, 2010; Matwick & Matwick, 2014). The relationship between gastronomy and media has boosted the popularity of cooking shows, transforming the hosts or chefs within these contents into well-known brands. This, in turn, has strengthened the social dimension of the relationship between individuals and chefs. The increase in the viewership of these programs has been associated with the growing desire of audiences to acquire knowledge about food (Laughey, 2010; Matwick & Matwick, 2014; Scholes, 2011; Taşpınar & Temeloğlu, 2018). Media has consistently continued to present the subject of food, which undergoes constant transformations in its visual presentation, to audiences. This visual change has also been reflected in culinary and cooking programs (Chung, 2019). Food-themed content contributes to the dissemination of cooking practices in contemporary societies, particularly through popular television programs such as *MasterChef* (Andrieu & Batat, 2019). Along with the globalized world, individuals with similar goals and lifestyles have converged around common content, which has led to a transformation in the quality of standardized programs. The fact that the plate presentations prepared for these programs have turned into an artistic form has further increased the value of the content. The primary reasons for this rapid growth is the increasing international demand for such content among audiences (Aldemir et al., 2020; Hüsem & Yavuz, 2023; Kanık, 2016). The rise in television program-

ming after the 1990s, followed by food becoming a central theme in the 2000s, led to the birth of these formats. These include contents where recipes are shared, food is narrativized, examined culturally, presented in documentary form, or featured in talk-show formats. In particular, the cooking segments within what are termed "daytime programs for women" on Turkish television have been followed with great interest (Kanık, 2016).

Furthermore, international formats such as *MasterChef Türkiye* have gained significant popularity. Since 2010, many well-known chefs have hosted cooking shows characterized by modern and entertaining content, while channels like 24 Kitchen have broadcasted food programs continuously (Görkem & Ertopçu, 2019; Kanık, 2016). Cooking shows in Türkiye first emerged in the 1990s with Gülriz Sururi's program *A La Luna*, and Ümit Usta became the country's first chef-host. Over time, these programs have increased in both number and variety, and today they are categorized into six different formats (Görkem & Ertopçu, 2019; Şenel & Yılmaz, 2017). While some programs focus on informative content, others emphasize elements such as competition, rivalry, and popularity. Consequently, the chefs featured in these productions have transformed into brands (Bilis & Tok, 2023). Considering the relationship between gastronomy and the media, the diversity and content concepts of these programs have been organized into Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Examples of TV cooking shows broadcast and currently broadcasting in Türkiye (Adapted from Bilis and Tok, 2023; Görkem and Ertopçu, 2009).*

Type of Cooking Program	Presentation Method	Key Examples
Cooking shows presented by celebrity chefs	Celebrity chefs preparing a dish or a menu	Arda Türkmen ( <i>Arda's Kitchen</i> ) Oktay Usta ( <i>Yeşil Elma</i> ) Ekin Eylem Ulaş ( <i>Route of Taste</i> ) Emine Beder's Kitchen Nermin's Delicious Kitchen From Kitchen to Table with Güzide Ayşe Tüter ( <i>Table of Taste</i> )
	Non-chef celebrities preparing a dish or a menu	Refika Birgül ( <i>Miracle Flavors</i> ) Ebru Şallı ( <i>From Ebru's Kitchen</i> ) Serra Yılmaz ( <i>Italian Style</i> ) In the Kitchen with Mehmet Özer
	Programs filmed in restaurants or culinary venues	Ezgi Sertel ( <i>Map of Taste</i> ) Murat Yeni ( <i>Adventurer</i> ) Turgay Başyayla ( <i>Uninvited Guest</i> ) Happiness at Home with Vahe What Do We Eat on the Road?
Cooking shows presented by non-chef celebrities	Programs filmed in homes Homemakers preparing a dish or a menu	Nursel Ergin ( <i>My Kitchen</i> ) Aslı Seda Kement ( <i>Our Table</i> ) Ceyhun Fersoy ( <i>Our Flavors</i> )
	Gourmets tasting dishes during restaurant visits	Vedat Milor ( <i>On My Palate</i> ) Mehmet Yaşın ( <i>Roadside Taste Stops</i> )
Cooking shows presented by gourmets	Gourmets tasting dishes during restaurant visits	Vedat Milor ( <i>On My Palate</i> ) Mehmet Yaşın ( <i>Roadside Taste Stops</i> )
Cooking competition programs	Contestants preparing a dish or a menu	MasterChef Türkiye Duel of the Chefs Yemekteyiz with Zuhul Topal My Bride is in the Kitchen Kadir Ezildi ( <i>I Am the Most Skillful</i> ) Fatih Ürek ( <i>Bride and Sister-in-law</i> ) Whose Plate is This? Excuses in the Kitchen
Food documentary programs	Explaining the process from production to consumption of foods in visited venues	The Journey of Food
Food segments within various programs	A chef preparing a dish or a menu within programs addressing various topics	E.Kemal Sevinç ( <i>Healthy Life with Dilara Koçak</i> ) Smile to Life with Alişan A New Day with Çağla Şikel Elif Korkmazel ( <i>Gülben Show</i> ) Ayşe Tüter ( <i>Realize Life</i> ) Ebru Akel ( <i>Take Care of Yourself</i> )

Culinary education in Türkiye has historically been carried out within the framework of a master-apprentice relationship. In 1985, the first culinary high school under the Ministry of National Education was established in Mengen, Bolu. Its integration into the formal education system enabled this profession to gain respect in society and served as a turning point for a more professional perspective (Arman, 2011; Çakır, 2010; Eren & Varel, 2023; Öztürk & Görkem, 2011). According to the YÖKAtlas report published by the Council of Higher Education (Yükseköğretim Kurulu, 2025), culinary programs are offered across 98 units within 64 public universities, 26 foundation universities, and 7 universities in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

In a world where the importance of professional specialization increases daily, choosing the right profession is of vital importance. The process of building a career depends on an individual's ability to accurately discover their own skills and talents. This period, defined as a multi-criteria decision-making process, is naturally influenced by multiple factors (Eryetiş, 2016; Pekkaya & Çolak, 2013). A career is not defined merely as a position but is accepted as a personal characteristic of individuals (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2006). Accordingly, career planning emerges as a process that allows a person to advance within an organizational structure by developing their level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Vergiliel-Tüz, 2003).

The culinary arts are regarded as one of the most challenging fields in the career process because they require advanced knowledge, dedication, and strict discipline. It can be said that the number of individuals possessing these qualities has increased in recent years due to rising educational levels. This brings to light the reality that competition within this profession is intensifying. In recent years, the professionalization of cooking as an art has increased the popularity of

associate degree culinary programs (Kurnaz et al., 2014). The fact that this professional group has found a place in popular culture has further increased the visibility of the culinary profession within the education system.

## **Method**

The primary research question of this study is to reveal the impact of cooking programs on the development of culinary students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The study utilized secondary data methods, such as an initial literature review and an in-depth examination of media content. To address the research question, students who chose culinary arts as their profession were reached, and focus group interviews were conducted while considering gender distribution. In this regard, a sample group representing the population, consisting of 12 culinary students from Trakya University Arda Vocational School, was included in the research. Half of the participants were first-year students and the other half were second-year students, all within the 18–25 age range. Care was taken to ensure that participants were in a similar age range, and it was specifically considered that none were pursuing a second university degree or viewing culinary arts merely as a hobby. In this way, it was assumed that the participating students' learning motivations, skill development, and professional attitudes could be evaluated within a genuine professional context. Therefore, only students who had adopted culinary arts as a professional career path were included in the study. Focus group interviews, which are one of the qualitative data collection methods, are a technique accepted within action research (Çokluk et al., 2011; Kitzinger, 1995). The aim of this technique is to ensure that behaviors or emotions, which may not be revealed through methods such as surveys or observation, are brought to light through in-depth questioning. According to Bowling (2002), focus group interviews involve an unstructured conversation and discussion between a small group and a moderator.

It utilizes group dynamics to obtain in-depth information and generate ideas (Çokluk et al., 2011; Sevim, 2008). This research method, conducted in an interactive environment, is considered highly beneficial. It is possible for a response given by one participant to influence another participant's expression of their ideas. This allows the research to collect more comprehensive data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005).

In the literature, there are different views regarding the number of participants in focus group interviews. While MacIntosh (1981) proposes 6–10 participants and Kitzinger (1995) recommends 4–9 participants, Morgan (1997) and Gibbs (1997) state that 6–12 participants are appropriate. Furthermore, according to Edmunds (2000), groups exceeding 10 participants in a single session may weaken the dynamics of the research communities, thereby reducing interaction.

To conduct the interviews, a meeting room equipped with a round table, suitable for focus group discussions and allowing participants to see each other, was requested from Arda Vocational School. Ethical approval for the study, including its data collection procedures, tools, and methods, was obtained from the Trakya University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Decision No: 2025.05.45, dated 07.05.2025; Meeting No: E-29563864-050.99-843767). Two separate sessions were conducted in 2025: one with second-year stu-

dents on May 15 and another with first-year students on May 20. Pens and paper were provided to facilitate note-taking during the sessions. The meeting room was ventilated in advance, and the air-conditioning was adjusted to ensure appropriate conditions. Audio recordings were taken during the sessions, and verbal consent was obtained from the participants. The session with first-year students lasted approximately 50 minutes, while the session with second-year students lasted over one hour. The number of focus groups in this study was determined based on the principle of data saturation. Following two focus group interviews, recurring themes and similar perspectives emerged in the participants' responses, and the generation of new insights became limited. In qualitative research, it is widely accepted that once data saturation is achieved, additional focus group interviews do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis. Therefore, the study was limited to two focus groups, each consisting of six participants.

### Findings

Frequently occurring words and themes from the interviews were visualized using word clouds and code clouds. In this context, the analysis was conducted through frequency tables, code–subcode models, and single-case models. The study examined the general trends in students' processes of forming knowledge, skills, and attitudes shaped by the influence of media. In doing so, it allowed for the investigation of individual or gender-based differences.



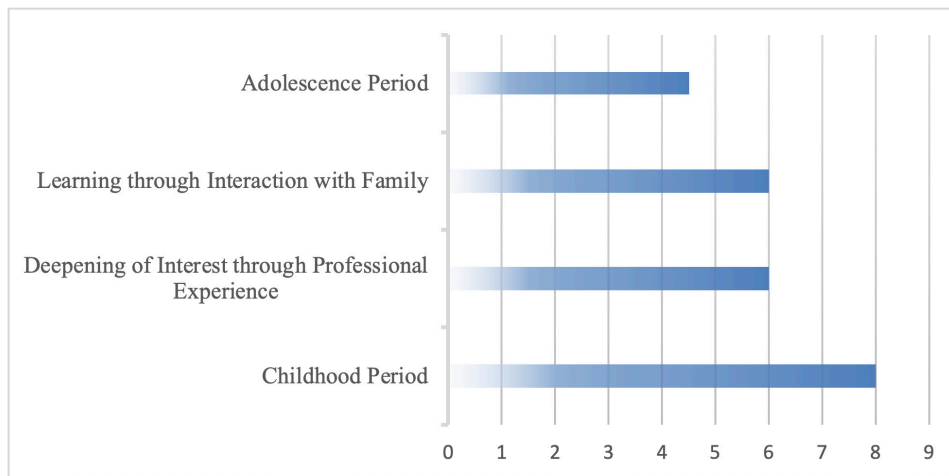
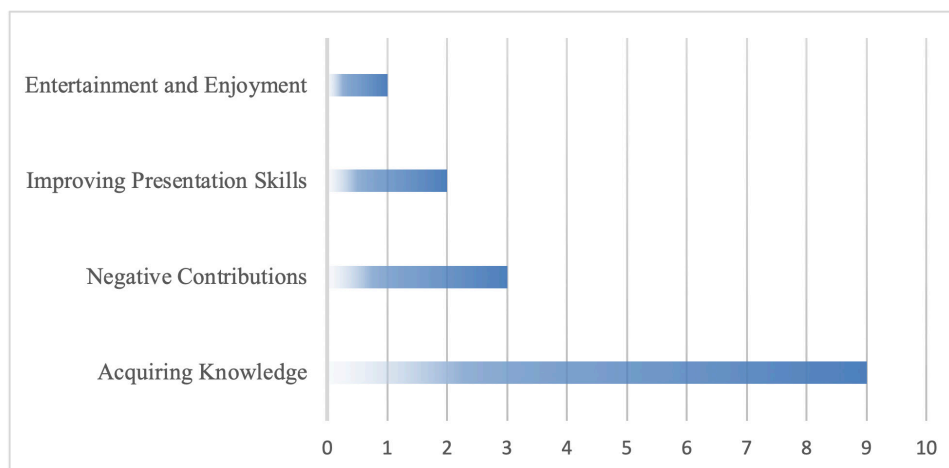
**Figure 3***Students' processes of interest and orientation toward the culinary profession*

Figure 3 illustrates the periods during which an orientation toward the culinary profession most frequently emerges. According to this figure, it can be stated that the most frequently mentioned period is childhood (8 participants). This indicates that the bond established at an early age

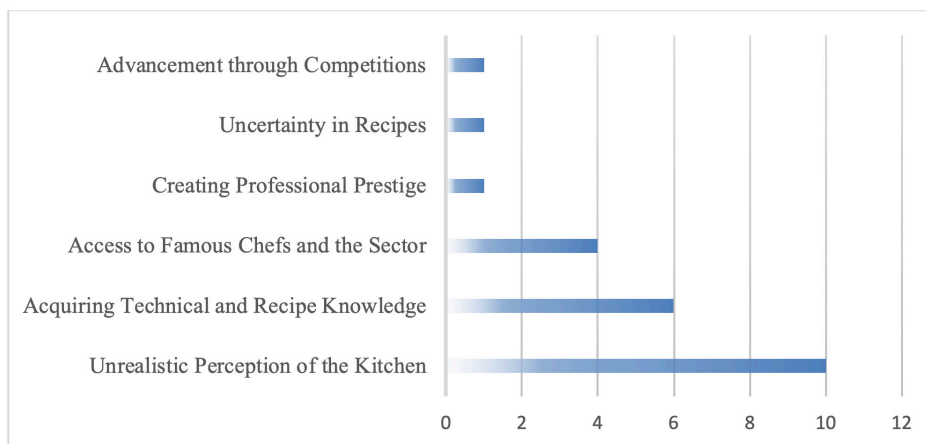
has an impact on career decisions made in later years. Six participants reported that it is possible for this interest to deepen as experience is gained, noting that culinary arts—being a particularly practical profession—further deepens learning through family interaction.

**Figure 4***Contributions of TV cooking programs to the viewer*

Regarding the question of the most significant contribution of cooking programs to viewers, participants (9 respondents) identified acquiring knowledge as the primary benefit. This highlights the fact that students perceive these programs as a component of their education.

It was also noted that the programs contribute to developing presentation skills or providing pure entertainment. However, it was revealed that some students (3 participants) who believe there are negative contributions consider these formats to offer misleading content.

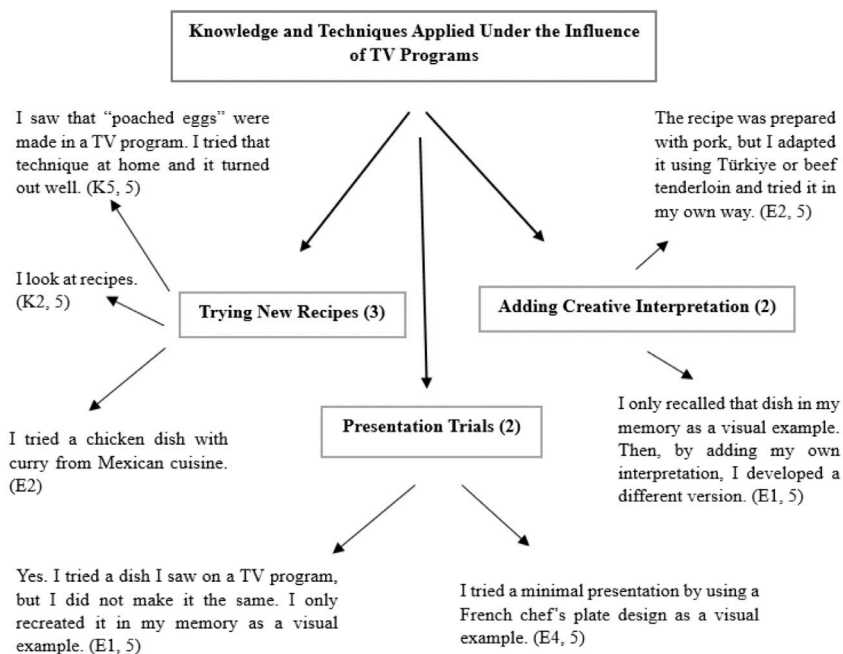
**Figure 5**  
Professional advantages and disadvantages of TV cooking programs



The research question in Figure 5 aims to reveal how television cooking programs are evaluated by participants within the context of the culinary profession. A vast majority of the participants (10 participants) responded to this question with the "unrealistic perception of the kitchen." Nevertheless, 6 participants stated that these programs are beneficial in terms of acquiring technical knowledge and recipes,

which suggests that such broadcasts contribute particularly to the development of professional skills. Additionally, 4 participants noted that these programs provide access to famous chefs and the sector, expressing that the broadcasts serve an inspirational role and function as a tool for establishing a connection with the profession.

**Figure 6**  
Code-subcode segments model



The visual in Figure 6 aims to analyze how students utilize the knowledge they acquire through the influence of television cooking programs. In response to this inquiry, three significant headings emerge: trying the exact same recipe, experimenting only with plate presentations, or developing a new recipe by adding one's own interpretation.

Under the sub-heading of the "Acquiring Technical Knowledge" theme, learning recipes and

methods is highlighted. In the sub-categories of the theme focused on "Developing Presentation Skills," participants expressed that their plate decoration techniques and aesthetic perceptions have been strengthened. Furthermore, it was observed that students consider the in-kitchen behaviors of the chefs they take as role models; they learn a recipe or a presentation from them and then incorporate their own ideas, categorized under the theme of "Adding Creative Interpretation."

**Figure 7**  
*Single case model of female participants*

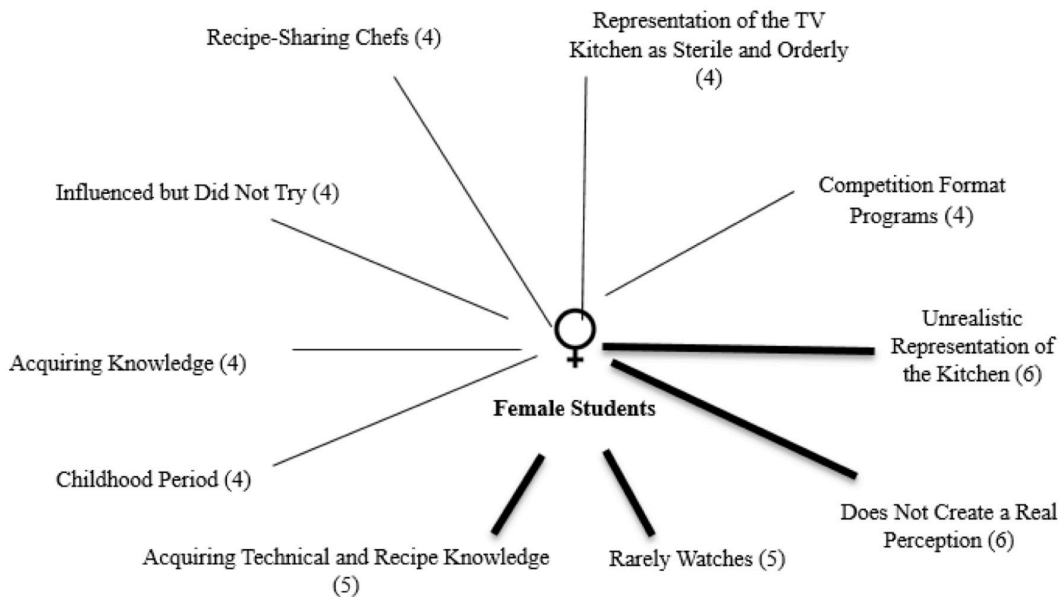
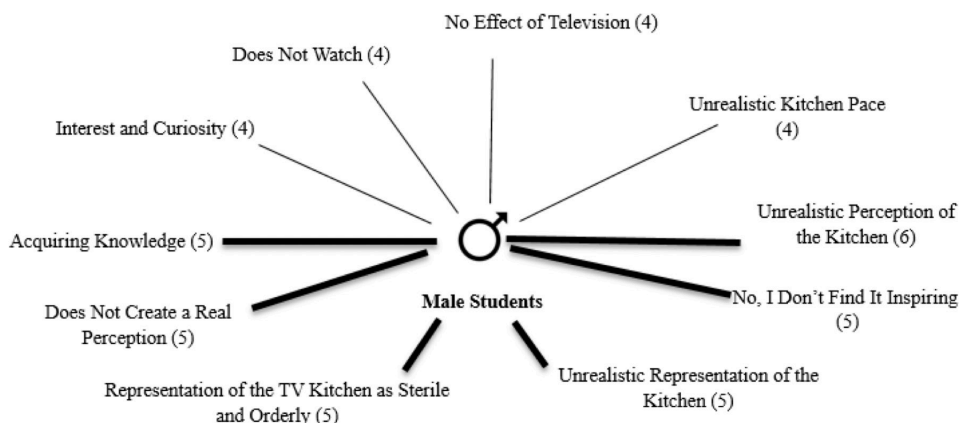


Figure 7 focuses exclusively on the opinions of female participants. In this question, they were asked what they thought about the cooking programs featured on television. The participants stated that the kitchens shown on television appear to be more sterile and organized than real ones. Childhood also emerges as a decisive

period in career choice. Although participants report that television programs do not directly influence their career decisions, they emphasize that such programs support the acquisition of technical knowledge and skills during professional development.

**Figure 8**  
Single case model of male participants



In the model of male participants (Figure 8), it is also observed that TV cooking programs represent the kitchen in an unrealistic manner and therefore fail to create a realistic perception of the kitchen for viewers. It was stated that male participants mostly oriented themselves toward the culinary profession based on their interest and curiosity, that they generally did not watch TV cooking programs, and that they did not find these programs professionally inspiring.

Table 2 comparatively presents the views of 1st- and 2nd-year students regarding the pro-

fessional advantages and disadvantages of TV cooking programs. A total of 24 codes were made, with an equal amount of data collected from both grade levels. While 2nd-year male students mostly emphasized advantages such as "Acquiring Technical Knowledge and Recipes" and "Access to Famous Chefs and the Sector," 1st-year male students expressed the advantage of "Creating Professional Prestige." In addition, they presented a critical perspective, stating that they believe there are uncertainties in the recipes.

**Table 2**  
Class-based code matrix browser of the professional advantages and disadvantages of TV cooking programs

	1st Year	2nd Year	Total
Creating professional prestige	■		1
Uncertainty in recipes		■	1
Unrealistic perception of the kitchen	■	■	10
Advancement through Competitions		■	1
Access to famous chefs and the sector	■	■	4
Acquiring technical and recipe knowledge		■	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>24</b>

Table 3 evaluates television cooking programs based on their advantages and disadvantages through the lens of gender differences. A total of 24 codes were identified with 13 derived from male participants and 11 from female participants. The common view shared by both genders is the idea of an "unrealistic perception of the kitchen." The acquisition of technical

knowledge and recipes was more frequently mentioned by female students, while male students highlighted the advantage of "access to famous chefs and the sector." Overall, male participants tended to adopt a more critical and opportunity-oriented perspective, whereas female participants emphasized professional development and technical learning.

**Table 3**

*Gender-based code matrix browser of the professional advantages and disadvantages of cooking shows*

	Male	Female	Total
Creating professional prestige	■		1
Uncertainty in recipes		■	1
Unrealistic perception of the kitchen	■	■	10
Advancement through competitions	■		1
Access to famous chefs and the sector	■	■	4
Acquiring technical and recipe knowledge	■	■	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>

Table 4 presents the question regarding which characteristics of the chefs in these programs students find inspiring. The opinions on this question were analyzed by taking gender differences into account. A total of 17 codes emerged, with 8 codes repeated by male participants and 9 codes by female participants. It is observed that the most prominent code is "Chefs Who

Share Recipes." Additionally, the response "No Chef I Am Inspired By" was expressed only by male students. The codes "Technical Knowledge and Mastery" and "Being Instructive and Understandable" were stated by both groups. This emphasizes the importance of the chefs' expertise and clarity in communication among the students.

**Table 4**  
Gender-based code matrix of inspiring chefs and their impressive characteristics

	Male	Female	Total
Chefs who share recipes		■	4
No chef I am inspired by	■		3
Cultural depth	■		1
Technical knowledge and mastery	■	■	4
Being instructive and understandable		■	1
Chefs hosting competitions	■	■	2
Chefs hosting documentaries	■		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>

**Discussion**

This study, which examines the impact of television cooking programs on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of culinary students, aims to provide a comprehensive perspective. In particular, this examination, conducted through formats presented on television, focuses on culinary students' professional perceptions, attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

Based on data obtained through focus group interviews, the study seeks to reveal the extent to which cooking programs influence students' knowledge acquisition processes, their tendency to try new recipes, and their processes of shaping career paths. Additionally, another objective of the study is to determine whether these effects differ according to grade level or gender.

In conclusion, it is emphasized that such programs make significant contributions to students' knowledge acquisition processes. Furthermore, one of the most notable contributions is the view that cooking programs serve as an

important source of inspiration in the professional development process. On the other hand, the most significant criticism is that these programs create an "unrealistic perception of the kitchen." This view emerges as a common opinion for both groups. As previously noted, it was observed that 1st-year students expressed themselves using more subjective terminology. The use of phrases such as "In my opinion" or "I think" leads to the conclusion that they evaluate these programs with a personal and emotional approach.

The findings indicate that the most important mechanism influencing career orientation is, in fact, personal interest and curiosity. However, it is concluded that the driving force behind the emergence of this interest and curiosity is often a recipe tried with the family. In the context of this specific study, it is possible to say that the family plays a decisive role in career guidance or choice. This result is consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Aldemir et al. (2020).

The study also shows that television cooking programs are not direct determinants of career decisions; however, they contribute indirectly by increasing students' interest in the profession. Although most participants reported no direct influence on their career preferences, second-year students, in particular, considered these programs useful for acquiring knowledge and developing technical skills.

Furthermore, media chefs were found to motivate students not through aspirations for fame or popularity, but by supporting professional skill development and providing role models within the sector. While female students emphasized chefs' recipe sharing and instructional qualities, male students tended to adopt a more critical perspective, often stating that they did not find such programs inspiring.

In recent years, the increase in the number of television cooking programs has sparked ongoing debates about whether these programs function solely as entertainment or exert a transformative influence on viewers' eating behaviors and food culture. Studies in the literature report divergent findings regarding both the extent and direction of this influence.

One of the early studies in this field, Clifford et al. (2009), showed that television-based cooking programs targeting university students can increase knowledge levels. This study emphasized that this behavior remains low in terms of transforming into permanence. As reported in the study by Caraher et al. (2000), the primary purpose of such programs is entertainment; therefore, it has been noted that cooking programs do not possess a strong enough dimension to change viewer behavior. It has also emerged that the chefs featured in these types of programs are not evaluated as significant figures regarding nutrition or health, but are instead seen more as entertaining icons. This information is consistent with other studies in the literature (Demir and Kızıllırmak, 2019). While

participants found celebrity chefs to be qualified and professional, they stated that they were not influenced by their behaviors concerning diet or nutrition. For this reason, although celebrity chefs are prominent figures, the fact that their influence on society remains limited aligns with other studies in the field (Clifford, 2009; Villani et al., 2015).

In contrast, some studies demonstrate that television cooking programs can generate positive effects in specific situations or indirectly. Taşpınar and Temeloğlu (2018) stated that programs prepared by professional chefs have an increasing impact on the public's gastronomic knowledge and awareness. Similarly, in a study conducted in Hong Kong, Lai Yeung and So (2010) expressed that television programs containing nutrition education provide significant contributions to promoting healthy eating and preserving food culture.

However, studies addressing the hygiene dimension point toward more critical results. In a research study conducted in Egypt, El Huseyin and Azza (2022) revealed that hygiene-related issues frequently occur in television cooking programs. Similarly, Ovca et al. (2024) noted that there are various errors in these programs, particularly regarding personal hygiene and food preparation processes. This situation suggests that although hygiene is one of the fundamental elements of professional culinary education, it is not sufficiently reflected in television content.

The findings obtained from this study both overlap with the current literature in some aspects and diverge in others. Criticisms regarding the fact that television cooking programs create an "unrealistic kitchen perception" show similarities with the findings presented by Ali and Ali (2022) and Ovca et al. (2024). However, the culinary students participating in this research particularly emphasized that the kitchens presented on television do not fully reflect

the actual conditions of professional kitchens. In addition, they stated that real kitchen environments can often be less hygienic, and this situation may affect perceptions regarding the profession.

Clifford et al. (2009) found that television cooking programs increase students' knowledge levels; this finding is consistent with the present study, in which students considered television to be useful for technical learning. Similarly, Aldemir et al. (2020) and Kurnaz et al. (2014) emphasized that such programs enhance the social prestige of the profession and support interest in culinary careers. However, criticisms regarding the "unrealistic kitchen perception" are in line with earlier studies suggesting that television presents kitchens in a more entertaining and sanitized way (De Solier, 2005).

The original contribution of this study lies in examining the effects of television cooking programs in detail across class level and gender. The findings show that second-year students, in particular, tend to view these programs as valuable sources of technical learning, recipe knowledge, presentation skills, and inspiration, whereas first-year students approach them from a more personal and individual perspective. As experience increases, the development of a more critical and selective perspective helps to explain, at least in part, the "entertainment-oriented viewing" approach identified by Caraher et al. (2000) and Demir and Kızıllırmak (2019). In addition, the findings suggest that television cooking programs are not direct determinants of career choice; rather, they indirectly support students' interest in the profession. This result partially aligns with the study by Şimşek and Güner (2021) on MasterChef Türkiye. However, the present study indicates that professional skill development and role model influence are more prominent than aspirations for popularity or fame. The greater emphasis placed by female students on instructional content, along with the

more critical perspectives adopted by male students, points to gender-based differences in perceptions—an aspect that has received relatively limited attention in the literature.

### **Conclusion**

This study examines the impact of television cooking programs on gastronomy students within the multidimensional context of media. The literature reports divergent findings regarding the behavioral effects of television programs; while some studies suggest that media content influences behavior, others argue that this effect remains limited. In this respect, the present study contributes to this ongoing debate by focusing specifically on gastronomy students within an educational context. A key feature distinguishing this research from previous studies is the inclusion of gender as a central analytical variable. In addition, the comparison between second-year students with sectoral experience This study examines the impact of television cooking programs on gastronomy students within the multidimensional context of media. The literature reports divergent findings regarding the behavioral effects of television programs; while some studies suggest that media content influences behavior, others argue that this effect remains limited. In this respect, the present study contributes to this ongoing debate by focusing specifically on gastronomy students within an educational context. A key feature distinguishing this research from previous studies is the inclusion of gender as a central analytical variable. The most fundamental feature that distinguishes this study from others is the comparison of sectoral experience among students. Since second-year students receive education within the 3+1 system, they were continuing their training in the sector as part of workplace practice during the focus group interviews. This situation indicates that the evaluations of students with real kitchen experience regarding kitchens presented on television are not merely based on perception, but are grounded in practical expe-

rience. In addition, television cooking programs are evaluated not only as factors influencing career orientation, but also as potential tools for knowledge transfer that can be integrated into higher education curricula. The study questions whether these programs should be regarded solely as sources of entertainment. At the same time, it aims to reveal their potential contributions to the educational process, particularly in terms of presentation techniques, recipe diversity, and the introduction of sectoral trends.

In addition, the study seeks to determine whether students' expectations of a real kitchen environment align with the representations presented on television. It also focuses on whether these programs cause disappointment among students or whether they increase or decrease motivation toward the profession.

The findings of the study acknowledge that television cooking programs have a significant and undeniable impact on culinary education. In this context, the study provides important implications for the quality of vocational education while also revealing students' attitudes and perceptions toward the profession. Addressing the relationship between media and education from a multidimensional perspective, the findings emphasize that the impact of media on gastronomy education should be taken into account and suggest a more conscious use of media content in future educational programs.

In addition to these contributions, the study also has important limitations. One of the main limitations is that it was conducted with a small sample group, which restricts the validity and generalizability of the findings. The exclusive use of qualitative methods also limits the ability to make broader statistical inferences. For future researchers, it is recommended to enhance the validity and reliability of the study by adopting quantitative or mixed-method approaches with larger sample groups.

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