

# Sustainable competencies of social entrepreneurship for sustainable development: Exploratory analysis from a developing economy

Veland Ramadani<sup>1</sup>  | Sucheta Agarwal<sup>2</sup>  | Andrea Caputo<sup>3,4</sup>  |  
Vivek Agrawal<sup>2</sup>  | Jitendra Kumar Dixit<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Business and Economics, South East European University, Tetovo, North Macedonia

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Business Management, GLA University, Mathura, India

<sup>3</sup>Department of Economics and Management, University of Trento, Trento

<sup>4</sup>Department of Management, University of Lincoln, Lincoln

## Correspondence

Andrea Caputo, Department of Economics and Management, University of Trento, Trento, Italy.

Email: [andrea.caputo@unitn.it](mailto:andrea.caputo@unitn.it)

## Abstract

With the establishment of social enterprises, the role of social entrepreneurs (SEs) becomes prominent with their exceptional competencies that contribute to the sustainable development (SD) of the environment. Sustainable competencies (SC) assist these entrepreneurs in strengthening their personalities for the present and future development by facilitating entrepreneurial social activities. This study focuses on the investigation of SC of SEs with the help of in-depth interviews and exploratory factor analysis by collecting the data from SEs belonging to different regions of Uttar Pradesh, India, through a questionnaire. During the analysis of interviews and data, it has revealed that among the eight vital SC, few are entrepreneurial resilience, empathy, emotional intelligence, strategic thinking and so forth, which are crucial for the success of the social entrepreneurial journey. This is the significant study that focuses on the SC required by the present and future generations for the world's SD with humankind and would facilitate the academic institutes and policymakers to inculcate the SC among the generations to create more social enterprises.

## KEYWORDS

entrepreneurial resilience, exploratory factor analysis, India, interview approach, resource-based view, social entrepreneur, sustainable competencies, sustainable development

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Academics, researchers and politicians continue to be interested in the way individuals or organisations question old beliefs and bring innovative ideas to society through social entrepreneurship (SEP). A social entrepreneur (SE) is a person who uses revolutionary ideas and solutions to solve social problems (Cohen et al., 2019; Dickel & Eckardt, 2021). These entrepreneurs are delighted to bring about beneficial improvements through their courageous efforts and deeds. SEs accept that this approach connects them with their life's purpose and

that their actions make an impact on the world. SEP is also an action that is getting momentum as a result of its capacity to address social and national issues. However, in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, academics wonder about how these SEs are motivated to deal with many hard social problems efficiently and the impact of their competencies on the SEs' entrepreneurial activities. Without a doubt, this sector is gaining attraction in the field of entrepreneurship (Cincera et al., 2018; Martínez et al., 2019; Sassmannshausen & Volkmann, 2018). The social advantage instilled in this industry necessitates that entrepreneurs adhere to the tripartite extreme mark, that

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

© 2022 The Authors. Business Strategy and The Environment published by ERP Environment and John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

is, planet, people and profit. Compassion, empathy, kindness, morals and ethics, along the ability to make independent decisions, persuade others and be an effective communicator are all required for social causes. These qualities are required both now and in the future. Researchers are looking for the competencies required to become SEs that are sustainable in nature for long-term development (Cincera et al., 2018; Dickel & Eckardt, 2021; Edwards, 2021).

Sustainability is currently associated with numerous characteristics such as sustainable economies, sustainable markets, sustainable business and sustainable development (SD), and these characteristics focus on meeting the needs of the present without jeopardising future generations' ability to meet their needs in various domains (Chavez et al., 2020; De Almeida et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2021). The terms sustainability and SD are frequently used interchangeably. Both emphasise the risk of depleting resources faster than they can be restored. However, a detailed examination of sustainability versus SD reveals subtle differences. Sustainability is a broad phrase that refers to the management of resources so that they are not depleted and are available for future generations. This notion extends beyond environmental sustainability, which is concerned with economic and social sustainability, and refers to meeting people's current economic and social requirements without affecting future generations (Goni et al., 2021; Reynolds & Holt, 2021). SD refers to practises that aim at improving the long-term economic well-being and quality of life while not endangering future generations' ability to meet their requirements. It promotes an integrated approach to human well-being that includes economic advancement, environmental sustainability and strong social relationships. SEs who have a thorough understanding of these two critical principles can assist society in fulfilling the current demands while also planning for the future. They can apply their knowledge to assist social enterprises in incorporating sustainability and SD ideas into their operations (Chavez et al., 2020; Edwards, 2021). They can also help government and business leaders to create sustainable goals, define sustainability success and assess the consequences of their decisions (Reynolds & Holt, 2021; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011; Scoones, 2007). Their acts have the potential to affect equity, responsibility and social justice, and their difficulties become increasingly severe as big and quickly growing global economies create massive environmental harm, and new technologies necessitate the need for new competencies (Esteves et al., 2021; Bartolacci et al., 2020; Sachs, 2015). Social change, technological progress and globalisation are accompanied by new experiments. These experiments need to address increasing individualisation and social diversity, which is accompanied by increased economic and cultural uniformity, a rapidly expanding availability of information and a need to deal with increasing complexity and uncertainty; all of these necessitate sustainable competencies (SC) (Barth, Godemann, Rieckmann, Stoltenberg, 2007). SC is a mixture of two words: Sustainable implies the promotion of adaptive change or entails lifelong learning (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011; Scoones, 2007), and competencies are an individual's cognitive and noncognitive skills to effectively fulfil complex demands in a dynamic world (Biberhofer et al., 2019; Rychen & Salganik, 2003). Therefore, SC can be defined as a set of

diverse attitudes, knowledge and abilities that allow for successful task completion and problem resolution in the context of real-world concerns, difficulties and opportunities for long-term development (Biberhofer et al., 2019; Edwards, 2021; Rieckmann, 2012; Wiek et al., 2011).

According to the resource-based view theory (RBV), uniqueness leads to any individual or enterprise towards superior performance (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). The individual or enterprise easily handles the external circumstances with the help of existing resources but finds it difficult to acquire abilities to handle uncertain opportunities. This theory supports that individuals or enterprises try to find the reason for the sustainable competitive advantage in this competitive environment. RBV research focuses on the utilisation of assets, skills and knowledge, talents and expertise in the enterprise. The emphasis is on the availability of internal resources as well as the creation of resources within the enterprise, rather than obtaining external resources. From the standpoint of RBV, competitive advantage is accomplished by concentrating on and capitalising on the enterprise's internal qualities, notably its resource profile (Coates & McDermott, 2002). Therefore, researchers who embrace these approaches must define the concepts of resources and core competence, as well as the features of these resources that make them strategically valuable. In essence, the owner's competencies are internal abilities at which one is better than the competitors. A competency is defined as 'a bundle of aptitudes, abilities and technologies that the enterprise performs better than its competitors that is difficult to copy and offers an advantage in the marketplace' from a resource-based perspective (Agarwal & Lenka, 2017; Boyatzis, 2008). In RBV, competencies are broadly described as the entrepreneur's tangible and intangible assets, capabilities, processes and knowledge. In terms of resources and competencies, these resources must meet the following criteria (Coates & McDermott, 2002; Grant, 1991): Competence is difficult to mimic, there is an asymmetry in ownership among enterprises and it must provide opportunities for the enterprises.

Competencies have the strategic potential to capitalise on opportunities or eliminate competitor threats. Competencies that contribute to a competitive advantage provide the enterprise with the ability to allocate resources. For the SD of the social enterprise, the SC of an SE is essential. These competencies are intangible assets that are associated with four attributes, that is, valuable, rare, imitable and non-substitutable in nature. Agarwal et al. (2020) also developed a competency model that emphasised the personal, social and environmental motivation driven and learning factors, which affect the development of the competencies. The competencies are considered an essential part of the personality and are affected by the internal and external environment.

SE is a person who finds new ways of solving social problems. SEs are enthusiastic to take the risk and effort through their initiatives to generate optimistic changes in society (Bornstein, 2004; Cohen et al., 2019; Dickel & Eckardt, 2021). They believe that entrepreneurship is a method to attach with needy people, help them and bring change in the world. They have and need the encouragement of SC to

analyse and solve the environmental and societal problems from both the present and future perspectives.

Thus, there is a need of identifying the SC of SEs, as these competencies will help solve problems through their social entrepreneurial activities for achieving SD and exploring the different types of SC of SEs. Keeping in view the above description, the research objectives of this study are as follows:

*RO1: To investigate the various types of SC of SEs with an interview approach*

*RO2: To analyse the significant SC of SEs with exploratory factor analysis (EFA)*

For the insight of the study, initially, researchers preferred to collect data with the help of interviews using the semistructured questionnaire from SEs of the Uttar Pradesh (UP) region of India to explore the objectives comprehensively. After recording the interviews, certain important statements associated with SC are noted. Subsequently, with the help of the expert's opinion, the preliminary questionnaire has been prepared for further analysis. After examining the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, the EFA is carried out to explore the significance of SC. EFA is a multivariate statistical technique and a data reduction approach, which is a significant method involved in reducing a large number of items resulting in data complexity to essential SC. It also provides significant information concerning the psychometric properties of specific items related to SC, the nature of underlying SC, and gives knowledge regarding the specific measured items that effectively capture each competency. The reason behind using the method in this study has been discussed in the methodology section.

The introduction is trailed by the theoretical background related to SC of SEs, which is followed by the methodology section. Further, the results, conclusion, implication and prospects of the study have been discussed.

## 2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 | Sustainability

Sustainability has been referred to by many researchers in the past decades (Costanza & Patten, 1995; Scoones, 2007). The term sustainability focuses on the essential objective of protecting our surroundings as well as in maintaining, renewing and restoring specific things for the future generation (De Almeida et al., 2021; Scoones, 2007). Sustainability refers to the ability of a thing, outcome, or process to persist across time. However, in the development literature, most academicians, researchers and practitioners use the term to refer to the improvement and maintenance of a healthy economical, ecological and social system for human growth (Goni et al., 2021; Gray, 2010; Mensah, 2019; Sachs, 2015; Scoones, 2007). Sustainability is explained as the efficient and equitable allocation of resources both intragenerationally and intergenerationally with the operation of

socio-economic activities within the limitations of a finite ecosystem (Diesendorf, 2000; Mensah, 2019; Reynolds & Holt, 2021). In this regard, economic models seek to accumulate and sustainably use natural and financial capital, environmental models primarily focus on biodiversity and ecological integrity and social models strive to improve political, cultural religious health and educational systems, among others, to continuously ensure human dignity and well-being, as well as SD (Costanza & Patten, 1995; Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018; Sachs, 2015).

SD has become a catchphrase in the development discourse, which simply means 'development that can be perpetuated indefinitely or for a set length of time' (Goni et al., 2021; Mensah, 2019; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). It is a development strategy that employs resources in such a way that they (the resources) can continue to exist for the benefit of others (Gray, 2010; Silvestre & Țircă, 2019). The goal of SD is to achieve social progress, environmental balance and economic growth (Esteves et al., 2021). The World Commission on Environment and Development (, 1987, p.8) defined SD as, 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. It suggests that SD is an attempt to strike a balance between economic growth, environmental integrity and social well-being. However, it is common for individuals to confuse sustainability and SD, but the two notions are distinct. Sustainability, according to Diesendorf (2000), it is the goal or finish of a process known as SD. Gray (2010) expanded on this issue by claiming that, while 'sustainability' refers to a condition, 'SD' refers to the process of obtaining this state (Hu et al., 2021; Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018). Thus, this study made the combination of sustainability with competencies, which are essential for the present and future SEs for SD.

### 2.2 | Competencies

The term competency is earliest devised by Boyatzis in 1982, who directed a study on 200 managers and analysed 100 competencies. He demarcated competency as 'a capacity that exists in a person that leads to behaviour that meets the job demands within the parameters of the organisational environment and that, in turn, brings about desired results' (Boyatzis, 2008). A competency is described as an ability or capability to perform a task. Task performance is the basis for the concept of competency. The competencies of a person need to be consistent with the job demands and the workplace environment for achieving maximum performance (Boyatzis, 1982). The individual competencies are associated with his or her values, vision, knowledge, interests and psychology. Competencies are associated with behavioural aspects related to cognitive, emotional and social intelligence. These aspects are related to the theory of action and job performance (Goleman, 1998). Boyatzis (1982) stated that competencies are the underlying characteristics of the individual that play a crucial role in improving performance at the job. He explained that cognitive intelligence competency focuses on the ability to analyse, recognise, understand

and interpret the information related to task and situation for superior performance; emotional intelligence (EI) competency focuses on the ability to analyse, understand and interpret the emotions of oneself related to task and situation for superior performance; and social intelligence competency focuses on the ability to analyse, understand and interpret the emotions about others related to task and situation for superior performance. Previous studies have explained the different competencies, for example, Delphi introduced 19–23 key competencies, while Wiek et al. (2011) categorised those under five main competencies, Rieckmann (2012) reduced Delphi's 19 competencies to 12. The other important competencies provided in the previous literature as the following: competence to think ahead, that is, the ability to deal with ambiguity and make predictions about the future; competence in interdisciplinary work, that is, collaboration between numerous scientific fields and a variety of learning methods; participatory competency and the acquisition of cooperative skills, that is, influence of SD in decision-making (Cebrián & Junyent, 2015; De Haan, 2006; Rieckmann, 2012; Wiek et al., 2011); competence in planning and implementation skills, that is, the ability to identify and use resources that are required for an activity, networks, and to quantify the action's side effects; empathy, compassion and solidarity competence, that is, the ability to comprehend peace and justice as well as to act and communicate in the interests of international solidarity; and competence in self-motivation and encouraging others, that is, bringing the concept of sustainability to life for encouraging individuals to make lifestyle changes and so forth (Anderson, 2015; Teruel-Sánchez et al., 2021).

### 2.3 | Sustainable competencies of SEs

The competencies of entrepreneurs are associated with essential characteristics such as generic and specific knowledge, skills, abilities, traits, motives, self-image, social image, self-management and social management; these characteristics are responsible for the initiation, development and growth of their enterprises (Bird, 1995; Wiek et al., 2011). Several previous studies have discussed the competencies necessary for being successful in the field of entrepreneurship (Agarwal & Lenka, 2017; Anderson, 2015). However, the SC are associated with the combination of knowledge, skill and attitude, which empowers entrepreneurs to act and perform concerning the environment for both the present and future (Barth et al., 2007; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). Wiek et al. (2011) stated that 'complexes of knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable successful task performance and problem-solving concerning real-world sustainability problems, challenges and opportunities'. The SC can facilitate the behaviour and action of entrepreneurs in complex situations based on the present circumstances and the future consequences of these actions (Rieckmann, 2012). People have three types of competencies, which are cognitive (competencies of the head), emotions (competency of the heart) and skills (competencies of the hands) (Boyatzis, 2011). Thus, SEs are trying to perform social work with the help of competencies that are sustainable in nature. These

entrepreneurs have certain competencies that can respond to the hostile, social, political, institutional and cultural conditions in developed and developing economies. SEs are facilitating models that are financially and innovatively viable to deal with social problems (Martínez et al., 2019; Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018; Westman et al., 2019). Therefore, academicians and researchers are interested in SC of SEs, and these competencies are necessary for the future generation and must be compared with the longstanding scholarly study of entrepreneurship (Agarwal et al., 2020; Sassmannshausen & Volkman, 2018; Shane et al., 2003). Thus, the work definitions and theoretical frameworks that enquire about the SC to accomplish social objectives are still ongoing. Scholars have defined different series of competencies that are sustainable in nature. According to Brundiers et al. (2010), the three competency clusters are as follows: (a) strategic knowledge cluster, (b) practical knowledge cluster and (c) collaborative cluster. The strategic knowledge cluster is an amalgamation of systemic thinking, anticipatory, normative and action-oriented competencies. This cluster is primarily concerned with the ability to analyse and evaluate the past, make decisions based on the present and define future scenarios with long-term visions. It enables a person to learn about historical trends and guides the current situation to reach a more sustainable future. The practical knowledge cluster consists of competencies required for connecting knowledge and behaviour and bridging the knowledge-action gap. This cluster is built primarily on experience and the acquisition of opportunities to practise decision-making at various scales and in real-world situations. The collaborative cluster includes the skills required to work in teams as well as with various knowledge groups and communities. These groups can include stakeholders, the government, volunteers and industries. This cluster refers to the facilitation of participatory decision-making and problem-solving abilities (Brundiers et al., 2010).

Wiek et al. (2011) identified five competencies: (a) Systems-thinking competency is the ability to think holistically while making decisions based on the current circumstance, taking into consideration future effects of your actions; (b) anticipatory competency is the ability to assess, analyse, develop and explain long-term plans for a variety of sustainability concerns, which can help to mitigate the negative effects of our choices; (c) normative competency is individual's ability to transmit, apply and negotiate sustainable ideals, principles and aims on the basis of the principles of justice, fairness, equity, sustainability and ethics; (d) strategic competency refers to the ability to get things done while employing proper tactics for enhancing sustainability and it necessitates an awareness of real-world issues, power dynamics, administrative norms and the ability to disseminate information and technology; (e) interpersonal competency entails a thorough awareness of other cultures, social groupings, communities and individuals in various situations, as well as collaboration, involvement, communication and motivation for problem-solving (Anderson, 2015; Wiek et al., 2011). These are the certain sustainable related competencies mentioned by the various scholars needed for the SD and future generations. In this study, the researcher has tried to discuss the significant SC of SEs by analysing with the help of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

### 3 | RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Concerning methodology (Figure 1), this study will address the following questions:

1. What do we wish to investigate (the research question)?
2. How do we intend to investigate it (the design)?
3. Whom do we want to investigate (the sample)?
4. How to obtain information in the most efficient manner (the data collection techniques)?
5. How to best evaluate or interpret the data we collected (the data examination)?
6. How and with whom should we share our findings (the dissemination process)?
7. How to validate our findings (the verification process)? (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

#### 3.1 | Research question

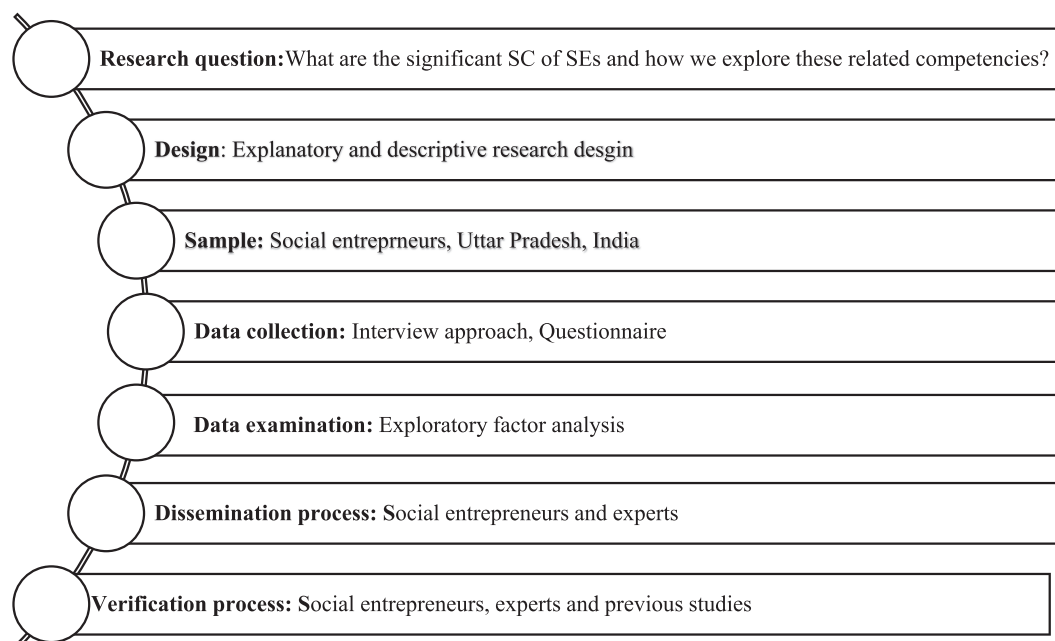
This study talked about the SC of SEs which reflected in the social innovative actions during their entrepreneurial journey. Furthermore, all of the associated competencies are attainable and can be developed through knowledge, skills and action (De Haan, 2006; Rieckmann, 2012). Barth et al. (2007, p.4) stated that ‘they are learnable, not teachable’ and can be passed down to future generations. Competence is also defined as the acquisition and implementation of effective skills, knowledge, acceptable attitudes and experience that are required for the successful performance of one's life roles (Cebrián & Junyent, 2015; De Haan, 2006). SEs with these

competencies can play a critical role in enhancing the sustainability of society using their ‘active, reflective, and cooperative participation’ (Rieckmann, 2012, p.130). SEs involved in the development of economically sustainable enterprises lead to the generation of social value and sustainable social transformation (Alvord et al., 2004). These entrepreneurs are willing to not give up until they have spread their ideas as far as possible for the accomplishment of the social purpose (Bornstein, 2004; De Haan, 2006). They have different motivations and attitudes, which gets reflected in their entrepreneurial behaviour and have competencies that are helpful in their social mission for attaining SD of society, nation and world (Cohen et al., 2019; Martínez et al., 2019). Researchers are curious to understand how these SEs are doing their social work with selfless intention and want to explore their SC, which encourages SD of the environment in different aspects (cultural, societal, economical, ecological, technological etc.) and guides the future generation to make this world happy. Thus, the above discussion raises the following research question:

*RQ1: What are the significant sustainable competencies of social entrepreneurs and how do we explore these related competencies?*

#### 3.2 | Design

The research design is the framework that guides the researcher to discuss features and possibilities for acquiring answers to a research question. This study has applied both explanatory and descriptive research designs. Initially, the study deals with an explanatory design to explain the various significant competencies with the help of interviews of SEs. This provides some conclusive evidence to help the researcher to understand the objectives of the study and to do further



**FIGURE 1** Steps to discuss the methodology of the study

analysis. The information collected from explanatory research has been used further through descriptive research design. The focus of the design is to get complete and accurate information and the method is carefully adopted for the study. The researcher needs to precisely define the what and how of the objective that needs to be measured.

The information under these designs is gathered to define a sample or specific group, that is, SEs with no intention of going beyond that group.

### 3.3 | Sample and its context

This study inquired about the SC of SEs belonging to the different regions such as Jhansi, Moradabad, Rampur, Mathura and Kanpur of UP, India. India is a multicultural, multilingual and multiethnic society with 29 states and seven union territories. Among them, UP is a northern Indian state and has a huge population. UP being India's second-largest economy after Maharashtra contributes 8.4% of the country's Gross Domestic Product. The researcher was familiar with the regions of UP, India, so using the convenience and snowball sampling (as SEs know other entrepreneurs of the same field) method, it was easy to approach the SEs and collect the information by conducting interviews (Agarwal et al., 2020). SEs having a minimum of 1 year of experience and 10 employees were chosen for the study, as the researcher was eager to enquire about their social entrepreneurial journey and experiences along with the management of employees, which gave them more clarity about their SC (Alvord et al., 2004; Cohen et al., 2019; Rychen & Salganik, 2003). For this study, the researcher considered those SEs whose objective has been to transform the world positively with their work and ultimately address problems such as child trafficking, girl's empowerment, condition of slums people and pollution-related issues, that is, those problems that threaten the social development. For these issues, SEs possess compassion, kindness, interpersonal skills, empathy and so forth that are required to guide and encourage the spirit of goodness and selflessness of the present and future generation (Boyatzis, 2011; Cebrián & Junyent, 2015; De Haan, 2006). Some competencies are inbuilt characteristics, but some are external, which get reflected through their social actions and motivate us to change our attitude and encourage us to develop these competencies.

### 3.4 | Data collection and data examination

#### 3.4.1 | Interview approach

This study used an interview approach from SEs, as it allows the researcher to attain rich, personalised and useful information (Agarwal et al., 2020; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). As discussed in the previous section, the SEs of some regions of UP were approached and both the convenience and snowball sampling methods were used for gathering interviews of these SEs from November to December 2020. For conducting the interview process, semistructured questions were

prepared with the help of experts' opinions (Presser & Blair, 1994). The experts' opinion process is reliable and accurate (Olson, 2010), and for the validation of preliminary questions, 21 experts were considered: seven academicians of the entrepreneurship field with more than 8 years of experience, five eminent speakers and the rest were SEs with at least 4 years of experience. After gathering the feedback from the experts, the researcher prepared the semistructured questionnaire (Appendix A) and the rest of the questions were formed at the time of the interview while the researcher probed the respondents to express openly and freely about their social entrepreneurial journey (Jeong et al., 2020).

The interview took place through different modes, that is, face to face, video conversation with mobile, Zoom and Skype due to COVID 19 as per the respondents' easiness and recorded following the interview protocols. The recordings were transcribed for closer scrutiny and also compared with the data derived from other sources (published articles, material on social media and employee's conversation) for maintaining authenticity and worthiness (triangulation method). In this approach, the willingness of those SEs was highly important, as they provided the information to address the research objectives that affected the quality of information attained. The 23 respondents were adequate as per previous studies (Agarwal et al., 2020; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and the addition of more respondents do not reveal additional information often called saturation theory (Agarwal & Lenka, 2017; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The demographic profiles of respondents are given in Table 1. The significant statements of the respondents, which are potentially meaningful to the research objectives and effort, are noted (Table 1).

#### 3.4.2 | Reliability and validity of interviews

The interview approach is considered a popular method in qualitative research to get first-hand information directly from the respondents. Through this method, researchers tried to measure their perception and attitudes towards the objective of the study and get the in-depth useful information for maintaining acceptability, authenticity, credibility and quality of the research (Burns, 2003; Crittenden & Hill, 1971). It is up to the researcher and respondents to build validity and reliability into the many phases of the interview approach, which range from data collection to data analysis and interpretation (Merriam, 1998, p. 202). For checking the validity, it is crucial to measure content validity for which following the experts' input, the unclear or ambiguous questions are altered or omitted from the semistructured interview (Appendix A), as well as internal validity for which the triangulation and member check methods have been implemented. In the triangulation method, the data are collected from many sources and use varied techniques, such as discussions with employees, with peoples who are directly or indirectly associated and benefitted (data triangulation) and in the member check method. In addition, the respondents are given the researcher's prepared material (interview transcribed carefully) to check whether the information provided by them during the interview is accurately noted or not. Moreover, the

**TABLE 1** Demographic profile and significant responses of respondents during interview approach

S. no	Respondents <sup>a</sup>	Region	Age (years)	Marital status	Gender	Social enterprises	Significant responses from respondents
1	A	Jhansi	28	Married	Male	Education of poor children	'To deal with social problem, we have to feel that this is our problem' 'Before changing the world, first we need to change ourselves'
2	B	Jhansi	32	Married	Male	Empower the local people	'The intention and action always depend on our decisions' 'It is our decision to understand what is right or wrong' 'Problem are solved easily when we look at them in a different way'
3	C	Jhansi	30	Married	Male	Care of street children	'If our intention is to find the solution then god also helps you' 'May be the solution is present in front of you, you just need to modify or mould it according to the situation'
4	D	Jhansi	45	Widow	Female	Livelihood of widow	'To solve any social problem, we need to think differently to invite the participation of common people' 'To think about the society is a matter of courage because we have to confront with many issues tangible and intangible'
5	E	Jhansi	44	Single	Male	Empower the girls	'The action is the result of our feelings and the feelings towards needy people are automatically developed'
6	F	Moradabad	35	Married	Female	Education of poor children	'Value of helping others makes you feel happy, and this happiness brings satisfaction' 'Lots of social issues are present, it depends on our decision that in which matter you give 100% of own self to solve it'
7	G	Moradabad	40	Married	Male	Care of street children	'This field demands you creative thinking, the solution which is never presented by anyone'
8	H	Moradabad	50	Married	Male	Care of pollution	'The initiator who wants to participate in this field must have the approach to find the solution in any situation'
9	I	Rampur	45	Single	Male	Care of street children	'Entrepreneurs must have the quality of thinking in different manner as compare to others'
10	J	Rampur	43	Married	Male	Livelihood of widow	'The entrepreneurship field is always defined with innovativeness and this social field also expects from people to manage things differently'
11	K	Rampur	49	Single	Female	Care of orphanage children	'Every entrepreneur should have an eye to discover, analyse and utilise the opportunity to benefit the society' 'When you do something for the people, you feel some human connections that give the calmness to your mental agony'
12	L	Rampur	38	Widow	Female	Care of older people	'The essential quality of this field is empathetic in nature; feel that this is your problem. Then you see, your mind will be running as horsepower. Ha ha ha ...'
13	M	Mathura	39	Married	Female	Education of poor children	'We are the humans so every time our decision is not right. But we have to learn from the mistakes then makes the appropriate decision. Thus, experience strengthens our decision-making skills'

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

S. no	Respondents <sup>a</sup>	Region	Age (years)	Marital status	Gender	Social enterprises	Significant responses from respondents
14	N	Mathura	51	Married	Male	Care of street children	'We have to be aware of our surroundings that will help us to be creative, Creativity itself enlightens your mind' 'Every problem has the solution; you must think on it and dare to work on it'
15	O	Mathura	34	Single	Male	Care of older people	'It is not necessary that the problem is what we see, sometimes it is deep rooted in the society. As a social entrepreneur, we have to think strategically to eradicate the problem completely'
16	P	Mathura	48	Single	Male	Education of poor children	'Time is uncertain and unpredicted; it brings many challenges so we must have capacity to recover quickly'
17	Q	Mathura	47	Single	Female	Care of pollution	'Talking with experienced people give many solutions to your problem. You just modify it, explain it, and implement it. If the solution is present in between the people, the people love to implement it effectively'
18	R	Mathura	41	Married	Male	Empower the local people	'To participate in this type of entrepreneurship is more difficult as compare to any other type of entrepreneurship. I think. Because this needs self-introspection then you will be able to understand other's perspective as well'
19	S	Mathura	39	Married	Male	Livelihood of widow	'Society, people are not wrong ... nobody is wrong, we should try to explain them that for upliftment, some improvements are needed. That improvement is only possible when the people are concerned about other's pain'
20	T	Mathura	50	Single	Female	Care of orphanage children	'There are various alternatives in front of you, you have to select the best alternative which satisfies you and makes other benefitted and happy. This choice of the best alternative with good intention makes you capable in decision-making, which is a significant quality of the social entrepreneur' 'To explore new ideas is the fundamental of social entrepreneurship'
21	U	Kanpur	49	Widow	Male	Girls empowerment	'The girl's empowerment is not a new issue; this problem exists in every backward part of the country. As an entrepreneur, you have to find the ways to which achieve your objective and satisfy the people also. Because the support of society is necessary'
22	V	Kanpur	46	Single	Male	Care of orphanage children	'Children are very innocent. If we teach them to help others, they will learn easily and implement it to improve self and others. So, strategically, you develop more hands to develop the society'
23	W	Kanpur	48	Married	Female	Livelihood of widow	'In this field, people criticise you in every step, you must not avoid this but consume it to try to extract some positive thing and go ahead'

<sup>a</sup>The names of respondents kept A, B, C .... to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

Source: Primary data collected by researchers.

utility criterion must be met to determine whether the assessment effort provides decision-makers with enough knowledge about the effectiveness and appropriateness of objectives. The evaluation method provides adequate and accurate information that present

clear evidence of utility (Crittenden & Hill, 1971). This, in turn, indicates that validity has been established. The interviews are properly recorded and reanalysed carefully by all the researchers of this study, and the table presenting the important responses of the respondents



are prepared (Table 1). Lastly, external validity is maintained, as Burns (2003, p. 160) stated that the generalisability of a study's findings may depend on the degree to which our setting and other contexts are similar. So, the semistructured questions (Appendix A) will further be useful in a different context. The consistency, dependability and reproducibility of 'the results obtained from a piece of study' are referred to as reliability (Nunan, 1999, p. 14). The data are again collected by the co-authors with the help of semistructured questions (Appendix A) after 1 month, in February 2021, to achieve identical results. In the interview approach, achieving similar results is difficult because the information is in narrative form and subjective in nature. Thus, the proper guidance given to co-authors and after following the careful data collection procedure, it has been checked that the findings are consistent and dependable.

### 3.4.3 | Experts' opinions for preparation of preliminary questionnaire

As shown in Table 1, the statements made by respondents are gathered and refined with the help of experts (description of experts discussed in the previous section) according to their importance. All the experts are related to this field. As a pretesting procedure, the expert method is quick and straightforward to utilise (Olson, 2010; Presser & Blair, 1994). To identify problematic linguistic patterns in survey questions and to classify items related to interviewer effects, expert reviewers have been employed as a pretesting strategy (Presser & Blair, 1994). In this way, experts were chosen to minimise diversity in the background variables, rather than trying to pick a random sample of all experts. The review was completed independently by the experts. They were also asked to perform their reviews independently; the identities of other experts were not given to anybody other than the researcher. The processes involved are comprehension (understanding the question), retrieval (obtaining the knowledge for the question from memory), evaluation (considering the recovered information and whether it satisfies the objectives) and editing (modifying the response) (Tourangeau et al., 2000). The experts were requested to submit written comments through mail or any other comfortable mode. After multiple repetitions of the procedure, the preliminary questionnaire was finalised with the consent of all experts. Thus, with the suggestions of experts, the items from Table 1 are investigated and framed for further analysis and the content validity of the questionnaire is also maintained. Thus, a preliminary questionnaire comprising of 34 items was finalised with the help of experts' opinions and those were further communicated to 46 respondents for pilot testing through convenience sampling.

### 3.4.4 | Pilot testing

Pilot testing refers to the earlier step taken out to cover any error by testing and governing the preliminary questionnaire on a small sample size from the population under study. It checks the reliability of the

questionnaire; if the value of Cronbach's alpha comes equal to or above 0.6, it indicates that further analysis could be carried out on the data. For this study, the data were collected from 46 respondents to check the consistency and refinements of all items in the questionnaire. Through SPSS, the data were analysed, and the value of Cronbach's alpha obtained was 0.819 (Hair et al., 2015; Nunnally, Bernstein, & Berge, 1967). Thus, all 34 items were reliable, significant and retained for further analysis.

### 3.4.5 | Data collection

After checking the reliability (pilot testing) of the questionnaire, further data collection procedures took place. The data were collected during April–June 2021 from the respondents of different regions of UP, India, through convenience and snowball sampling methods. Initially, the known SEs were contacted, and the rest of the respondents were referred by the initial SEs. The SEs with at least 1 year of experience have been considered for the study because experience gives more clarity and understanding about their competencies. The interviews were conducted through mail and telephone due to COVID 19. Overall, 209 responses related to significant SCs were collected on a 5-point Likert scale and among them, only 177 responses were considered for further analysis owing to incomplete responses. As it is difficult to find out the SEs and convince them to participate in the research, only 177 responses were analysed. The percentage of valid responses was 84.68, which was appropriate for further analysis, as Allen and Babbie (2008) stated that 50% of responses are adequate for investigation and appropriate findings. The demographic profile of the respondent is shown in Table 2.

**TABLE 2** Demographic profile of the respondents

Variable	Basis	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	90	50.8
	Female	87	49.2
Age	21–30 years	68	38.4
	31–40 years	51	28.8
	41–50 years	30	16.9
	51–60 years	28	15.8
Marital status	Married	80	45.2
	Single	49	27.7
	Widow	48	27.1
Region	Jhansi	55	31.1
	Moradabad	36	20.3
	Rampur	33	18.6
	Mathura	29	16.4
	Kanpur	24	13.6
Previous experience	1–4 years	82	46.3
	5–8 years	47	26.6
	9–12 years	48	27.1

Source: Researchers.

### 3.4.6 | Reliability of the questionnaire

The internal consistency approach is utilised to analyse the questionnaire's reliability based on total respondents (Hair et al., 2015). The consistency of the data is due to the instrument's high reliability (Nunnally et al., 1967). The value of Cronbach's alpha, which should be equal to or greater than 0.60, has been used to assess the reliability in terms of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2015; Nunnally et al., 1967). The Cronbach's alpha value for the current study of 177 respondents is 0.890, thus indicating that the questionnaire is reliable and consistent enough for further investigation.

### 3.4.7 | EFA

EFA analysis is a technique for obtaining a more reliable estimation of the underlying structure of correlations among a group of objects. EFA is applied to a set of measured variables for assessing the number of constructs, but the hypotheses stating the causal relation with the constructs have not been framed (Agarwal et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2015). Instead of relying solely on intuition and theory, EFA analysis gives a statistical way for experimentally assisting the process of concept identification. After the researcher has carefully specified the domain of interest, she/he can begin developing structures that appear to fit the domain's conceptual specification. The researcher can then collect scores on the measured variables from a group of people and use factor analysis to discover the number of latent constructs (shared components) that make up the domain of interest. The researcher can determine the nature of the constructs by observing the specific measured variables that appear to be influenced by the same common factors. An EFA is recommended when the researcher has no assumptions about the number of common factors, which measured variables that would be influenced by the same common factors.

Thus, for empirical identification of significant SC, this study carried out the EFA and calculated the value of the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) index. The value obtained was 0.751 after analysing 177 responses, which being greater than 0.6 showed appropriateness for adequate sample size and suitability of data (Hair et al., 2015; Nunnally et al., 1967). The statistical significance of Bartlett's sphericity test was verified, and no evidence of multicollinearity was discovered (Table 3).

The further analysis result shown in Table 4 emphasised that a total of eight significant SC have been explored with the eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1 and overall 85.461% of variance explained.

The result is shown in Table 5 after further analysis depicted that the significant SC loadings of all the associated items are more than 0.5 and communalities values for all 34 items ranged from 0.603 to 0.968, respectively; hence, all the items were considered (Hair et al., 2015).

The scree plot (Figure 2) shows the eigenvalues of various significant SC, which is depicted in the Figure 2. The graph's 'elbow', where the eigenvalues appear to level off, should be determined, and eight SC to the left of this point should be kept as important.

**TABLE 3** KMO and Bartlett's test

Statistics	Value
Cronbach's alpha	0.890
No. of items	34
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (measures of sampling adequacy)	.751
Bartlett's test of sphericity	
Approx chi-square	8886.556
Degree of freedom	561
Significance	.000

Abbreviation: KMO, Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin.

**TABLE 4** Total variance explained

Factor	Eigenvalues	% of variance explained	Cumulative %
SC1	12.489	36.732	36.732
SC2	5.285	15.543	52.276
SC3	3.053	8.981	61.256
SC4	2.197	6.463	67.719
SC5	2.078	6.111	73.830
SC6	1.457	4.284	78.115
SC7	1.372	4.036	82.151
SC8	1.125	3.310	85.461

## 4 | RESULTS

### 4.1 | Identification and naming of significant SC (dissemination and verification process)

The process of identification/naming of the factors is not scientific; rather, it is based on the subjective opinion of experts. For this procedure, the researcher again contacts a few SEs to share the result as well as to get the suggestion for the naming of significant SC. This also generates the reliability, credibility and trustworthiness of the findings while considering the appropriateness of the result. For this, a researcher approached the 56 entrepreneurs through the mail and shared the result. After discussing and validating with SEs, a researcher approached the expert's opinion (profile of experts discussed in the previous section) for the further validation of naming of significant SC (Hair et al., 2015), which resulted in SC1: entrepreneurial resilience, SC2: problem-solving, SC3: Empathetic, SC4: EI, SC5: innovativeness, SC6: strategic thinking, SC7: leadership and SC8: self-efficacy. The details of the related items of SC have been given in Appendix B. These naming of significant SC have been further verified with the help of previous studies (Agrawal et al., 2020; Bullough & Renko, 2013; Dees, 2012; Eyal & Kark, 2004; Goleman, 2007; Humphrey, 2013). The description of significant SC is presented.

#### SC1: Entrepreneurial resilience

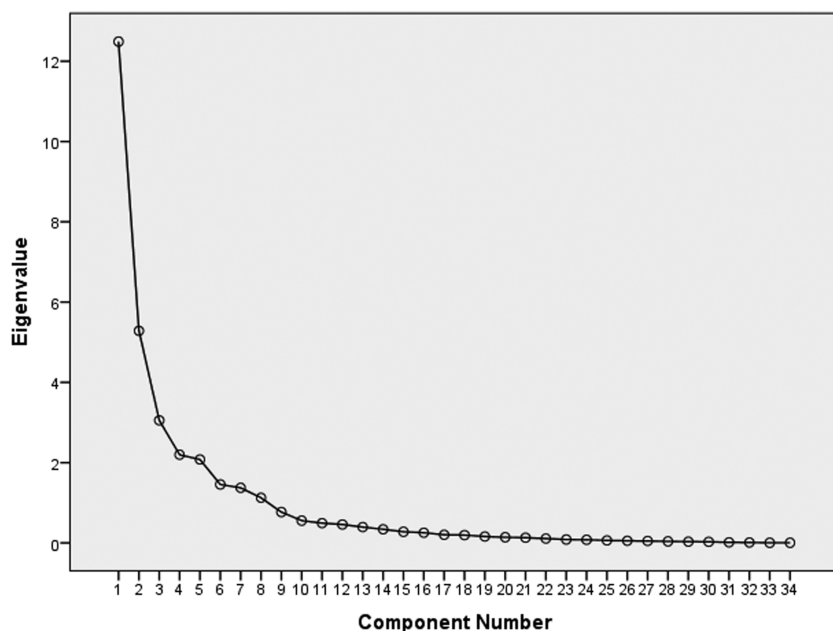
Entrepreneurial resilience is an important attribute for SEs because it aids in the growth and development of their enterprises. It is defined

**TABLE 5** Statistics of communalities and factor loading

S. no	Items related to SC	Communalities	Significant SC loadings							
			SC1	SC2	SC3	SC4	SC5	SC6	SC7	SC8
1	I have to understand the pain of others	.899			.923					
2	I have to change myself first for change the others	.968	.972							
3	I make balance among the intentions, actions and results	.883			.885					
4	I have the ability to judge what is right or wrong	.883	.920							
5	I have the ability to solve the problem in a different way	.843		.897						
6	I feel satisfied when others happy	.917	.937							
7	I have the ability to handle situation in innovative manner	.603				.734				
8	I have the ability to be empathetic	.840		.897						
9	I have courage to deal with social issues calmly	.911	.932							
10	I am very emotional in nature	.784			.834					
11	I belief in making others happy	.940	.947							
12	I have the ability of effective problem-solving	.915		.942						
13	I have the ability to scrutinise the activities effectively for efficient result	.909	.933							
14	I have the ability to be very creative	.779				.836				
15	I am very positive in nature	.839								.585
16	I have the ability to think strategically	.622						.551		
17	I have the ability to manage/coordinate the things differently	.911								.912
18	I have the ability to discover and utilise the opportunities for the benefit of society	.832						.881		
19	I feel human connection with needy people	.911		.925						
20	I have the ability to convince the people	.948	.963							
21	I feel that others problem is my problem	.894			.894					
22	I learn from my experience/mistakes which is helpful for me to take decisions	.906	.927							
23	I have the ability to touch the social issues and spread the awareness in the society	.899		.937						
24	I am dare to solve any problem	.905	.934							
25	I have the ability to control my anger	.898		.921						
26	I involve the people to solve the problem	.890	.927							
27	I have the ability to understand self and others	.870			.885					
28	I have the ability to maintain the interpersonal relationship with others	.827	.884							
29	I have the ability to choose best alternatives among all the alternatives that benefit lots of people	.929		.955						
30	I have the ability to explore new ideas	.834	.895							
31	I have the ability to learn something new from the surrounding	.849				.758				
32	I have the ability to enrich more hands to develop the society	.768							.648	
33	I have the capacity to recover with challenges quickly	.757							.833	
34	I have the ability to handle the criticism positively	.691	.621							

Note: Extraction method: principal component analysis; rotation method: varimax with Kaiser normalisation.

Abbreviation: SC, sustainable competencies.



**FIGURE 2** The scree plot of eight significant sustainable competencies (SC)

as an entrepreneur's ability to overcome problems associated with psychological, social, cultural and physical resources for sustained development (Bullough & Renko, 2013; Corner et al., 2017). It is necessary for future generations to face issues and conquer them with innovative solutions, as the future scenario is more dynamic than the present scenario.

#### SC2: Problem-solving skill

Problem-solving ability translates to being happier, more confident and more self-sufficient. The SEs must address social issues more efficiently and effectively. Problem-solving includes integrating logic and imagination to make sense of a situation and devise an intelligent solution. SEs function as the best problem solvers by anticipating potential future problems and taking steps to avoid or mitigate their effects (Buttner & Gryskiewicz, 1993; Dees, 2012; Goleman, 2007).

#### SC3: Empathetic

Empathy is a cognitive and affective development that fosters the ability to understand and value other people's feelings, opinions and experiences. Empathy, along with other emotional and social intelligence competencies, is critical in reducing the negative consequences of cognitive biases and in raising the likelihood of successfully comprehending stakeholders (Humphrey, 2013; Korte et al., 2018). SEs with an empathetic approach perceive and effectively engage with others in a multitude of circumstances, and this competence is required for future generations to sustain development by recognising the sorrow of others.

#### SC4: EI

EI is defined as a set of individual social talents or skills that enable one to monitor, distinguish and apply one's own and other people's emotions to govern one's thinking and action. EI refers to the ability to perceive and express emotions, as well as emotional adjustment and

the use of emotions to motivate oneself and others (Goleman, 2007; Ngah & Salleh, 2015). SEs require EI abilities, as they must manage social relationships with themselves and others. To visualise the outside world, future generations will need to understand themselves.

#### SC5: Innovativeness

Innovativeness is a critical capability for SEs to maintain enterprise growth in the face of global uncertainty. It is one of the most important traits of SEs, as it aids in the identification and active pursuit of chances for the benefit and upliftment of society creatively and innovatively (Barth et al., 2007; Ngah & Salleh, 2015). To grow and develop oneself, community, nation and planet, the potential generation needs different perspectives to visualise the problem. This competency enhances their cognitive ability to create an innovative sustainable business model that benefits both people and the world.

#### SC6: Strategic thinking

Strategic thinking is frequently the catalyst that drives entrepreneurs' decision-making process to recognise, locate, develop, and build new enterprise initiatives. The ultimate feature is associated with thinking, which comprises transitioning from one level of information to a higher degree of understanding (De Bono, 1969). Thinking encompasses memory, planning, ideas and possibilities (Argade et al., 2021; Zahra & Nambisan, 2012). Through logical creative thinking, sound ideas, deliberate analyses and sound conclusions, SEs can strategically think and create opportunities.

#### SC7: Leadership

SEs advise, motivate, encourage and influence people to solve problems. They have truly enabled the community to develop critical thinking skills to deal with future crises on their own (Eyal & Kark, 2004; Foo et al., 2021). SEs handle the adverse situation efficiently and transform the team effectively so that they become role model for

others. SEs act as change agents and reform society through innovative and creative processes. SEs effect radical change by presenting diametrically opposite beliefs and values to those that presently exist. Through their influence, SEs impact followers' identification, value internalisation, emotional engagement and social contagion processes. SEs can encourage revolutionary entrepreneurship in society by igniting followers' identity, inspiration and willingness to contribute to the society's progress (Kerr, 2006; Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018).

### SC8: Self-efficacy

Individual decisions, goals, emotional reactions, effort, coping and persistence are all influenced by self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001). An entrepreneur with high self-efficacy is more likely to 'exert more effort for a longer period, endure despite setbacks, and develop better', as stated by Shane et al. (2003, p. 267). Self-efficacy is defined as a person's confidence in his or her ability to successfully perform various responsibilities and tasks that come with becoming an entrepreneur. In the field of SEP, self-efficacy has emerged as a critical psychological characteristic. It has been used to demonstrate the way in which how a SE may consider a social enterprise as a viable solution, and it is an important aspect of creating SE intentions. It also demonstrates that it plays a significant role in SEP, as societal concerns are typically viewed as so enormous that people doubt their ability to make any kind of difference.

Thus, these are the significant SC that have been analysed with the help of the interview and EFA approach. Social work needs a different personality concerning different attitude, perceptions, and behaviour. These competencies must be transferred by this generation to future generations to make this field sustainable. For SD of the individual, society, nation and world, these competencies should be sustainable in nature from the present and future perspectives. The findings have depicted the eight SC that are crucial for the success of the social entrepreneurial journey. A social enterprise, which is sometimes defined as a 'pioneering movement with an embedded social purpose' (Agarwal et al., 2020), has become a substantial monetary phenomenon on a global scale. The innovative solutions that SEs approve in their local environment are frequently replicated in other topographies and spun off global enterprises. So, SEP has played a minor but significant role in sustaining social, national, and international growth. Our research has identified SC of SEs that are useful in the formation and growth of social enterprises that serve as a model for skill development, job creation, economic empowerment of underprivileged and marginalised elements of society, and the maintenance of high-quality goods and services. SEs are not motivated only by personal profit; rather, their major goal is to establish a social enterprise to address an economic, social or environmental issue or to provide assistance to those in need; which has become the motivation for the researchers to undertake this study.

## 5 | CONCLUSION

This study analyses the significant SC of SEs by using the qualitative and quantitative approaches. With the help of the interview approach,

the direct information from SEs has been retrieved and explored with EFA to discuss the different competencies associated to with SD.

Previous studies have also mentioned the importance of competencies in the entrepreneurship field (Agarwal & Lenka, 2017; Boyatzis, 2011). Competency in coping with inadequate and complex knowledge, individual decision difficulties, self-motivation and motivating others, independent action and acting fairly and environmentally are just a few examples. Competence in communication and media use, ambiguity and frustration tolerance, ethical action and competency in planning and implementing creative projects are some of the other skills that might be listed (Argade et al., 2021; De Haan, 2006; Rieckmann, 2012; Teruel-Sánchez et al., 2021).

In the present scenario, mostly government and nongovernment agents are emphasising the SC for the SD of the society, nation and the world. Due to COVID-19, any type of economy affected by this pandemic situation has been trying to recover the same only with SC. The present study has analysed the eight SC, that is, entrepreneurial resilience, problem-solving, empathy, EI, innovativeness, strategic thinking, leadership and self-efficacy with the help of information collected from SEs (Foo et al., 2021). These SEs have the intention, desire and motivation to transform the society and encourage and empower them to deal with the pandemic situation and become the inspiration for future generations also. They believe in development with the enrichment of more hands that come forward to help others. The feeling to serve others, open-minded perception, having empathy, sympathy to motivate oneself and others, solving uncertain situations, maintaining ethical values and principles, working in an interdisciplinary manner with collaboration and cooperation need the ability to be forward-looking and have the transcultural understanding to achieve efficient action; and future generation demand the same. SC emphasise the significance of generating activities that are grounded in reality, the need for social contact and the challenge of models based only on knowledge transmission. It is not enough to understand concepts; it is also required to learn how to put them into practice, integrate them and use them appropriately in a variety of real-world situations to achieve sustainable economic growth. Thus, rather than simply acquiring knowledge, SC becomes learning achievements based on an engaging, crucial and participatory perspective, which can lead us to responsible people who are informed and committed to cultural, environmental and societal issues and can act to solve the present problems along with potential issues.

## 6 | IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

In today's competitive world, every sector needs long-term growth, which necessitates the SC. The present and future generations are fundamentally working on the SC for the sake of the present and future SD. This study directs government and nongovernment organisations to focus on the creation of various effective strategies/models that promote the competencies of present and future generations. The implications of the current study are commensurate with the RBV, which holds that the performance of SEs is influenced by their

competencies that are valued, unique, difficult to mimic and non-substitute in nature. Therefore, certain characteristics of SEs, such as empathy, EI, self-efficacy and so on should be encouraged with the help of role models, development programmes and workshops, because they foster a beneficial environment for the creation of distinctive SC to maintain the enterprises' competitive advantage. Thus, developing countries around the world are progressively investing considerable capital in the effective implementation of their SEP programmes. These efforts appear to be the driving force behind the country's SD. Managers and administrators of academic institutes should provide social entrepreneurship education programmes with adequate instructional methods and resources to employees and students, which could drive them to create and manage their social enterprises in the future. We must set the examples for present generations to follow, and these SC will never diminish with time.

## 7 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study includes a few shortcomings that point to new possibilities and areas for future research. This study used qualitative analysis, which is largely dependent on the researcher's skills and may provide a subjective perspective. As a result, future investigations should take a semiquantitative or quantitative approach. It mainly focuses on the SEs; additional research would have been conducted by considering the other sample such as male and women SEs and business entrepreneurs to analyse more SC. This study also analyses the scale associated with distinct SC, which enables future researchers to do longitudinal studies using different methods such as regression and structural equation modelling, in diverse sample contexts for a better understanding of the social entrepreneurship field.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Open Access Funding provided by Università degli Studi di Trento within the CRUI-CARE Agreement. [Correction added on 20 May 2022, after first online publication: CRUI funding statement has been added.]


### ORCID

Veland Ramadani  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8495-9141>

Sucheta Agarwal  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6525-3007>

Andrea Caputo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2498-182X>

Vivek Agrawal  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7665-7103>

Jitendra Kumar Dixit  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3149-1351>

### REFERENCE

- Agarwal, S., & Lenka, U. (2017). Does growth of ventures depend on competencies? Selected cases from India. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 31(2), 227–243. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJESB.2017.10004850>
- Agarwal, S., Agrawal, V., & Agrawal, A. M. (2018). Motivational and success factors: Through the lens of women entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Management and Enterprise Development*, 17(4), 307–328. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJMED.2018.096231>
- Agarwal, S., Lenka, U., Singh, K., Agrawal, V., & Agrawal, A. M. (2020). A qualitative approach towards crucial factors for SD of women social entrepreneurship: Indian cases. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 274, 123135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.123135>
- Allen, R., & Babbie, E. (2008). *Research Methods for Social Work*. Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- Alvord, S. K., Brown, D. L., & Letts, C. W. (2004). Social entrepreneurship and societal transformation: An exploratory study. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 40(3), 260–282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886304266847>
- Anderson, E. L. (2015). *Developing Key Sustainability Competencies Through Real-World Learning Experiences: Evaluating Community Environmental Services*. Doctoral dissertation. Portland State University, Poland.
- Argade, P., Salignac, F., & Barkemeyer, R. (2021). Opportunity identification for sustainable entrepreneurship: Exploring the interplay of individual and context level factors in India. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 30(8), 3528–3551. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2818>
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1>
- Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99–120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639101700108>
- Barth, M., Godemann, J., Rieckmann, M., & Stoltenberg, U. (2007). Developing key competencies for sustainable development in higher education. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 8(4), 416–430. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14676370710823582>
- Bartolacci, F., Caputo, A., & Soverchia, M. (2020). Sustainability and financial performance of small and medium sized enterprises: A bibliometric and systematic literature review. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 29(3), 1297–1309. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2434>
- Biberhofer, P., Lintner, C., Bernhardt, J., & Rieckmann, M. (2019). Facilitating work performance of sustainability-driven entrepreneurs through higher education: The relevance of competencies, values, worldviews and opportunities. *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 20(1), 21–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465750318755881>
- Bird, B. (1995). Towards a theory of entrepreneurial competency. *Advances in Entrepreneurship, Firm Emergence and Growth*, 2, 51–72.
- Bornstein, D. (2004). *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas?*. Oxford University Press.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1982). *The Competent Manager: A Model for Effective Performance*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (2011). Managerial and leadership competencies: A behavioral approach to emotional, social and cognitive intelligence. *Vision*, 15(2), 91–100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/097226291101500202>
- Boyatzis, R. E. (2008). Competencies in the 21st century. *Journal of Management Development*, 27(1), 5–12. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710810840730>
- Brundiers, K., Wiek, A., & Redman, C. L. (2010). Real-world learning opportunities in sustainability: From classroom into the real world. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 11(4), 308–324. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14676371011077540>
- Bullough, A., & Renko, M. (2013). Entrepreneurial resilience during challenging times. *Business Horizons*, 56(3), 343–350. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2013.01.001>
- Burns, A. (2003). *Collaborative Action Research for English Language Teachers*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.
- Buttner, E. H., & Gryskiewicz, N. (1993). Entrepreneurs problem-solving styles: An empirical study using the Kirton adaption/innovation theory. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 31, 22–22.
- Cebrián, G., & Junyent, M. (2015). Competencies in education for SD: Exploring the student teachers views. *Sustainability*, 7(3), 2768–2786. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su7032768>

- Chavez, R., Yu, W., Sadiq Jajja, M. S., Lecuna, A., & Fynes, B. (2020). Can entrepreneurial orientation improve SD through leveraging internal lean practices? *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 29(6), 2211–2225. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2496>
- Cincera, J., Biberhofer, P., Binka, B., Boman, J., Mindt, L., & Rieckmann, M. (2018). Designing a sustainability-driven entrepreneurship curriculum as a social learning process: A case study from an international knowledge alliance project. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 172, 4357–4366. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.05.051>
- Coates, T. T., & McDermott, C. M. (2002). An exploratory analysis of new competencies: A resource based view perspective. *Journal of Operations Management*, 20(5), 435–450. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-6963\(02\)00023-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-6963(02)00023-2)
- Cohen, H., Kaspi-Baruch, O., & Katz, H. (2019). The social entrepreneur puzzle: The background, personality and motivation of Israeli social entrepreneurs. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 10(2), 211–231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19420676.2018.1541010>
- Corner, P. D., Singh, S., & Pavlovich, K. (2017). Entrepreneurial resilience and venture failure. *International Small Business Journal*, 35(6), 687–708. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242616685604>
- Costanza, R., & Patten, B. C. (1995). Defining and predicting sustainability. *Ecological Economics*, 15(3), 193–196. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0921-8009\(95\)00048-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0921-8009(95)00048-8)
- Crittenden, K. S., & Hill, R. J. (1971). Coding reliability and validity of interview data. *American Sociological Review*, 36(6), 1073–1080. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2093766>
- De Almeida, J. M. G., Gohr, C. F., Morioka, S. N., & Da Nobrega, B. M. (2021). Towards an integrative framework of collaborative capabilities for sustainability: A systematic review and research agenda. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 279, 123789. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.123789>
- De Bono, E. (1969). *The Mechanism of the Mind*. Simon & Schuster.
- De Haan, G. (2006). The BLK '21' programme in Germany: A 'Gestaltungskompetenz'-based model for education for sustainable development. *Environmental Education Research*, 12(1), 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504620500526362>
- Dees, J. G. (2012). A tale of two cultures: Charity, problem solving, and the future of social entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 111(3), 321–334. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1412-5>
- Dickel, P., & Eckardt, G. (2021). Who wants to be a social entrepreneur? The role of gender and sustainability orientation. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 59(1), 196–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472778.2019.1704489>
- Diesendorf, M. (2000). *Sustainability and sustainable development. Sustainability: The corporate challenge of the 21st century* (Vol. 2, pp. 19–37). Allen & Unwin.
- Edwards, M. G. (2021). The growth paradox, sustainable development, and business strategy. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 30(7), 3079–3094. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2790>
- Esteves, A. M., Genus, A., Henfrey, T., Penha-Lopes, G., & East, M. (2021). Sustainable entrepreneurship and the SD goals: Community-led initiatives, the social solidarity economy and commons ecologies. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 30(3), 1423–1435. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2706>
- Eyal, O., & Kark, R. (2004). How do transformational leaders transform organizations? A study of the relationship between leadership and entrepreneurship. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 3(3), 211–235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700760490503715>
- Foo, P. Y., Lee, V. H., Ooi, K. B., Tan, G. W. H., & Sohal, A. (2021). Unfolding the impact of leadership and management on sustainability performance: Green and lean practices and guanxi as the dual mediators. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 30(8), 4136–4153. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2861>
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Research: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Aldine Transaction.
- Goleman, D. (1998). The emotionally competent leader. *The Healthcare Forum Journal*, 41(2), 36–38.
- Goleman, D. (2007). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Be Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam Books.
- Goni, F. A., Chofreh, A. G., Orakani, Z. E., Klemeš, J. J., Davoudi, M., & Mardani, A. (2021). Sustainable business model: A review and framework development. *Clean Technologies and Environmental Policy*, 23(3), 889–897. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10098-020-01886-z>
- Grant, R. M. (1991). The resource-based theory of competitive advantage: Implications for strategy formulation. *California Management Review*, 33(3), 114–135. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41166664>
- Gray, R. (2010). Is accounting for sustainability actually accounting for sustainability ... and how would we know? An exploration of narratives of organisations and the planet. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 35(1), 47–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aos.2009.04.006>
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2015). *Multivariate Data Analysis*. Pearson.
- Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2006). *A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers Doing Case Study Research*. Teachers College Press.
- Hu, D., Qiu, L., She, M., & Wang, Y. (2021). Sustaining the SD: How do firms turn government green subsidies into financial performance through green innovation? *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 30(5), 2271–2292. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2746>
- Humphrey, R. H. (2013). The benefits of emotional intelligence and empathy to entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 3(3), 287–294. <https://doi.org/10.1515/erj-2013-0057>
- Jeong, S., Bailey, J. M., Lee, J., & McLean, G. N. (2020). Its not about me, its about us: A narrative inquiry on living life as a social entrepreneur. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 16(3), 263–280. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SEJ-05-2019-0030>
- Kerr, I. R. (2006). Leadership strategies for sustainable SME operation. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 15(1), 30–39. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.451>
- Korte, R., Smith, K. A., & Li, C. Q. (2018). The role of empathy in entrepreneurship: A Core competency of the entrepreneurial mind set. *Advances in Engineering Education*, 7(1), 1–10.
- Martínez, C. N., Bañón, A. R., & Laviada, A. F. (2019). Social entrepreneur: Same or different from the rest? *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 30(3), 443–459. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-00053-9>
- Mensah, J. (2019). Sustainable development: Meaning, history, principles, pillars, and implications for human action: Literature review. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1653531>
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. Jossey-Bass.
- Muralidharan, E., & Pathak, S. (2018). Sustainability, transformational leadership, and social entrepreneurship. *Sustainability*, 10(2), 567–589. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10020567>
- Ngah, R., & Salleh, Z. (2015). Emotional intelligence and entrepreneurs innovativeness towards entrepreneurial success: A preliminary study. *American Journal of Economics*, 5(2), 285–290.
- Nunan, D. (1999). *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Eighth printing.
- Nunnally, J. C., Bernstein, I. H., & Berge, J. M. T. (1967). *Psychometric Theory*. McGraw-Hill.
- Olson, K. (2010). An examination of questionnaire evaluation by expert reviewers. *Field Methods*, 22(4), 295–318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X10379795>
- Presser, S., & Blair, J. (1994). Survey pretesting: Do different methods produce different results? *Sociological Methodology*, 24, 73–104. <https://doi.org/10.2307/270979>
- Reynolds, N. S., & Holt, D. (2021). Sustainable development and profit? A sensemaking perspective on hybrid organisations and their founders. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 30(4), 2147–2159. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2737>

- Rieckmann, M. (2012). Future-oriented higher education: Which key competencies should be fostered through university teaching and learning? *Futures*, 44(2), 127–135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2011.09.005>
- Rychen, D. S., & Salganik, L. H. (2003). *Key Competencies for a Successful Life and Well-Functioning Society*. Hogrefe Publishing.
- Sachs, J. D. (2015). *The Age of Sustainable Development*. Columbia University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7312/sach17314>
- Sassmannshausen, S. P., & Volkmann, C. (2018). The scientometrics of social entrepreneurship and its establishment as an academic field. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 56(2), 251–273. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12254>
- Schaltegger, S., & Wagner, M. (2011). Sustainable entrepreneurship and sustainability innovation: Categories and interactions. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 20(4), 222–237. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.682>
- Scoones, I. (2007). Sustainability. *Development in Practice*, 17(4–5), 589–596. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520701469609>
- Shane, S., Locke, E. A., & Collins, C. J. (2003). Entrepreneurial motivation. *Human Resource Management Review*, 13(2), 257–279. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1053-4822\(03\)00017-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1053-4822(03)00017-2)
- Silvestre, B. S., & Țîrcă, D. M. (2019). Innovations for sustainable development: Moving toward a sustainable future. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 208, 325–332. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.09.244>
- Teruel-Sánchez, R., Briones-Peñalver, A. J., Bernal-Conesa, J. A., & de Nieves-Nieto, C. (2021). Influence of the entrepreneurs capacity in business performance. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 30(5), 2453–2467. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2757>
- Tourangeau, R., Rips, L. J., & Rasinski, K. (2000). *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511819322>
- Wernerfelt, B. (1984). A resource-based view of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 5(2), 171–180. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.4250050207>
- Westman, L., Luederitz, C., Kundurpi, A., Mercado, A. J., Weber, O., & Burch, S. L. (2019). Conceptualizing businesses as social actors: A framework for understanding sustainability actions in small-and medium-sized enterprises. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 28(2), 388–402. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2256>
- Wiek, A., Withycombe, L., & Redman, C. L. (2011). Key competencies in sustainability: A reference framework for academic program development. *Sustainability Science*, 6(2), 203–218. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-011-0132-6>
- World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press.
- Zahra, S. A., & Nambisan, S. (2012). Entrepreneurship and strategic thinking in business ecosystems. *Business Horizons*, 55(3), 219–229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2011.12.004>

**How to cite this article:** Ramadani, V., Agarwal, S., Caputo, A., Agrawal, V., & Dixit, J. K. (2022). Sustainable competencies of social entrepreneurship for sustainable development: Exploratory analysis from a developing economy. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 31(7), 3437–3453. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.3093>

## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did you develop the interest for SEP?
2. Who motivates to involve in this field?
3. How did you initiate your enterprise?
4. What problems you have faced in your entrepreneurial journey?
5. How did you tackle these problems?
6. What do you think what type of skills/competencies needed in this journey?
7. How these competencies are helpful in your journey?
8. How have you developed these competencies?
9. How have your effort bring the social impact?
10. How have you changed the perception of the common people towards any social problem?

\*Rest of questions depend on the interview between researcher and respondent.

## APPENDIX B: SIGNIFICANT SUSTAINABLE COMPETENCIES WITH ITEMS

### B.1 | SC1: Entrepreneurial resilience

2. I have to change myself first to being change among others.
4. I have the ability to judge what is right or wrong.
6. I feel satisfied when others are happy.
9. I have courage to deal with social issues calmly.
11. I belief in making others happy.
13. I have the ability to scrutinise the activities effectively for efficient result.
20. I have the ability to convince people.
22. I learn from my experience/mistakes which is helpful for me to take decisions.
24. I dare to solve any problem.
26. I involve the people to solve the problem.
28. I have the ability to maintain the interpersonal relationship with others.
30. I have the ability to explore new ideas.
34. I have the ability to handle the criticism positively.

### B.2 | SC2: Problem-solving

5. I have the ability to solve the problem in a different way.
12. I have the ability of effectively solving problems.
23. I have the ability to touch the social issues and spread the awareness in the society.
29. I have the ability to choose the best alternatives among all the alternatives that will be beneficial for lots of people



**B.3 | SC3: Empathetic**

1. I have to understand the pain of others.
8. I have the ability to be empathetic.
19. I feel human connection with needy people.
25. I have the ability to control my anger.

**B.4 | SC4: Emotional intelligence**

3. I make balance among the intentions, actions and results.
10. I am very emotional in nature.
21. I feel that others problem is my problem.
27. I have the ability to understand self and others.

**B.5 | SC5: Innovativeness**

7. I have the ability to handle situation in innovative manner.
14. I have the ability to be very creative.
31. I have the ability to learn something new from the surrounding.

**B.6 | SC6: Strategic thinking**

16. I have the ability to think strategically.
18. I have the ability to discover and utilise the opportunities for the benefit of society.

**B.7 | SC7: Leadership**

32. I have the ability to enrich more hands to develop the society.
33. I have the capacity to recover with challenges quickly.

**B.8 | SC8: Self-efficacy**

15. I am very positive in nature.
17. I can manage/coordinate things differently.