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## Strategies for Revitalized Immigrant-Owned Small Businesses to Sustain Growth Following Emergencies

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# Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Goi Jooyul Yol

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2023

Abstract

Strategies for Revitalized Immigrant-Owned Small Businesses to Sustain Growth

Following Emergencies

by

Goi Jooyul Yol

MBA, Walden University, 2015

BA, Lindsey Wilson College, 2002

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

June 2023

## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed obstacles for immigrant small business owners (ISBOs) to sustain growth. ISBOs need strategies for growth sustainability following emergencies because United States immigrant-owned small businesses accounting for 28% of the main street businesses, declined by 36% in revenues between January to April 2020 due to the pandemic. Grounded in the entrepreneurial ecosystem framework and business continuity management model, the purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore strategies four South Dakota ISBOs used to revitalize their businesses to ensure sustainable growth after the COVID-19 emergency. Data were collected by conducting semistructured interviews and reviews of organization documents and physical artifacts and analyzed using thematic analysis and Yin's five-step approach. Six themes emerged: developing resilient personal capabilities and fostering business structure for growth; improving engagement and communications to enhance trust; leveraging financial, linguistic, and technology resources for business continuity; ensuring resilient tools for business sustainability; establishing business risk mitigation and compliance practices; and employing business continuity measurement tools. A key recommendation for ISBOs is to strengthen communication skills and channels to enhance engagement with customers and business partners to realize business and social value. The implications for positive social change include the potential for sustainable business growth, stability, and resilience in local communities' financial, social, and cultural foundations.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this study to the memory of my mother, who believed in me. And to my father, who I always emulate. My wife, who supported me during this study, and my children for encouraging me and adoring the effort. To the people of Akobo.

## Acknowledgments

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Creating strategies for managing business continuity and sustainable growth for small businesses during and after disasters has been an effective measure for business recovery. Successful revitalized enterprises have become an indicator of the small business sector's sustainable social and economic ecosystem viability (Sapapthai et al., 2021). The evidence of COVID-19's effect on small businesses was the reduction of small business operations in the United States by 36% in the first 3 months of the pandemic (Fairlie, 2020). National business leaders worked to find solutions to stabilize the national economy amid the declining small business gross domestic product (GDP; Small Business Administration [SBA], 2019). Some national business leaders recognize the importance of immigrant small business ownership, despite adversity through inspiring new business aspirants (SBA, 2018). The foundation for understanding the contributions of immigrant business owners and communities and the barriers to their successes are transferable attributes for supplementing relevant enterprises (Duan et al., 2021). The experiences are for immigrant business owners to replicate the results in similar situations by concentrating on tested solutions.

### **Background of the Problem**

The COVID-19 emergency intensified the search for resilient models for sustaining growth and recovery for immigrant-owned businesses. Immigrant-owned businesses account for 28% of the main street businesses in the United States (House Small Business Committee, 2021). A revitalized small business's growth sustainability indicates a better strategic and economically sustainable approach to modeling the

realities at hand (Sahebjamnia et al., 2018; Xing et al., 2019). Considering the contributions of immigrant small businesses to the economy and the impact it creates in communities, the viability of the enterprise goes beyond revenue creation.

Social impact is a result of skillful economic growth policies at the micro and macro levels of business. Small businesses globally are the centerpiece of social and economic growth and a conduit through which skills and resources intersect to create formidable social impacts (Sapathai et al., 2021). In the United States, small businesses accounted for 44% of the U.S. economic activity, corresponding to the most recent nominal small business GDP, measured at \$5.9 trillion between 1998–2014 (SBA, 2019). The contributions of small business to the U.S. economy are significant; though slow accounts persist during economic upheavals; small businesses continue to be a vital engine of economic sustainability. The loss of 36% of small businesses nationally from January to April 2020 was primarily because of the COVID-19 pandemic (Fairlie, 2020). Such a revenue loss demonstrates a need for emergency-proof strategies for business recovery measurements that include ecosystem approaches consistent with immigrant-owned small businesses' experiences (Duan et al., 2020; Lindstedt, 2017). The evident rebound of some immigrant-owned small businesses could be a result of different internal and external factors (Sahebjamnia et al., 2018). Therefore, understanding such experiences and information on the revitalized immigrant-owned businesses in South Dakota and designing strategies to sustain growth after emergencies will expand practical approaches in literature and practice for business owners.

### **Problem and Purpose**

Leaders should recognize the economic implications of not leveraging entrepreneurial drivers to sustain immigrant start-ups that account for 28% of main street businesses nationwide (Duan et al., 2020; House Small Business Committee, 2021).

Immigrant small businesses experienced widespread losses impacting business performance that led to the closure of more than 36% of businesses between February and April 2020, primarily exacerbated by the COVID-19 emergency (Fairlie, 2020). The general business problem is that immigrant-owned small businesses that do not adapt to emerging changes and utilize appropriate innovative drivers will experience limited enterprise revitalization and growth sustainability following emergencies. The specific business problem is that some revitalized immigrant-owned small business owners lack strategies for growth sustainability following emergencies.

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore strategies used by revitalized immigrant business owners for growth sustainability following emergencies. The targeted population consist of four immigrant-owned businesses in South Dakota that successfully revitalized their enterprises and sustained growth following emergencies. The implications following the emergencies on business practice and social change are the implementation of successful strategies by immigrant-owned businesses, translating into expanded personal income, employment, profit generation, and an increase in tax revenues to support local community citizens.

### **Nature of the Study**

I considered each of the three research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and



mixed methods for doctoral study. Qualitative researchers use open-ended questions to explore experiences and sharing practices that may impact the situation (Laursen & De Welde, 2019). A qualitative approach incorporating the best-suited models results in successful strategies (Korepanov et al., 2020). Therefore, I used the qualitative method to explore innovative strategies to revitalize enterprises and sustainable growth after emergencies. In contrast, quantitative researchers use variables and closed-ended questions to test hypotheses about variables' characteristics or relationships (Lo et al., 2020). I did not use quantitative methodology because I did not need to examine the variables' characteristics or relationships to address my doctoral study's purpose. Similarly, mixed-methods research includes both qualitative and quantitative methods (Sahin & Ozturk, 2019). I did not use mixed methods because my study does not require using a quantitative component.

I considered three qualitative research designs for studying strategies for revitalizing enterprises after an emergency. I first explored phenomenological and ethnographical designs to learn small business strategies for revitalized enterprise and growth sustainability. Phenomenological researchers seek to understand the personal meanings of participants' lived experiences (Kilinc et al., 2020). I did not select the phenomenological design as I looked beyond personal meanings of lived experiences to review carefully selected cases to include perspectives, documentation, and artifacts to explore the business problem. In contrast, ethnographic designers study groups and organizations' cultures (Akarsu et al., 2018). I did not select an ethnographic design because I did not study organizational culture. I concluded that the multiple-case study

design is the most appropriate for my study. The multiple-case design is a bounded system for a detailed, in-depth data collection process that uses interviews, interpretation, and archived documents through data analysis (Lupo & Stroman, 2020). In addition, the multiple-case design aligns with researchers' understanding of exact reproduction by answering the process and reason for analytic comparisons and conclusions arising from two or more cases (Yin, 2018). In contrast, the single case design is vulnerable and usually reflects a single condition surrounding the case without comparisons among cases to provide alternatives (Yin, 2018). A single case study is not appropriate for this doctoral study.

### **Research Question**

What strategies are used by revitalized immigrant small business owners for growth sustainability following emergencies?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What key strategies have you used to revitalize your business and sustain growth after emergencies?
2. What financial strategies did you use for your business's sustainable growth following the emergencies?
3. What social, economic, and environmental conditions affected your business growth sustainability following emergencies?
4. What key obstacles did you face in implementing your strategies for revitalized enterprise and sustainable growth?
5. How did you address the key challenges faced toward enterprise recovery and

sustainable growth?

6. What measures do you use to monitor your success to determine your strategies and implementation plans' effectiveness for enterprise recovery and sustainable growth after an emergency?
7. What additional information can you provide to help me understand the strategies you used to revitalize your business and sustain growth after emergencies?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study was a composite framework consisting of the entrepreneurship ecosystem model pioneered by Moore (1993) and the business continuity management (BCM) model by Barnes and Rothstein (2002). The entrepreneurship ecosystem model emanates from the literature on business strategy and regional development (Acs et al., 2017). The entrepreneurship ecosystem model tenets draw on local resources, institutions, and networks and enhance cultural, social, and material attributes to improve knowledge (Malecki, 2018). Such attributes benefit entrepreneurs from intersecting technical, social, and technological resources (Bradley, 2019). The use of an ecosystem model adds to the study through the provision of space and a hub for networking and resource contributions toward strategy formulation by business owners. The BCM model features disruptive emergencies and the management of disruption risks affecting customers, compromising business credibility and revenue streams (Gibb & Buchanan, 2006). The relationships between these attributes reproduce an ecosystem that influences organizational-level factors, such as networks, resources, and demographic characteristics, to enhance the social network connectivity of ventures

(Spigel, 2017). The interlinks within BCM tenets align with processes resilience leading to successful business results (Gibb & Buchanan, 2006). The use of BCM adds tenets of continuity management after disruptions that are used by business owners for business recovery and growth. The successful experiences and lessons learned are parcel of borrowing from different complementary business models to create resilient strategies.

A framework is a tool for discovery and problem-solving. The composite conceptual framework for ecosystem and BCM is a lens through which to see common attributes that form successful fusion for growth. Such growth involves technical resources, people, locations, and products associated with constraints related to risks, costs, scope, and time required for resilience and recovery.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Disruptive emergencies:* Complex disruptions caused by pandemics to populations and businesses exacerbate risk factors resulting in the breakdown of coping mechanisms that require multifaceted responses from business owners, suppliers, and regulators (Hammer et al., 2018).

*Growth sustainability:* A critical factor in business growth characterized by a positive increase in revenues and profits in any circumstance, maintaining business stability and continuity (Chen et al., 2021).

*Revitalized business:* Signifies business revitalization, which is an important method and act for a persistent business owner to make a business grow, redevelop, and become successful again after a period of intermission using approaches that address different types of disruptions (Plugge et al., 2020).

## **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are presumed facts without checking that are usually beyond testing theoretical predictions derived from a specific theoretical model, method, and design that relate to inferences surrounding personal interpretations and results (Armstrong & Kepler, 2018). I made three assumptions for this study. First, I assumed that immigrant business owners would not share their financial data and downplay their business successes. The findings were false and revealed the opposite when immigrant business shared their documents voluntarily. The second assumption was that a composite framework consisting of the entrepreneurship ecosystem model and business continuity model is the most appropriate conceptual framework to address business ownership needs for resources for profitability, success, and sustainable growth following disasters. The assumption was true to some extent with applications of framework tenets to research. The third assumption was that the participants have difficulty explaining strategies that continue to keep businesses resilient during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The assumption was not true; though some extra explanation was needed, participants contributed their ideas freely.

### **Limitations**

Research limitations are conditions beyond the researcher's control that require identification before a successful study (Shahriari & Rasuli, 2020). Researchers assess issues that may stand in the way of conducting complete and dependable research. There are multiple limitations encompassing this study. First, COVID-19 social distance

requirements were a health limitation for face-to-face personal interviews with the participants. Second, linguistic barriers and limited English language fluency may have led to more time for interview questions interpretation and data transcription. Third, misidentifying the immigrant business owners' perceptions and experiences about the research topic may have resulted in skewed data in a formal study interview.

### **Delimitations**

Study delimitations are distinctive factors such as matters, boundaries, issues, and nature restricting the scope of the study (Cusma et al., 2020). I set three delimitations for this study. First, I set my study parameters to South Dakota, excluding immigrant-owned small businesses outside this geographic area. Second, I only included immigrant-owned small businesses in the study, excluding other categories of small businesses. Third, the duration of the study included immigrant-owned businesses that remained operational for at least the last 5 years and recovered after the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Significance of the Study**

Small business owners often strive to find models and strategies to manage, resource, grow, and sustain their businesses. The doctoral study's potential significance is to recognize strategies for revitalizing immigrant-owned small businesses and sustaining or growing profitability following emergencies for contributing to regional output.

### **Contribution to Business Practice**

The doctoral study's findings are potentially significant to business practice by providing a practical model for local immigrant business owners to develop better strategies to revitalize their businesses following emergencies. Furthermore, the findings

from the doctoral study could enable immigrant businesses to develop more robust economic models and processes for growing and sustaining profitability under varying market conditions. These potential improvements could also support other businesses' ability to respond to their business development.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The doctoral study's potential implications for social change start with the business owner, local economy, and environment. The implications for the doctoral study's contributions to social change are creating knowledge and value for the business owner and society to maintain successful businesses and create varieties of alternatives and choices in communities to access jobs. The findings could strengthen researched strategies for immigrant business owners to recognize the contributions of entrepreneurship spaces to acquire knowledge to succeed and create value for the growing sections of communities through the newly acquired knowledge translating personal growth, revenue jobs, and vibrant communities (SBA, 2018). The intention of generating social impact lies within the goals and objectives of business design to generate positive business social responsibility.

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

The purpose of this multiple-case study was to explore strategies used by immigrant small business owners for enterprise revitalization following emergencies. During the COVID-19 emergency, some immigrant-owned small business owners used strategies to revitalize enterprises and sustain growth after the disaster (Kehbila, 2021). However, due to a lack of support and strategies to access the resources available, many

immigrant-owned revitalized businesses found it challenging to maintain the continuity and growth needed for maintaining personal income, employment, and revenue (Fairlie, 2020). The lack of support generated a gap that exacerbated business loss with a threat of business closure and potentially a permanent loss of livelihood.

In this literature review, I provide details on scholarly articles and sources for the entrepreneurship ecosystem and BCM strategies for enterprise revitalization to sustain growth. Sustained business growth signals expansion and profitability, better business acumen and skills, profitability, innovation, and revenue generation (Kehbila, 2021). I present a review of prior research to understand better the scope of business revitalization and sustained growth following emergencies. The organization of articles within the literature review provides a purpose, a summary of the research philosophy, and relevance to support the research problem.

The purpose of the literature review is to help identify gaps in research about small business disruptions, understand the loss of occupancy and customers, deprivation of consumer choices, and translate the business development issues about immigrant-owned businesses. Therefore, I identified gaps in small business revitalization throughout the literature review process. The following are the main topics for the organization of the literature review (a) composite conceptual framework of entrepreneurship ecosystem model and business continuity management model, (b) alternate theories, (c) business innovative and sustainable growth strategies, (d) revitalized business organization and systems strategies, (e) business risk management and emergency strategies, and (f) business social responsibility.



I analyzed peer-reviewed journals and articles to find sources of the entrepreneurship ecosystem approach, immigrant-owned small business literature, minority small business, sustained growth, emergencies and business continuity, COVID-19 impact on businesses, management theories, change management, strategic management, resources and financial management, economic growth, corporate responsibility, start-ups and incubation process, stakeholder management and value creation, ethical business, leadership, and business profitability. I searched management and business databases and dissertations related to small businesses, books, and e-books in Walden library's primary searches of ProQuest central, Emerald Insight, ABI/INFORM Complete, and SAGE Journals. I searched google scholar, government legislative and business policy committees, Small Business Administration releases, journals, and Crossref.org to ascertain digital object identifiers (DOI). I used keywords: *Immigrant-owned businesses, entrepreneurship, sustainability, business success, corporate social responsibly, change management, business profitability, economic growth, financial capital, business start-ups, digital innovation, technology, COVID-19, black swan emergencies, disasters, marketing, fraud and risk management, and business management.* The literature review includes social impact management, value creation, business recovery, business sustainability and emergencies, innovation ecosystem, stakeholder theory, entrepreneurship theory, complex systems theory, and resource-based theory. I referenced 175 journal articles, books, e-books, dissertations, and nonpeer-reviewed government or seminal sources. Out of those sources, 163 were peer-reviewed, constituting 93% of the sources in the literature review. The remaining 12 are nonpeer-

reviewed government or seminal works, constituting 7% of sources. One hundred thirty-nine of the sources, 79%, were published in 2019–2023.

### **Conceptual Framework: Composite Entrepreneurship Ecosystem and BCM**

The composite conceptual framework for my doctoral study comprises the entrepreneurship ecosystem model intersecting technical, social, and technology resources (Bradley, 2019). The entrepreneurship ecosystem model provides a flexible interpretation of sustainable conceptual development through its principal components of strategic management, engagement, interaction, and opportunity for multi-interpretive exploration of resources by creating conceptual business models for organizational evaluation and sustainability (Fiore et al., 2020). The economic exchanges of entrepreneurs within an innovation ecosystem are part of an interactive system of social relationships for entrepreneurship learning in assessing the role of connecting business activities to improve performance in situated, dynamic, and multilevel processes (Khurana & Dutta, 2021; Tejero et al., 2019). The business connections include identifying accessible markets, human capital, social culture, infrastructure business support, and government policies to support and sustain small businesses such as immigrant entrepreneurs in the prevailing ecosystem (Duan et al., 2021; Flores & Kovács, 2018). Based on the nature and structure of the specific business problem, understanding immigrant-owned businesses is facilitated through the lens of the entrepreneurship ecosystem model. The structure shows the interdependence explained in the literature review sections to enrich the selected model's feasibility.

The resource impact on business requires functional tools and sources of business

continuity management after interruptions to formulate recovery strategies. The business continuity model is employed to provide greater confidence to deliver the process and service outputs in the face of changes by identifying and managing risks that threaten to disrupt essential service processes (Ranf et al., 2021). The model consists of relevant constructs that offer increased critical success factors, modeling the capability and leadership competencies in the right business environment and market while considering measuring time constraints, opportunity, and costs for recoverability (Lindstedt, 2017). The model is most effective for organizations to maintain and resume activities after disruptions (Sapapthai et al., 2021). Model effectiveness is deduced from recovery strategies employed by the business managers and their evaluation of critical success points that lead to growth.

Small business owners who recognize the processes of successful recovery efforts as a learning curve for similar future disruptions tend to build better strategic resilience for continuity. The applicability of continuity creates adaptability through consistent and resilient relationships during the applied projects for the adaptable environment and managerial-development solutions after emergencies (Ranf et al., 2021; Sapapthai et al., 2021). The increasing number of natural disasters forces organizations to build resilience against numerous types of disruptions that threaten the continuity of business processes (Sahebjamnia et al., 2018). The integrated business continuity and recovery planning model facilitates a simultaneous and sequential response to incidents that affect internal and external resources (Sahebjamnia et al., 2018). Immigrant small businesses that experienced different bouts of disasters recognize the stages and efforts to leverage

managerial and financial resources to reduce the adverse effects of disasters.

The composite conceptual framework of the entrepreneurship ecosystem and BCM attributes are the foundation for participants to understand the successful fusion of incubation involving technical resources, people, locations, and products. BCM is a proactive framework that mitigates disruptive events from impacting business operations by reducing potential damages (Sahebjamnia et al., 2018; Xing et al., 2019). The measurement of continuity plans requires using business continuity assessment models to analyze, identify, and address components and systems that influence vulnerability and resistance to disruptive events (Xing et al., 2019). The business assessment should include a maximum tolerable period of disruption, minimum business continuity, and recovery time objectives (Sahebjamnia et al., 2018; Xing et al., 2019). Establishing benchmarks to creating minimums for internal and external sources signals business owners' preparation in identifying the bottlenecks aggravating disruptions by cushioning and reducing the effects of disruptions.

### **Ecosystem Applications for Revitalized Businesses**

Business sourcing models project shared resources and agreements to lower costs and maximize profits. The collaboration enhances systems designed to enhance business sustainability via strategies incorporating preparedness following disasters (Imasiku & Ntagwirumugara, 2021). Sustainable models to mitigate impact require soliciting appropriate resources and successful collaborations that enhance ecosystem systems to encourage collaboration (Roundy & Fayard, 2020). Preparedness, resilience, and recovery after disaster impact require adaptation to approaches enhancing growth, such as

technology or venues that stimulate knowledge and research (Xiang et al., 2021).

Collaborative business owners create synergies by using similar financial and technological resources to produce a platform ensuring stability in fostering sustainable growth.

Business requires appropriate types of leadership to influence the results through *what, when, and how* the strategy is crafted in the early stages before and during the disaster. Besides the tools and processes, some managerial decisions play a role in affecting the operations of the business during and after emergencies (Marshall & Schrank, 2020). Aligning management focus with economic, social, and environmental factors creates benchmarks for situation reset for losses and explains scenarios for mitigating catastrophic consequences to help businesses cope (Xiang et al., 2021). The pre-disaster and post-disaster strategies can enhance resilience, survival, and recovery of products, finances, human resources, and other systems (Marshall & Schrank, 2020). Business resilience is a measure of a stable business's internal factors of management and capital underlining the overall competitive advantage through leveraging innovative incorporation processes that contribute to recovery (Imasiku & Ntagwirumugara, 2021; Xiang et al., 2021). Moreover, business characteristics, such as the type of business and place affecting recovery, are essential to validate the differences in pre- and post-disaster outcomes. Such outcomes parallel the owner's characteristics of gender, race, education, industry-related work experience, or prior disaster experience, which affect business sustainability following a disaster (Marshall & Schrank, 2020). Analyzing resources, tools, processes, and leadership characteristics before, during, and after disasters is a

requisite for forming a basis for the overall image of the desired strategic goal.

### **BCM Model Application During Emergencies**

Businesses and organizations seek appropriate paths for remaining resilient and continuing to be effective during and after emergencies. An increasing number of natural disasters force organizations to build resilience against numerous disruptions that threaten business continuity (Sahebjamnia et al., 2018). The BCM is the most effective program for organizations to maintain and resume activities after disruptions (Sapapthai et al., 2021). The model consists of relevant constructs offering an increased magnitude of critical success factors aligned with leadership competencies and capabilities consistent with resiliency relationships in applied projects following emergencies (Sapapthai et al., 2021). The integrated business continuity and recovery planning model facilitates a simultaneous and sequential response to incidents by aiming at internal and external resources (Sahebjamnia et al., 2018). The plan targets minimal resumption time, restoration time, and loss in the operation level of critical functions by making tradeoffs between required resources for continuity plans, recovery time, and recovery point (Sahebjamnia et al., 2018). Adopting plans to reduce business loss, and concurrently generating profit and growth is central to the model of enterprise revitalization of immigrant small business owners.

Researchers use practical frameworks for mitigating the effects of disasters on business vulnerability by scrutinizing the overall damage impact on businesses. BCM is a proactive framework that mitigates disruptive events from impacting business operations to reduce potential damages (Xing et al., 2019). The measurement of continuity plans

requires using BCA models' analysis for components and systems exclusion that influence vulnerability and resistance to disruptive events (Xing et al., 2019). An assessment to include a maximum tolerable period of business disruption, minimum business continuity objective, and recovery time objective, considering the organization's resiliency after disruptions (Sahebjamnia et al., 2018; Xing et al., 2019). Recognizing elements of vulnerability within a business helps owners flexibly refine strategies to resiliently fit the objectives through a business continuity framework.

Instituting metrics to enhance business continuity concepts to align with appropriate business models augments practical structural resilience. The process of monitoring and evaluating dynamic business continuity metrics enhances the applicability of existing business continuity approaches to intersect with appropriate business models (Niemimaa et al., 2019; Xing et al., 2019). Additionally, the integration of monitoring data allows updating of business continuity analysis through evaluating and modifying the business model to align with the defined logic to transform outcomes through increased resilience of resources and structures (Niemimaa et al., 2019; Xing et al., 2019). A shift in business continuity approaches from value preservation to value creation is requisite through the intersection of business continuity concepts and business models to provide preventative contingency on business disruption threats.

### **Business Continuity Management Contributions to Resilience**

Business continuity management is a process for organizational resilience perfection by offering capabilities consistent with perceived and emerging threats. Resilience is an elastic property of a solid material to regain its state when stress ceases

(Jain et al., 2020). The stress remedy is to perfect tools that model sustainability through enhancing collaboration, exchange, and learning for sustainable value creation (Breuer et al., 2018). Some tools that augment resilience and organize sustainability outlook provide critical capabilities for business continuity management (Corrales-Estrada et al., 2021). The organization's resilience is the capability of the enterprise to sustain its functions with minimum long-term damage from unknown threats and shocks. Businesses taking precautions for safety and reducing risks through managerial innovation is the essence of scenario analysis preparation for sustainable outlets.

Capabilities for resiliency are key for a valuable and durable business enterprise after emergencies. Sustainability aims to be resilient in offering extended survivability and value creation (Breuer et al., 2018). Business continuity is the capability of the organization to continue delivering products or services at acceptable predefined levels following a disruptive accident, and the continuity plan remains the ultimate preparational tool for stressful episodes to foment sustainability (Jain et al., 2020). Establishing a sustainable business continuity plan requires monitoring, anticipation, response, and learning (Jain et al., 2020). Therefore, resilience toward business continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic depends on the risks and the relationship between organizational sustainability intentions and resilience capabilities (Corrales-Estrada et al., 2021). The intersection of capability, resilience, and sustainability of a business is through using a business leader's abilities and mastery of tools to analyze risks and evaluate relationships to connect all the activities throughout an emergency.



### **Alternative Theories**

I considered several alternative conceptual frameworks similar to entrepreneurial ecosystem and business continuity management models that address sustainable business growth from structural and learning perspectives. The stakeholder management framework was considered because of its focus on different stakeholders fostering business engagement, interest, and contributions to business management of expectations. Institutional theory deals with structures to model relationships for growth, and to find value cocreation in boundaries of business system for economic efficiency and social legitimacy. Complex adaptive systems for change focus on adaptive systems for organizational culture, norms and use of tools and technology to drive desired change through participatory framework.

### ***Stakeholder Management Theory***

Connecting and managing different entities are instrumental in holistic planning and analysis to assess the opportunity and value competitiveness of an organization. Exploring characteristics that help leaders connect with various stakeholders to create engagement and differentiation is driven by coercive, mimetic isomorphism and not leveraged to create competitive advantage (Brockhaus et al., 2019). Further, Brockhaus et al. (2019) posited that creating market presence through applying a code of conduct as a lever has evolved as a strategy that differentiates leaders and companies by utilizing institutional theory tenets. In comparison, the strategic stakeholder management theory, based on tenets of Edward Freeman's work on stakeholder theory, is an instrumental approach that espouses the maximization of shareholder value over uncertain stakeholder

relationships to assure revenues, profits, and returns (Berman et al., 2017; How et al., 2019). Assigning value to a relationship while projecting a favorable ethical side of a relationship ensures managerial leverage and strategic achievability of a goal.

Stakeholder engagement is not the only measure for managerial leverage in assessing competitive advantage in comparing mere organizational value and ethical engagement. The differentiation comparison as a competitive advantage assures returns are not proper levers for intentional value engagement and inclusive growth (Berman et al., 2017). However, the strategic stakeholder framework extenuates the stakeholder theory tenets of responsibility, legitimacy, and power value towards immigrant businesses through returns and profit (How et al., 2019). Similarly, Kay's (2019) theory of distinctive capabilities urged corporate success through competitive advantage based on peculiar qualities often derived from its relationship with its suppliers, customers, or employees. Kay added that corporate activity's legitimacy for success lies in understanding business, which adds attributes from organization theory. Business strategies that uniquely add value, continuity, and stability through distinctive capabilities through hierarchical relationships are essential for flexible responses to change and processes such as codes of conduct that differentiate leaders (Brockhaus et al., 2019; Kay, 2019). However, Kay stated that the difficulty of distinctive capabilities attributes replication for competitive advantage. I considered the distinct capabilities framework due to its value addition focus, but the framework's strict interpretation and nonreplicability of strategies for similar situations made it an inappropriate choice.

### ***Institutional Theory***

Some small business owners define structures to model internal and external relationships for growth. Massi et al. (2021) explored institutional theory as a framework to find value co-creation and relationships in boundaries of business systems that are shaped continuously through the legitimization process occurring through actors' institutional work. The relationship between economic efficiency and social legitimacy, which are tenets of the institutional theory, assumes the management of external functions of an organization environment without considering the efficiency of the process (Jeong & Kim, 2019; Massi et al., 2021). The cost of obtaining legitimacy is exorbitant; hence devising strategies for internal efficiency creates a positive internal value (Jeong & Kim, 2019). Understanding the process that connects organizational inner workings helps support business owners to reduce costs and create efficiency in generating profit and growth.

Instituting consistent business culture fosters adherence to institutional norms, accountability, and confidence. Institutional theory's *why* and *how* organizational structures, norms, and values in the organizational field become established as authoritative guidelines for social behavior, entails repercussions that include penalties when a member fails to comply or conform (Jeong & Kim, 2019). The focus on organization-formalized routines generated within an institution constitutes legitimacy as a secondary tenet in shareholder theory (Jeong & Kim, 2019; Massi et al., 2021). Massi et al. (2021) reasoned that value co-creation occurs within the institutional logic of different actors in the system that is shared or overlapping by denoting institutional theory

constructs of ceremonial conformity, decoupling, face consideration, confidence, and good faith. All such is by assuming desirability, properness, or appropriateness with social norms, beliefs, and values. Such business systems are based not on objectives but on institutional logic shaped by the interaction between all stakeholders with one driving leader that affects the direction of the business by eliciting strategic responses that define a strategy forward (Jeong & Kim, 2019; Loi et al., 2021). The display of business ethical norms and values by business owners through interaction with other stakeholders is a logical institutional strategic fiat.

Economic growth initiatives prioritizing institutional integrity promote compliance and business success in the long run. Loi et al. (2021) enumerated leadership responses that include survival, new business norms, business rebound strategies, and corporate social responsibility, utilizing economic growth initiatives that look beyond compliance and autonomous actions. Such economic initiatives are embedded in the integrity of institutions in creating value (Massi et al., 2021). Proponents of the neo-institutional theory suggest that business behavior does not usually comply with rational economic decisions to maximize financial benefits (Loi et al., 2021). Loi et al. (2021) added that a successful regulative institution that stimulates autonomous actions with innovative ideas creates value. Such an assertion conforms with co-value creation objectives that define strategic conformity (Massi et al., 2021). Business owners who favor innovative autonomous actions push regulatory compliance outcomes in creating value.

### *Complex Adaptive Systems for Change*

Adaptive systems include organizational culture, norms, and the use of tools and technology to drive the desired change. The significance of understanding certain cultures to manage change results in offering alternative solutions without superimposition of one-sided values (Graamans et al., 2021). Therefore, adopting a participatory framework appropriate for adopting strategies considerate of mindsets such as minority small business owners contextualizes complexities and implications of building unique capabilities for innovative solutions (Graamans et al., 2021; Sadeghi et al., 2021). Complex adaptive systems and transformational change theories' different lenses are opportunistic for innovation diffusion and triggering alternative sustainable business growth (Williamson et al., 2021). Using the framework of complex adaptive systems to investigate the roles of capacity to cope with human-made disasters such as COVID-19 provides an opportunity for the diffusion of innovation for change.

Complex adaptive systems for change are key to identifying pertinent issues at hand, including the necessary capacities for systematic change. The use of an adaptive change system involves the researcher acquiring information knowledge, with robust human resource absorbing capacity to update the process constantly, adapt to the situation, and retain capabilities to enhance access to resources for sustainable application (Sadeghi et al., 2021). Therefore, minority small businesses require new social arrangements with more focus on experiences and job acumen that evaluates their content and capacity in creating a new reality for entrepreneurial realignment.

## **Business Innovative Growth Sustainability Strategies**

Resultant recognition of the prevailing business issue and environment contributes to the envisioned methods for creating competitive advantage and enhancing economic impact. The research problem is applied in the literature to identify the positive impact created by a phenomenon, such as the innovation paradigm of information technology's impact on economic growth or the inclusion of immigrant businesses to drive growth within a bounded business environment (A. P. V. B. V. Lopes & de Carvalho, 2018). Theoretical and conceptual frameworks development support the business problem in need of study. The alignment of the framework to the constructs of the problem under study and the proof of relationship is the initial step to comprehending the study's future (Fernández-Portillo et al., 2020). Determining an inclusive sustainable innovative growth strategy that leverages technological use helps ensure business alignment for future advantage.

Business innovation growth sustainability starts with the business start-up planning mindset and innovation, a culture of engagement, and business modeling in creating response and competitive value strategies. Such a process determines whether small businesses create significant GDP among the independent variables in improving service quality and business innovation for competitive advantage and a sustainable local economy (Fernández-Portillo et al., 2020; Syapsan, 2019). Fernández-Portillo et al. (2020) added that innovation for competitive advantage and growth should decipher what limits economic growth. Finding data on various aspects of creativity, innovation, or culture change is enhanced by either defined leadership strategies or underpinned growth

theories (Fernández-Portillo et al., 2020; Tsegaye et al., 2019). Knowledgeable leaders define innovative strategies for enhancing applicable business tools for sustainable growth.

Constructive theoretical application entails a variety of stakeholder and systems inputs. Building a support base for a problem statement requires a complete addressing of underutilized systems theory that considers creativity and innovation a cumulative effort of various stakeholders who operate the system (A. P. V. B. V. Lopes & de Carvalho, 2018). In contrast, Fernández-Portillo et al. considered growth theories to explain models that could, directly and indirectly, influence providing channels to boost economic growth. Using model-specific growth theories gives some specificity for extensive alternatives to broader economic growth.

### **Small Business Start-Up Innovation and COVID-19**

The profound impact of COVID-19 on small business start-ups not only altered traditional mindsets on the negative impacts of disasters but showed opportunities to rebuild after emergencies. Maritz et al. (2020) stated that the COVID-19 pandemic's catastrophic effect on business identified external and internal enablers of new venture creation. The role of entrepreneurship in times of adversity provides a constant emergent inquiry through identifying entrepreneurship initiatives that are affected by individual business mindsets to create resilient ventures for growth (Maritz et al., 2020). Business innovation for growth is necessary for substantiating the changes in corporate business strategies, which increases the relevance of the type of business, context, and place of adaptation mechanisms (Andreeva et al., 2018). Andreeva et al. (2018) posited that

activating entrepreneurial ecosystem structures involves coordinating environmental changes such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The new COVID-19 experiences exposed modern structures and processes, opportunistic for positive change through adaptation of COVID-specific strategies.

Emergency adaptive mechanisms prioritizing consumers over resources stand a better chance for enterprise revitalization. Embracing adaptive systems provides a sustainable competitive advantage that produces high-impact business for revitalized viable enterprises focusing on business owners' knowledge and understanding (Andreeva et al., 2018; Han et al., 2021). Small businesses face challenges from start-ups related to resource maturity, environments, consumers, and policy maturity. Therefore, explaining such intricacies through the context of complex adaptive systems provides for understanding the business on a systematic level, while focusing on individual entrepreneurs ensures the viability of productive and territorial connectedness to survive the catastrophic effects of COVID-19 (Andreeva et al., 2018; Han et al., 2021). Categorizing individual experiences during emergencies is the advantageous essence of the lessons learned from disasters which further provide an opportunity for business survival.

### **COVID-19 and Sustainable Growth Strategies**

Some business owners implemented strict safety regulations during COVID-19 to maintain customer confidence and sustain business growth. Shi et al. (2019) stated that appropriately handling unexpected events during program stages helps managers ensure clients' individual and property safety by creating sustainable strategies. Further,



strategies to enhance growth following emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic require better leadership and communication to understand the scale based on previous experiences to institute sustainability (Barone et al., 2021). The intersectionality of information before disasters and managing social and environmental experiences through personal and technological communication allows for progressive plans (Barone et al., 2021). Therefore, adherence to health and safety rules and maintaining a healthy business environment further customer appeal and retention.

Post emergencies require business owners' preparation at better levels affiliating with complex selection and acquisition of resources. Some crucial features of emergencies are that they could happen at any stage and cause imitative disasters affected by natural and social uncertainties that require adjustment strategies that make better use of available resources (Pathak & Mukherjee, 2020; Shi et al., 2019). Adopting scientific-appropriate emergency management coping strategies to relieve external pressure through categorizing types of emergencies affecting business is the management's initial step (Kwon et al., 2021). Comparing scenarios created by COVID-19 and the aftermath for establishing a foundation for future growth and stabilization helps in handling the complex association of rules between emergency mechanisms and coping strategies (Ameli et al., 2013; Shi et al., 2019). Preparing for a soft-landing strategy after an emergency requires business owners to lobby for business space to relax rules and blockages for the recovery process.

Establishing a base for an ecosystem space to promulgate knowledge for business owners preserves business resilience. Pathak and Mukherjee (2020) stated that the role of

like-minded individual entrepreneurs, design networks, and educational institutions is vital to business revival and sustainability after emergencies. The diverse groups illustrate the economic commodities scalability of ecosystems by nurturing community engagement, innovation, and services for successful continuity and growth outcomes (Shi et al., 2019). The disaster complexity level is used to determine the methodology and coping strategy for superimposing knowledge and resources required through stages following emergencies (Shi et al., 2019). The acquired knowledge helps business owners navigate gaps in post-emergency strategy.

### **Sustainability Adaptation Strategies**

Borrowing from the experiences of small business owners and entrepreneurship research creates a favorable fusion of literature and reality. Belitski et al. (2021) explained the disruptive potential of knowledge in small business economics and entrepreneurship research. The management of sustainable entrepreneurship adaptation and environmental efficiency are desirable processes within the intersection of research and practice (Kvach et al., 2020). The practicalities of working capital financing on entrepreneurship growth entail the knowledge, confidence, and innovation to respond to challenges and opportunities alike in fostering skills and strategies, organizing resources, and bearing risks through knowledge frameworks, creativity spillover, resource-based view, and the entrepreneurship ecosystem perspective (Belitski et al., 2021; Oyedokun & Somoye, 2019). The emergent perspectives mentioned are the cumulative stage of strategic innovation adaptation and value for strategy implementation.

Instituting instruments for benchmarking decision-making justification reinforces

business owners' confidence and ownership. The opportunities to employ primary elements of the environmental innovation process for sustainable entrepreneurship development process affect innovative changes by providing appropriate instruments to substantiate management decision-making for the use of financial resources to bridge the entrepreneurship micro–macro divide (Belitski et al., 2021; Kvach et al., 2020).

Successful entrepreneurship tends to gauge performance, the effects of innovation, orientation, behavior, and decision-making as conduits for entrepreneurial opportunity (Belitski et al., 2021). Choosing the appropriate matrices to measure business opportunity and success tools needs prior experience and research.

### **Leadership Innovation and Business Success Strategy**

Trustful leaders influence applicable and successful strategies through confidently using communication to gain strategy buy-in from subordinates. Wu et al. (2020) explored the strength of ties in determining leaders' influence within inter-organizational trust to create valuable performance results and social capital. Obtaining positive results requires an interchange of bridging communication conduits as a mode of trust-building strategy (Fuoli & Hart, 2018). The concept of trust as a tool in the strategy formulation to influence successful results and the mediating strengths of ties to impact performance follows different paths and models (Challender et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2020). Impactful results emanate from stakeholder feedback through bestowed trust in the process of engagement.

### **Business Leadership Trust Strategies for Growth and Success**

Strategies for fostering trust affect positive credibility and act as a mitigating

buffer against threats of stagnation (Fuoli & Hart, 2018). Therefore, conceptual models that support interrelationships and ties augment trust-building by introducing fundamental discourse strategies to engage stakeholders (Challender et al., 2019). Recognizing inherent challenges, risks, and barriers resulting from societal norms and beliefs is central to trust-building (Fuoli & Hart, 2018). Stakeholder engagement determines the direction, impact, and influence of strategy building for maintaining trust. The trust-building uses techniques such as an information model collaboration platform and reputation management mechanism (Wu et al., 2020). The process includes best practices methods of collaborative engagements and partnerships to spur growth, depending on stakeholders' responses on legitimacy and access to types of resources available for collaboration (Challender et al., 2019; Fuoli & Hart, 2018). Reputable practices model foster trust through engagement in partnerships for resourceful collaboration in various activities.

### **Stakeholder Engagement Strategy for Growth Sustainability**

Prioritizing issues related to interest groups and partners during strategy formulation is the objective leadership activity for organizational engagement. Preparing a sustainable business theory development requires a definition analysis of an industry's assessment of internal pressure and demand of different stakeholder interest groups critical to creating models that maximize partnership synergy (Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020; Nandonde, 2019). The internal pressure results in modeling organizational structure dynamics in leadership and communications that foster alignment to vision and mission support for innovation opportunities (Sembiring & Krisna, 2019). Stakeholder

prioritization should not deviate or misalign with the internal organizational vision and mission to maintain consistency and coherence.

The efforts of external engagement by leadership are crucial in mirroring the internal value of the organization to be used to unlock external experiences and capabilities. Lehtinen and Aaltonen (2020) posited that external stakeholder engagement is crucial for delivering value for all the diverse stakeholders through intra-organizational and interorganization contexts to align different external experiences. However, the internal resource strategy responds to policy, sociocultural, and market needs by focusing on internal capabilities (Nandonde, 2019). Adopting a model for developing a strategy to influence economic development expansion, such as investigating barriers and opportunities for effective and efficient business, involves creating dynamic socioeconomic and governance solutions (Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020; Sembiring & Krisna, 2019). Internal priorities and capabilities should boost external experiences and help provide solutions for a wider socioeconomic impact.

### **Business Management Modeling**

Presenting business principles and themes help model leaders' interventions by fostering responsibility towards alignment of results. Freudenreich et al. (2020) posited that the principles embedded in stakeholders' conceptual framework include thematic attributes furthering new theoretical modeling. The conceptual models have informed interventions of thematical subsets in areas such as social marketing that uncover the stakeholder responsibilities that align the purpose of intentional stakeholder engagement, spurring innovation, and value creation (Freudenreich et al., 2020; Galvao et al., 2020;

Hodgkins et al., 2019). Galvao et al. (2020) focused on the components of the research's purpose, hinting that the significance of the study comprehension is through the identification and definition of stakeholder factors that relate to the research's variable constructs instead of the theoretical constructs. The business model alignment mainly relies on the study topic variables to create a suitable business model.

### **Competitive Value Strategy**

Producing competitive value through stakeholder analysis to generate harmony in strategic leadership intentions leading to better strategic performance. The mediating effects of competitive stakeholder pressure and strategic performance management infuse leaders' actions to harness the strategic role to enhance the external factors of desired goals (Soewarno & Tjahjadi, 2020). Noto and Noto (2019) stated that stakeholder analysis's role in the local strategic planning process is linking stakeholder activities to the performance of the local area. The paradigm shifts in local areas' performance and consensus building among leaders and other stakeholders require tools available to all (Noto & Noto, 2019; Soewarno & Tjahjadi, 2020). Accessing resources results in selective activity preference fostering a competitive edge among all stakeholders.

Understanding stakeholders is a method to measure and manage expectations aligned with strategic goals. Mapping stakeholders is an ideal method to start gauging the groups' expectations, prioritize and delineate potential bottlenecks, and identify facilitators of appropriate framework that enhances economic growth and value creation (Gianotti & Damião da Silva, 2021; Noto & Noto, 2019; Soewarno & Tjahjadi, 2020). Externalizing internal capabilities reinforces the inward–outward outlook for synergic

results enhancement of the overall context (Soewarno & Tjahjadi, 2020). Leaders are expected to influence positive achievements through formulated goals by looking internally to affect other stakeholders to effect competitive advantage externally and achieve desired growth.

### **Response Coordination for Small Businesses Growth**

Coordination of disaster response among stakeholders, particularly with governmental partners encourages small businesses to remain hopeful and resilient. Wilson et al. (2020) stated that the local government responses to economic crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic illustrate the local government leaders turning to collective action to create unusual partnerships in normal circumstances among the local government entities. However, encouraging and supporting small immigrant businesses through the needed expertise fosters enthusiasm among entrepreneurs to create a consistent culture loaded with tested experiences that manifests in the beginning stages and grows with newly acquired knowledge (SBA, 2018). Organizations engaged in collaborative processes tend to create value through different stages and classifications of diverse types of value that include motivation and learning linked to the overall efficacy desired in business and social change (Le Pennec & Raufflet, 2018). The circumstances related to adversity spur diverse strategies for organizations fostering a link between opportunity, place, and success (Le Pennec & Raufflet, 2018; Wilson et al., 2020). Collaboration among private–public partners provide an opportunity for disaster-impacted businesses to rejuvenate and grow.

### **Revitalized Business Organization and Systems Strategies**

Business systems are tools for various business owners for the business recovery process that foster relationships and trust-building among organizations. Organizational ideas that foster internal and external growth ought to be strategically linked to the customer, business, financial, and government institutions (Chaikin & Usiuk, 2019). Small business organizations start with the foundation for growth through the design of conceptual systems for business adaptation (Voznyak et al., 2020). Tools such as technology provide opportunities for risk assessment and due diligence for small businesses by leveraging financial and funding strategies in emergencies.

### **Small Business Economic Foundation**

The basis of small business is to generate revenue that translates to economic growth and impact on local communities. Y. S. Lee (2020) posited that growth is a component of economic development that meets the objectives of poverty relief, increased employment, and higher income for the majority. Though growth is significant for creating a foundation for a country, growth alone does not translate to successful economic development (Y. S. Lee, 2020). Theories for economic growth require synthesis and interpretation in the context of local development synonymous with intended factors of economic growth, such as social, natural, human development, production, and financial (Voznyak et al., 2020). Foundational economic growth needs a political–economic change within reach of local business owners through services, deregulation, and benefits. However, economic theories do not adequately explain economic growth and value creation locally due to their multifaceted nature that treats



economic development factors differently and is unsubstantiated by economic growth theories (Y. S. Lee, 2020; Voznyak et al., 2020). Chaikin and Usiuk (2019) added that the existing approach for inclusive growth requires appropriate measurement and analysis, which is beyond the scope of economic growth theory. Creating a framework for inclusive development or a concept of financial inclusion to aid strategies to create value in the business (Y. S. Lee, 2020; Voznyak et al., 2020). Small business owners ought to use inclusive strategies to narrow gaps and disparities that include access to technology and resources to enable the process of transformation to achieve business resilience.

### **Building Relationships for Recovery**

Business recovery requires building mutual and trusting relationships with regulatory and financial agencies for the attainment of sustainable business recovery. Shapiro and Borie-Holtz (2020) stated the heuristics that curtail regulatory effectiveness, such as the attitude of the regulated communities towards the government. Unpleasant experiences partially cause issues that negatively affect small business owners' attitudes toward regulatory requirements in the past (Shapiro & Borie-Holtz, 2020). There is a need for regulatory evaluation to improve compliance that would benefit businesses and regulatory agencies for improved relationships and reduce the tension between the regulators and business owners (Shapiro & Borie-Holtz, 2020). Engraining behaviors related to national and cultural peculiarities are a model for socially responsible businesses that portray a systems approach to types of small business interaction with local bodies and centers for the promotion of small business through an organization, consultation, education, financial, and investment areas (Bondaruk & Bondaruk, 2019).

The relationships ought to create an atmosphere for the exchange of ideas on the benefits of regulatory implementation by making it supportive and recovery-oriented to revive affected businesses. In such a regard, the prescriptive crowdfunding regulation's complexity prevented small businesses from accessing much-needed capital for development to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic (McHenry, 2021). The purpose of the regulatory system is to protect and enhance compliance while easing recovery to regenerate jobs in communities, leading to a meaningful social impact (McHenry, 2021; Shapiro & Borie-Holtz, 2020). The effectiveness of small business contributions to the economy is through business owners' successful revitalization and implementation of compliant operations and successfully contributing to society.

### **Customer Due Diligence and Trust Dynamics**

The lack of comprehension among some small business owners aggravates their vulnerabilities in dealing with institutions of lending policy fine print. As customers of financial institutions, governments, and regulators, small businesses face due diligence challenges while verifying pertinent information (Yacoubi, 2020). Yacoubi (2020) posited that customer due diligence vulnerabilities and dynamics expose entities to threats. Therefore, some small business owners prefer to trust social network leads before venturing into direct borrowing and conducting business acquisitions. According to Nash et al. (2018), trust in social ties enables pre-planned fraud schemes and hinders due diligence. Difficulties in getting resources and information from reliable industry professionals, and business owners usually result in relying on other more accessible connections (Nash et al., 2018). Such easily accessible connections encourage customers

to blindly trust sources without conducting due diligence and are usually riddled with fraud and document falsification. Business institutions ought to create trusting dynamics by providing detailed information to businesses to reduce reliance on socially accessible connections that usually offer a false sense of security.

The conduct of human rights due diligence reveals business ethical standards on an organization's regulatory compliance, transparency, and risk reduction. Human rights issues in business dealings affect the identification of organizational bottlenecks and the generation of decision-making responses to ethical due diligence processes (Smit et al., 2021). Due diligence is equally important in human resource recruitment and supply chains, thus, mitigating human rights challenges in departmental and organizational spheres of due diligence (Smit et al., 2021). Small business owners' awareness of human rights laws, antimoney laundering provisions, and fraud and terrorism regulations globally is the center of the due diligence framework (Yacoubi, 2020). Moreover, the risk-based approach to understanding the risk implications of nonappraisal of relationships and reporting standards creates a base framework for an entity's due diligence process (Smit et al., 2021; Yacoubi, 2020). Instituting standardized assessment and reporting of noncompliance with human rights regulations fosters a reliable due diligence platform for business owners' risk reduction.

### **Disruptive Change Management During Emergencies**

Emergencies are disruptive to processes, systems, and entities necessitating a robust incident assessment while recognizing temporary interventions on the impact. Fairlie (2020) stated that social distancing restrictions and health-economic-driven

demand exacerbated shifts from COVID-19 to shutter many small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures, putting strain on management. During the first 2 months of the pandemic in April 2020, 3.3 million or 22% of all U.S.-based businesses experienced a drop in revenues, categorizing the losses across all small businesses between 22–41%; women-owned businesses (25%), Asian-owned (26%), Latino-owned (32%) immigrant-owned (36%), and African-owned 41% (Fairlie, 2020). The impact of the pandemic on small businesses and the effects on costs, goals, and subjects will require more assessment in the long run (Fairlie, 2020; Vasin et al., 2018). Business owners recognize business viability by assessing and surpassing the stages of survivability and recovery toward profitability and growth.

The acquisition of resources to remain afloat while reducing costs is the benchmark for avoiding enterprise failure. Rush et al. (2021) argued that identifying and acquiring resources to address persistent crises through a radical change system to reinvent success stories would open opportunities for recognizing past failures and act as benchmarks for innovation. The resources such as financial and managerial are prerequisites to provide quality standard relevance to increasing digital entrepreneurship, which has expanded the information base through reducing information costs, resource allocation, and technical opportunities and interaction (Vasin et al., 2018). Abrupt changes in an organization's strategic, tactical, and operational sectors increase associated costs and management requirements during emergencies.

Small business owners during emergencies avoid unnecessary changes associated with business improvements and competitive advantage by racking up fees associated

with the software, administration, and untested strategies. Changes in digital innovation in small businesses increase financial management costs, expenses, and cash flow which are usually dependent on rules of relevant theory (Vasin et al., 2018). Innovation frameworks are wrought with shortcomings that need further research to avoid misalignments due to the intersectionality of disasters, structures, and frameworks (Rush et al., 2021). In contrast, the implications for policy, income loss, and future economic inequality in small business activity match with inward focus and self-referential discourse of innovative ecosystem framework (Fairlie, 2020; Rush et al., 2021). Therefore, there is a need to reconfigure the existing relationships between institutions, practitioners, and researchers to illuminate deficiencies in understanding manufactured and natural disaster focus.

### ***Disruptive Technology Outputs***

The results of disruptive technology add value to business innovation by presenting the new normal opportunities for business owners. Wiener et al. (2020) stated that disruptive changes in new technologies, services, and business models present various opportunities and risks for companies by contributing relatively to economic success and greater sustainability. Enhancing opportunistic bouts through sustainability innovation and e-business achieve superior firm performance with considerable competitive advantage (Dhyanasaridewi & Augustine, 2021). Veldhuizen (2021) highlighted that an appropriate model contributes to opportunities and risks by providing sustainability-focused innovation with a policy as a foundation. Enhancing the opportunities brought by technological disruptions are determined through assessing the

level of risks and opportunities that necessitates the introduction of appropriate models and innovative tools to enhance growth.

Policy imbalances and the push for regulation without due study disincentivize gains from the immigrant business enterprise. The development of policy and continuous contributions to knowledge provides a framework that facilitates continuously evolving perceptions for social, environmental, and economic interpretations (Veldhuizen, 2021). Such a continuous need for awareness and sensitivity creates a balanced, sustainable outcome through leveraging technological innovation and increased competitiveness, which provides an opportunity for focused value and innovation (Dhyanasaridewi & Augustine, 2021). The value focus aligns with identifying multiple companies' trends in the external environment rather than single internal knowledge and capabilities to solve sustainably disruptive changes such as COVID-19 (Wiener et al., 2020). Business owners focus on value and opportunities for innovation and evaluate disruptive changes that augment growth.

### ***Disruptive Strategic Policies for Immigrant-Owned Businesses***

Local enterprise development entities should develop strategic policies that provide equitable opportunities in boosting the capacities of immigrant business owners. Lung-Amam (2021) postulated that challenges facing immigrant-owned businesses include a lack of capacity for community-based organization advocacy, political representation, and limited government policies and programs. The spectrum of immigrant-owned business characteristics and challenges is more than being smaller with less profit and ethnicity (Huang & Liu, 2019). There is a need to advance equitable

outcomes through social, economic, and political structures that delineate factors that foster and balance scales for equitable and sustainable community development (Huang & Liu, 2019; Lung-Amam, 2021). Advancing equitable economic approaches enhance sustainable results for small business entrepreneurs through advocating for political and communal justice.

Policy advancements could help immigrant business owners to become less vulnerable by favorably responding to general policies without reprehension. The leveraging of immigrant resources promotes local economic development through inclusive small business development policy advancements (Huang & Liu, 2019). Huang and Liu (2019) stated that immigrant-owned businesses are susceptible to barriers in information, language, business service, financial support, and place-based approaches. Immigrant-owned businesses are exceptionally vulnerable to minimum wage increases because their franchises are less likely than other small businesses to fire employees, reduce employees' hours, or lower wages (Somashekhar et al., 2022). Somashekhar et al. (2022) posited that the evidence suggests that immigrant-owned businesses have a lower likelihood of passing the increase in labor cost to usually few employees who mainly rely on family labor. Such facts do not deter immigrant-owned businesses from responding at the same rate as other larger entities. The response to minimum wage policies remains consistent with incomes and job quality rates, though the threat of high labor costs passed down remained inappropriately real to induce a threat of bankruptcy to small businesses (Lung-Amam, 2021; Somashekhar et al., 2022). Policy imbalances that occur during the push for regulation without due study and understanding hinder some small business

economies from responding to advantageous policies.

### **Financial and Funding Strategies**

Some small businesses lack strategies for obtaining financial capital and funding systems in the event of an emergency. Sanchís-Pedregosa et al. (2020) described crowdfunding as a disruptive financial tool frequently used for covering small and medium enterprises' (SMEs) capital needs. Crowdfunding technology requires systems to avoid repayment default to encourage lending and minimize the risk of default (Sanchís-Pedregosa et al., 2020). Similarly, crowd inputs on sustainability-oriented changes should involve balancing economic, environmental, and social knowledge-based factors (Troise et al., 2021). Such knowledge-based factors include capabilities' proactive connection with external stakeholders that enrich and empower the firm's sustainability-oriented outcomes (Inigo et al., 2020). Sustainable capital strategies enrich businesses setting a formidable foundation for business viability during and after emergencies.

Exploring business capabilities is to define the value and integrate the triple bottom line goals to forge new innovative alliances. Acquiring a suitable product with distinct loan characteristics that ensure economic, social, and environmental sustainability requires innovative capacities (Inigo et al., 2020; Sanchís-Pedregosa et al., 2020). Further adoption of the open innovation approach as a tool to address sustainability challenges for achieving equity crowdfunding uses knowledge input sources that compete and contribute to sustainable development for business (Troise et al., 2021). In addition, knowledge inputs encourage intentional changes in the organization's values, products, and processes for specific creativity by bridging the gap



in relationships among the organization's processes, products, and services for creating a common value (Inigo et al., 2020; Troise et al., 2021). Characteristics that influence the prospects of crowdfunding success are those related to the investors and loans, while small and medium enterprise factors have less impact (Sanchís-Pedregosa et al., 2020). The effects of sustainability-oriented innovation result in greater sustainability through open innovation approaches and crowdsourcing and crowdfunding tools and sources of knowledge (Troise et al., 2021). Some loan characteristics attached to borrowing, including lenders' intentions must consider entrepreneurial characteristics for sustainable borrowing.

### **Small Business Due Diligence**

There ought to be a requirement for small business owners to conduct a thorough due diligence process before engaging in franchising and other business dealings. Buchan et al. (2018) stated that there is a lack of comprehensive due diligence activity for prospective independent small business operators and franchises before a start-up or purchase of a business. According to Sanz-Prieto et al. (2021), due diligence provides information to identify risks by understanding an entity's components. Therefore, understanding such technological components outlines the basis for decision-making using appropriate models (Müller, 2021). However, the design and approach for a due diligence process, especially for small business owners entering business for the first time, adversely affects the business outcomes.

Most small business owners lack resources and strive to understand the risks and bottlenecks in their management. A new entity or recovered business requires a steep

learning curve from others to adopt steps in forging a proper due diligence model (Buchan et al., 2018). Positioning appropriate management tools consistent with the incubating ecosystem would reconstruct technological changes to assess risks (Sanz-Prieto et al., 2021). Hence, the legal, technology, and financial measurement processes reduce challenges and risks by avoiding inefficiencies of classical measurement systems by specifically adopting systems such as a balanced scorecard model to augment the decision-making process and confirm organic growth (Müller, 2021). Due diligence reduces challenges and risks associated with the franchise by providing tools that help business owners identify the product, service, and process risks within legal, technology, and financial expertise.

Small business structural planning and learning are the bases for assessing resources required for anticipating results and achieving the start-up and long-term goals of the business. Business access requires planning, structuring, and procedures to improve cost-saving and growth potentials (Buchan et al., 2018). In the absence of a framework, focusing on long-term goals and indicators, and perspectives of external performances to represent exponential digital technologies within a multidisciplinary process provides reliability (Müller, 2021; Sanz-Prieto et al., 2021). Nevertheless, Buchan et al. (2018) added that an assessment of structural factors that align with the realism paradigm is appropriate through a framework that explains the due diligence process. According to Buchan et al., researchers use the realism paradigm to study perceptions of small businesses' survival ability as a function of learning from specific stakeholders, such as lawyers, accountants, and bankers. The due diligence process

reduces challenges and risks associated with business franchises when business owners use industry-specific functions and advising.

### **Business Risk Management and Emergency Strategies**

The increase or lack of regulation hindered business activity proliferation during the COVID-19 era. Business risk management requires the improvement of mechanisms to reinforce regulation and accountability through tools and constant strategies during and after emergencies (Hamilton, 2020; Palanisamy et al., 2020). To realize sustainable growth during COVID-19 and other force majeure events, business owners and regulators relied on concepts and frameworks to curb pervasive fraud amid increased anticorruption regulation (Palanisamy et al., 2020). The risk management measure by increasing oversight through the regulatory framework for technology's lending process proved to be a formidable management tool.

### **Immigrant-Owned Businesses Risk During Emergencies**

Immigrant entrepreneurs are among the most robust and resilient small businesses recovering from the pandemic shutdowns. Immigrant-owned businesses are at risk during COVID -19 circumstances creating disproportionate difficulties despite some federal funding (Javed, 2020). Soebroto (2021) stated that the profound impact on immigrant businesses was partly because of language barriers, exacerbating concerns about the ability to appropriate documentation to apply for and receive funding. Immigrant small businesses receive the most denials from loans at higher rates compared to other small businesses, partially because of their limited history with the banks (Javed, 2020). Javed (2020) wrote that the banks choose to work with those who previously took out loans,

thus explaining the struggle to receive payment protection program loans. The immigrant-owned business needs help in receiving relevant information in a way they can understand services that ensure equal access to funding programs (Soebroto, 2021). Immigrant businesses are essential to the country, and foundational to its success as the business and social enterprises are intertwined. California has initiated social entrepreneurs for economic development (SEED) to underscore the importance of providing financial support to businesses with significant barriers due to English language proficiency or immigrant status (United States: Governor Newsom Highlights Investments in Entrepreneurship Initiative During Visit to Immigrant-Owned Small Business, 2022). United States: Governor Newsom Highlights Investments in Entrepreneurship Initiative During Visit to Immigrant-Owned Small Business (2022) stated that the \$30 million social entrepreneurs for economic development initiative targets about 27% of California's population and a third of the state's labor force, maximizing integrated education and support in diverse segments of society. Therefore, business survival strategies pivot on learning curves and stakeholders' collaborative improvements that contribute to the due diligence framework.

### **Readjusting Strategy After Emergencies**

Business emergency strategies result from business risk management to guard against business stagnation. Some business owners view tools and resources that increase business recovery and sustainability during emergencies of COVID-19 as a sign of positive business improvement during and after disasters (Rakshit et al., 2021). Hamilton (2020) explained the process of a sizable business manufacturing firm readjusting its

business during traditional client market changes, such as creating a sustainable competitive business position during COVID-19 lockdowns. Hamilton added that the economic damage in Australia because of the lockdown was offset by preemptive readjustment position by businesses that reduced the negative economic impact by 15% of GDP. Readjusting business output requires business remodeling to augment a sustainable approach for economic, social, and environmental factors encompassing significant value and societal perspectives on business survivability through accessing and using lesser resources (Hamilton, 2020; Mundra & Mishra, 2021). Targeted equitable social initiatives increase revenues for underserved sections of immigrant business-owning communities by opening possibilities for economic viability.

Adapting new technologies, such as mobile apps and digital devices for business, is potentially critical to ensure sustainable growth for small- and medium-sized enterprises. Sustainability requires the alignment of theories to solve interdependent concepts such as the theories of consumption values and theories of planned behavior to predict and measure sustainable performances of the mobile app (Rakshit et al., 2021). Moreover, the pillars of a sustainable business model during emergencies are befittingly the integration of lean six sigma for management, culture, technology, economy, and social aspects of the organization that balance the overall relationship impact on economic, social, and environmental issues (Mundra & Mishra, 2021). An integrative approach that aligns with emergent realities such as COVID-19 is more impactful and valuable for business growth sustainability strategy.

## **Sustainable Growth After Disasters Strategies**

Disaster strategies supporting sustainable growth require an intermediate step-by-step process that aligns with the characteristics of sustainable business growth. Identifying actors and factors for appropriate strategy alternatives to improve performance and growth in any sector involves understanding the critical characteristics and business processes (Siahaan et al., 2020). Siahaan et al. (2020) conjectured that setting strategic strategies to achieve incremental business growth targets requires specific leadership and business elements to meet goals appropriately. Performance enhancement and economic growth necessitate leaders' decision-making approaches to align disparities in human resources, competitive advantage, and appropriate intermediation (Siahaan et al., 2020). In the same vein, amid the chaos and disparities, opportunities for innovation that align with new chaotic realities such as COVID-19 arise (Williamson et al., 2021). Taking an opportunistic innovative approach from an inherent chaotic situation serves as a guide for similar events in the future for business owners.

The creation of an environment that fosters dialogue and engagement increases exercises for listening sessions and training for informed leaders to develop skills. Appropriate engagement bolsters skills that enable leaders to consider other implications for all stakeholders to impact economic growth and value creation (Siahaan et al., 2020; Vito & Sethi, 2020). Nevertheless, issues of staff diversity management in the mix further complicate the organization's trajectory to adapt to the correct organizational model through inclusive narrative adoption from experiences of diverse cultural backgrounds that may enhance value in forming roles (Vito & Sethi, 2020; Williamson et al., 2021).

Role-playing and engagement help business owners harness experiences that enhance stakeholder engagement in creating value.

### **Sustainable Ecosystem Force Majeure Strategy**

Some small business owners use force majeure situations as an opportunity to rethink principles and conceptual blueprints for stimulating growth. Corchia (2020) stated that correcting inadequacies of development models and rethinking principles based on following the original theoretical blueprint need to be discontinued to save the human ecosystem balance by incorporating emergent realities. Some conceptual frameworks may address new realities such as COVID-19 disasters by evaluating human behavior, institutions, and societies through resource coproduction and cooperation using knowledge and governance for sustainability (Corchia, 2020; C. A. Miller & Wyborn, 2020). The sustainable ecosystem setting requires knowledge, rules, guidelines, and other common-pool resources for coproduction. The resources primarily benefit businesses for service delivery and consumers' reciprocity for effective forms of relevance in sustainable feedback and action (Hengst et al., 2020; C. A. Miller & Wyborn, 2020). Setting alternative strategies based on structural feedback benefits small business owners in a force majeure situation.

Flexibility in strategy implementation and integration set a clear strategy benchmark for small business owners to own and share outcomes. Hengst et al. (2020) posited that tensions in implementation and action obscure the legitimacy of the envisioned and conscious sustainability strategy. Such tensions thwart integration efforts and the adaptation of sustainability legitimacy at different levels of an organization's

policy (Hengst et al., 2020). Integrating sustainable growth in the overall vision and planning process across various measurements may include behavior analysis, learning requirements, systems, and responses across different disciplines (Hengst et al., 2020). Such integration occurs within the context of overall economic, social, and environmental aspects and principles to reduce tensions in sustainable strategy implementation (C. A. Miller & Wyborn, 2020). Strategy implementation follows the foundations of aligning models and principles that enable entrepreneurs aiming to implement sustainable growth to balance the intersection of successfully evolving tenets related to sustainability.

### **Technology During the COVID-19 Era**

Technological requirements for small business operations pose challenges to business owners' security, safety, and compliance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Palanisamy et al. (2020) reported that the bring your own device (BYOD) trend in organizations brings significant challenges when employees fail to comply with security policies because of human behavior. Such security vulnerabilities pose security risks that become policy noncompliance behavior that requires mitigation strategies to address (Palanisamy et al., 2020). Providing regulatory response during the fight against the novel coronavirus is an appropriate measure to introduce flexible models for accountability and enforcement (Sokołowski, 2021). Sokołowski (2021) urged institutions to present regulatory actions to relax objectives, rules, and standards through permit authorization procedures, monitoring, and surveillance to tackle COVID-19 through a knowledge-based approach. The specific organization's policy components support a conceptual framework to determine costing systems used to recognize related



risks (Palanisamy et al., 2020). However, the role of oversight to relax rules through the congressional acts gives appropriate override in restricting federal and congressional agencies' ability to extend their reach to act in the best interest of business in explaining the policy significance and implications for future legislative maneuvers (Dooling, 2020). Associated risks to small businesses are mainly recognized through the alignment of general safety, security, and regulatory compliance oversight with the intended business policy.

### **Strategies for Fraud Risk Management**

Designated programming ensures efficient internal business controls for regulatory implementation. Shear (2021) highlighted the steps to improve oversight and fraud risk management by the SBA through the implementation of the paycheck protection program (PPP). Shear pointed out that the paycheck protection program for \$968 billion results from expediting the processing of Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) to ensure program integrity, achieve program effectiveness, and address potential fraud through internal controls. Agencies and businesses can affect such internal controls through reporting and risk management efforts to identify individual fraud risks (L. Miller et al., 2019). The prevalence of fraud risk throughout the COVID-19 pandemic is because of business owners' inaccurate reporting practices and lack of technical business assistance.

Business owners' strategies in managing fraud risk include the adoption of an integrative framework to foster government agencies and business collaboration in combating fraud. L. Miller et al. (2019) posited that strategic approaches for managing

risk require an integrated risk framework to leverage *what* agencies have and blend fraud risk management into current and future enterprise risk management initiatives. Such blended initiatives include policies to control and limit governance and business ownership risk to promote efficiency and innovation (Harith & Samujh, 2020). The requirements for fraudulent financial reporting include sharing details on the misappropriation of assets and noncompliance with the Fraud Act support agencies to improve controls and procedures in assessing and mitigating fraud risks (Harith & Samujh, 2020). Additionally, setting financial controls and implementing legislative measures through the coronavirus aid, relief, and economic security (CARES) Act to respond to public health and economic crises helped businesses survive during the COVID-19 pandemic by addressing initial deficiencies (Shear, 2021). Nevertheless, most small businesses are usually in conflict, comparing profit generation and maintenance costs of controls, primarily through agency costs (Harith & Samujh, 2020). Therefore, maintaining linkages between governance, management, and risk to generate value and innovation for growth creates an opportunity for compliance with regulatory requirements through risk consideration.

### **Regulatory Anticorruption Strategy**

The use of strategy to include anticorruption programming with small business manuals ensures ownership of the principles. Dávid-Barrett (2019) postulated that collective action initiatives in which companies and businesses make anticorruption commitments had proliferated recently. Small businesses' success seems to be exempt from the preconclusive notion of corruption due to the absence of a principal-agent

situation (Dávid-Barrett, 2019). Immigrant small business entities conducting business with international connections faced with foreign anticorruption and fraud laws found themselves in domestic compliance and enforcement quagmire (Griffith & Lee, 2019). Griffith and Lee (2019) wrote that small business owners should focus more on exploring incentives for regulatory compliance in cementing a sustainable business. The incentives hinge on fraud detection activities and compliance training for small businesses, which are vital in reducing the risk of monetary loss from fraud (Watson, 2018). Therefore, conducting small business educational outreach to help small businesses in the United States protect themselves from scams and save the industry a potential 6% annual revenue loss associated with fraud (Watson, 2018). Onboarding internal training for small business owners creates awareness of individual responsibilities and helps owners avoid business decline.

### **Small Business Lending Framework**

Small business owners who advocate for a business-focused lending framework base their own ethical and resource underpinning on blanket agency-driven regulation. Khamirzova and Ushkho (2020) stated that the need to improve the mechanism of state regulation and support for small businesses is to stimulate development in conditions of economic stability. Some agency-driven processes use legislative, administrative, and legal measures for state regulation (Dilger, 2018; Khamirzova & Ushkho, 2020). Dilger (2018) stated that Small Business Administration section 504 of the Business Investment Act certified development company (504/CDC) loan guarantee encourages lenders to provide loans to small businesses. However, implementing such sections administratively

in an environment marred by the emergence of disasters has proven inefficient.

Business owners who keep abreast with emerging literature and regulation avoid penalties and fines that further hamper borrowing and revenue prospects. Some small business owners who only navigate the texts and bylaws of the section on training and price control policies will benefit and sustainably bounce back from declining business revenue (Khamirzova & Ushkho, 2020). There is more need for state mechanisms for financial support measures that small businesses can access without excessive regulation (Khamirzova & Ushkho, 2020). However, compliance costs have become more complicated owing to a plethora of legislation to create laws and regulations and deregulation through political and administrative grounds (Batkins & Brannon, 2018). Batkins and Brannon (2018) stated that the cost of enacting a significant rule exceeds more than \$100 million in value of measured economic impact. Batkins and Brannon added that regulators had published 116 significant rules during the Obama Administration in 1 year, imposing a net present value of more than \$870 billion in compliance costs for firms and businesses. Regulatory cost implications impact the borrower's and lender's eligibility standards in accessing sufficient capital through balancing operating requirements, performance statistics, loan volume, loss rates, proceeds usage, borrower satisfaction, and borrower demographics (Dilger, 2018). Therefore, changing regulations for small businesses is a vital contributor to the market by linking the process of increasing tax revenues to the regulatory tax burden and expanding financial resources implications.

### **Business Social Responsibility and Value Creation**

Business owners should pair social responsibility goals with the measured value impact in business and society. Value creation for growth requires using the appropriate theories, concepts, and models to create tools to increase leaders' capacities to influence business growth and value creation (Viviani & Maurel, 2019). Viviani and Maurel (2019) doctoral a value creation measure overview of the origins of value impact investing. Value results from tested business models enabled by growth strategies that include value-intentional inclusive steps (Bosbach et al., 2020). Drăghici (2018) further argued that constant economic changes prove innovation, value creation, evaluation, and maintenance are akin to competitive advantage. The advantage of sustainable growth is a result of social and business innovation-laden strategy.

### **Responsible Entrepreneurship and Funding**

Responsible entrepreneurship can address unfair competitive advantage from entry to new territory and business. Mukwarami et al. (2020) posited that immigrant business practices and standing among host communities through adopting responsible business practices add to business legitimacy. Such practices help stakeholders choose from a variety of business outcomes without prejudice. A business standing in the community also reflects on business social responsibility efforts elsewhere, such as being intermediary conduits for giving back to own their communities. Chen (2021) stated that immigrant-owned businesses identify with their homeland of origin to inform their philanthropic giving and other social missions. Social missions aim to augment social entrepreneurship by building close relationships with business customers and linking to

causes supported by wider philanthropic organizations through collaboration (Chen, 2021). The motivation for the role of immigrant-owned businesses in philanthropic giving and responding to community needs in the new or country of origin is influenced by culture and a sense of guilt, specifically during disasters. Such altruistic behaviors of philanthropy are common within systems of social networks and are akin to the risk-taking propensity in some immigrant-owned businesses (Rodríguez-Gutiérrez et al., 2020). Using social networks to garner trust for overseas philanthropy occasionally results in fraud, increasing the business risk associated with reputation. Rodríguez-Gutiérrez et al. (2020) added that businesses take more risks in creating wider networks to cement their reputation. Reputable businesses are synonymous with less risk and tend to generate more respect and trust.

### **The Value of Business and Social Innovation**

The use of benefits from social innovation to increase business value results from aspects of the business innovation process. Business owners formulate business investment strategies incorporating value and financial drivers that align with financial concepts, which are the basis for measurement in growth sources (Drăghici, 2018; Viviani & Maurel, 2019). Therefore, employing business models that include innovative aspects, such as the business model innovation (BMI), sets a different value creation source inclusive of both financial and social dimensions (Viviani & Maurel, 2019). Nevertheless, rendering the financial perspective only as a catalyst to employ available resources for achieving encompassing growth and value creation is inconclusive in value without incorporating value for social innovation (Bosbach et al., 2020; Viviani &

Maurel, 2019). Social innovation involves the use of business measurements that are consistent with value creation and projecting mutual growth in business and society.

### **Immigrant-Owned Business Social Capital**

Successful immigrant-owned businesses add value by contributing to local labor and community development. Contributions of immigrant-owned businesses toward the country's productivity through job creation are the foundation of social capital that further propels individual goals (Chukuakadibia & Chijioke, 2018). The social capital contributions to potential job creation are a factor that requires variables of skills such as language proficiency and rethinking ability (Y. G. Lee & Lee, 2019). The objective of job creation is mostly towards family life satisfaction. Y. G. Lee and Lee (2019) added that the impact of business ownership motives and goals tends to influence immigrant-owned businesses' success. In comparison, the intention of a business owner exists within the context of personal motivation and business goals (Chukuakadibia & Chijioke, 2018). Therefore, business owners coping abilities are mainly sought for business advancement purposes, aside from the business ownership motives and goals. The significance of employment creation potential for immigrant-owned businesses is within the context of general business outcomes.

### **Growth and Value Creation**

Value creation encompassing social and economic influences improves business systems for growth. The purpose of creating a better understanding of social value through the role of the local borrowing entity and banking capital is to support financial system resiliency and economic growth (Thakor, 2021). Strategies evaluating the social

benefits and costs in an ever-changing landscape, amplified by the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, increase the gap in leaders' endeavors to achieve growth and value creation (Inegbedion, 2021). Focusing on higher purpose and corporate culture to generate trust is a purposeful value enhancement through measures incorporating businesses' opinions and attitudes to find strategies to spur economic growth (Inegbedion, 2021; Thakor, 2021). Setting measures for business leadership endeavors and tenets respectively helps business owners to direct strategic purpose for consistent growth.

The business leader's responsibility is to purposefully urge business growth by engaging social and economic sectors in creating efficient results. Local leaders access government safety nets by anchoring customer trust to further tangible business growth and increasing economic, social, and political globalization levels (Inegbedion, 2021). However, the socioeconomic and sociocultural interactions further increase communication opportunities through technological media that intentionally focus on businesses to perform their role effectively and efficiently in the economy by devising profound leadership strategies (Inegbedion, 2021; Tekbas, 2021). Tekbas (2021) mentioned that creating a purpose for a business requires the leaders to be solution-oriented strategists instead of merely adapting to organizational culture and processes that take time to adopt. Moreover, institutions are incentivized to create complementary collaborative bodies for stability and growth (Thakor, 2021). Business owners who are purposeful and solution-oriented add more stability to their growth strategy.



## **Implications of Social and Business Innovation**

In the intersection of small businesses' social and business innovation, the business strategy success depends on the business and financial input during the process. Hawkins and Hoon (2020) concluded that small businesses create jobs and drive innovation critical to the economy. Such a conclusion contrasts the high failure rates and poor performance leading to declining and threatening small business survival (Hawkins & Hoon, 2020). Irrespective of the lack of available credit for small businesses, innovative entrepreneurs are competitive engines of growth (Higgins et al., 2021). Therefore, focusing on broader economic returns for lending promotion impacts local business components' controls, including social entrepreneurial intentions (Higgins et al., 2021; Seyoum et al., 2021). Seyoum et al. (2021) posited that social support drives social entrepreneurial efforts through education and access to loan centers. According to Seyoum et al., such conclusions enhance opportunity emergence and venture creation through dependence on social networks. Therefore, small business survival strategies should incorporate effective, sustainable means that impact profit margin and growth (Hawkins & Hoon, 2020). Examining relationships between U.S. Small Business Administration lending and local economic growth elucidates the direct effects of subsidies on growth and revenue imbalances (Higgins et al., 2021). Comparatively, using social embeddedness theory moderating factors on small business employment benefits the relationships between social support and social entrepreneurial intentions (Seyoum et al., 2021). Firms that perform recovery actions focusing on customer re-engagement strategies aim at the relationship of management and customer retention elements for

competitive advantage, sustainable profitability, and growth (Hawkins & Hoon, 2020). Business owners' engagement strategies prioritizing relationship management and customer retention create a foundation for repeated business engagement by setting a stage for revenue and sustainable growth.

### **Transition**

In Section 1, I explored the concept of sustainable growth and acquiring knowledge to be resilient during and before emergencies. I explored the use or lack of strategies that may foster or hinder business revitalization efforts. I researched the literature related to constructs that may influence immigrant small business owners' acquisition of knowledge and innovative strategies to remain resilient in the face of disaster and ensure their businesses' continuity and sustainable growth. Various processes used by small businesses to sustain growth and remain competitive in an emergency were discussed.

In Section 2, I restate the purpose of the study and give considerations for the study process requirements. I explain the role of the researcher, participants, research method, research design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, and technique, including an interview protocol as a guide that contains interview questions as a data collection instrument. I decide on data organization techniques and analyze data from selected participants to gain a deeper understanding of the study and ensure reliability and validity.

In Section 3, I present the application for professional practice and its implications for social change. I include an introduction, a presentation of findings,

recommendations for action, and further research. I conclude Section 3 with a reflection summary and conclusion.

## Section 2: The Project

Recognizing the importance of immigrant small business resilience promotes business owners' use of strategies that incorporates entrepreneurial ecosystem and BCM tenets in emergencies. The experiences of business owners can positively contribute to the improvement of immigrant small businesses in emergencies. The method and design explain the conduct of the doctoral study by ensuring the ethicality and confidentiality of research and participants with the integrity of findings that impact business practice and contribute to positive social change.

### **Purpose Statement**

This qualitative multiple-case study was conducted to explore strategies used by revitalized immigrant-owned businesses for growth sustainability following emergencies. The targeted population consisted of four immigrant-owned businesses in South Dakota that successfully revitalized their enterprises and sustained growth following emergencies. The implications following the emergencies on business practice and social change are the implementation of successful strategies by immigrant-owned businesses, translating into expanded personal income, employment, profit generation, and an increase in tax revenues to support the local community's citizens.

### **Role of the Researcher**

In qualitative research, a researcher analyzes participants' responses to the study matter and obtains relevant information depending on the inquiry's moment, context, and place (M. V. de O. Lopes, 2022). The researcher focuses on research objectives by exploring the respondent perspectives based on the study method, design, and personal

experiences (Koivumäki & Wilkinson, 2020). The researcher's role is to safeguard the integrity of data inquiry through a consistent and comprehensive understanding of the study's delineations (Hagues, 2021). Such an understanding reinforces the ethical relationship between the researcher and the participant throughout the data-gathering progression. The role is cemented via applicable data collection instruments and methods to reduce the researcher's personal bias and build relationships and trust while representing participants (Hagues, 2021). Researchers mitigate respondent doubt by exuding a relaxed and neutral affective state that reduces bias and unethical behavior in addition to an interview protocol to ensure the mitigation of bias leading to unethical research (Rainone et al., 2021). The interview protocol is a step-by-step guide to ensure consistency in contacting and interviewing participants, ensuring the study's trustworthiness (Yin, 2018).

The researcher's experience augments the trustworthiness and legitimacy of the study. I have 25 years of experience in leadership and management in the public and private domains. I managed disaster risk reduction strategy in the public sector and oversaw investment regulatory and compliance systems. In my previous role in state investment management, I engaged with investors to strategically provide an ecosystem for a one-stop-shop to explore regulatory requirements impact by prioritizing resources and achieving political, economic, and environmental awareness. My cross-cultural knowledge and education strategically helped develop innovative ways to manage business feasibility and continuity. My recent experience for the last 6 years working as a small business management consultant on financial management and regulatory

compliance increased my interest in small business strategies for enterprise revitalization during and after emergencies. My experience has provided me with an understanding of the process of formulation interviews and data collection methods with participant groups. Though my experience has helped me establish enduring connections in the small business category, my experiences have no direct bearing on geographic area, personal relevance, or affiliation with any participant in this study.

I also used *The Belmont Report* as a reference to understand ethical considerations and guidelines for researchers in applying report protocol and principles. The report principle of establishing boundaries between practice and research is essential to the participant because it provides consent and assessment of personal risk, benefits, and justice principles (Pritchard, 2021). The fulfillment of three basic ethical principles for research in *The Belmont Report* provides a researcher with a path to avoiding unintended harm during the study (Anabo et al., 2019). My role as a researcher was to first respect an individual's right to autonomy and protection. Second, I used beneficence by exerting effort to secure all participants' well-being and be devoid of harm. Third, I applied justice to participants by equally providing the same platform through contribution and addressing their concerns and needs based on merit.

After the initial interview with the immigrant small business owners, my role as a data collector shifted to data analysis and confirming data. I mitigated bias by not allowing my conclusions and insights to influence my study by using an interview protocol and member checking after the interview to detect any bias. I aligned the data collected by addressing the central research question and through member-checking to

validate data collected during the data analysis stage.

### **Participants**

I recruited four immigrant small business owners to conduct interviews until I reached data saturation and stopped the interview process for more participants.

Enterprise revitalization is a concept that improves entity business services resilience through robust service-oriented strategies encompassing relationships between business processes and continuously sharing knowledge (Plugge et al., 2020). This study's sample consisted of participants from a population of immigrant-owned businesses in South Dakota. A sample represents a subset of a case within a larger population for study (Yin, 2018). The participants were four revitalized immigrant business owners in South Dakota who used strategies to sustain growth during and after the COVID-19 emergency. The criteria to participate included (a) operating a business without interruptions for a minimum of 5 years, (b) being compliant with local regulations and in good business standing, (c) and surviving the first wave of COVID-19.

The strategies to gain access to participants included using random contacts from small business networks and acquaintances to highlight consistent resiliency and business continuity efforts during and after emergencies. Developing a plan to access innovative strategies to disseminate knowledge supporting technical and social innovation processes is key to building business partnerships that augment resiliency and growth (Buta, 2019). The participants possess the information and the inability to gain access to them hinders the information gathering (Buta, 2019). I used my connections within the immigrant community, and through the help of community leaders, I identified revitalized

businesses that continued during and after COVID-19. Resilience during and after emergencies is a business continuity component expressed differently suited for achieving and maintaining growth (Andersson et al., 2021). Such a trait is a component of the participant identification process, which includes building relationships to establish trust and rapport with participants through impromptu attendance of business owners' familiar networks (Plugge et al., 2020). Additionally, being open and transparent through personal contact and an introductory letter explaining the nature of the project beforehand reduced participants' hesitation.

## **Research Method and Design**

### **Research Method**

For the doctoral study, I considered qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The qualitative method aligned with the research question by allowing me to systematically inquire into how revitalized immigrant small business owners use strategies to sustain growth following emergencies to understand business resilience and survival factors. I did not use the quantitative method because it does not explain strategies contributing to growth sustainability. Qualitative researchers use open-ended questions to explore experiences (Laursen & De Welde, 2019), generating themes and capture participant experiences and perceptions to address the research question (Yin, 2018). Further, a qualitative approach incorporating the best-suited models can result in successful strategies (Korepanov et al., 2020). Therefore, I decided to use the qualitative method to explore innovative strategies to revitalize enterprise growth sustainability after emergencies.



## **Research Design**

I considered three qualitative research designs to study revitalized enterprises' strategies after an emergency. I first explored phenomenological design, but I intended to look beyond personal meanings of lived experiences to include experiences, perspectives, documentation, and artifacts to explore the business problem (see Kilinc et al., 2020). I also did not select an ethnographic design because I did not study organizational culture (see Akarsu et al., 2018). The multiple-case study design was the most appropriate for my study, providing a bounded system for a detailed, in-depth data collection process that utilizes interviews, interpretation, and archived documents through data analysis (Lupo & Stroman, 2020). In addition, multiple-case design aligns with the understanding of detailed reproduction by answering the process and reason for analytic comparisons and conclusions arising from two or more cases (Yin, 2018).

## **Population and Sampling**

This study's population sampling is drawn from immigrant business owners or managers over 18 years of age in South Dakota who successfully revitalized their businesses following the first wave of the COVID-19 emergency and sustained growth. Population sampling starts with narrowing the scope of the population selected for the study using a case study criterion (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The justification of the sampling method in a multiple-case study should align with the purpose of the study (Yin, 2018). Population sampling using a small purposeful sample for interviews and observation for a multiple-case study enhances the triangulation of multiple data sources to reach data saturation (Yin, 2018). I ensured that the selected sample size was enough for data

saturation. Data saturation is when a researcher reaches the optimal threshold of no extra new information, base size, and run length (Guest et al., 2020). Because purposive sampling better matches the sample of research objectives and improves the study's rigor (Campbell et al., 2020), I used purposive sampling to select four immigrant-owned small businesses based on the criteria of revitalized immigrant-owned small businesses. The eligibility criteria fitting population sampling included (a) being an immigrant business owner, (b) continuously operating the same business in the last 5 years, and (c) consent to participating in the recorded interview process in the agreed setting. I conducted a face-to-face interview in a secluded room or space to allow an unfettered recorded interview.

### **Ethical Research**

In conducting my research, I was upfront in introducing myself and communicating my intentions for doctoral research with immigrant small business owners. Considerations for ethical research generally help the researcher recognize conflicts of interest, privacy, and confidentiality of the study and the participant (Saunders & Bezzina, 2015). The Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) standard of behavior and rules for ethical research ensures proper selection of participants through steps of (a) unbiased procedure in data collection, (b) obtaining consent, (c) exuding confidence and creating space for trust and free will, (d) collecting enough information and reaching data saturation. The process ensures the researcher's integrity and objectivity in the research formulation. I provided (a) an equal selection process for participants, (b) an explanation of potential risks, and (c) reminders to participants of voluntary acceptance and withdrawal at any point before the publication of the study

(Yin, 2018). I provided no incentives to any participant for their participation.

Based on specific requirements, including consent, participant's agreement, and measures for ethical protection, I sought approval from the Walden University IRB before collecting data (approval number 02-13-23-0395042). Before confirming the participants' agreement, I obtained approval from the selected immigrant business owners. The informed consent disclosures include various research aspects, voluntary participants, and assurance of keeping participants' privacy and information safe. The voluntary nature of participants permits withdrawal from the study as the participant chooses without consequences.

I requested that each participant reply to the invitation email with "I consent" to imply signing a consent form for each semistructured interview. The consent form contains information regarding the study's purpose, researcher introduction, an explanation of participants' rights to withdraw from the recorded interview at any time, assurance of protection of the participant's identity, and data provided. I informed participants about their right to withdraw from their study by emailing or calling to withdraw from the study. I kept the research data in a secure personal vault for 5 years to ensure information safety and participants' confidentiality. I ensured that the document does not include identifiable and individual names, businesses, and organizations.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The use of instruments enabling proper data collection sources requires variability of adequate sources to ensure research quality and truthfulness. The researcher is the primary instrument in data collection that precedes techniques, skills, and tools beyond

individual presence to determine the quality of the research outcome (Becker, 2019).

There are six sources instrumental in information gathering, (a) interviews, (b) documentation, (c) archival records, (d) direct observations, (e) participant observation, and (f) physical artifacts (Yin, 2018). I used a semistructured interview process to gather information. Conducting qualitative interviews requires a person as an instrument to establish and follow interview protocol (see Appendix). The interview protocol is a document that provides step-by-step guidelines to conduct interviews with individual respondents using the same research questions included in Appendix.

I also gathered information through reviews of company documents. The semistructured interview, documentation, and participant observation processes allow qualitative researchers to triangulate data to obtain various perspectives and identify convergence and divergence of study findings related to data saturation (Yin, 2018). In addition to the content, the process ensures contextual corroborative outcomes by avoiding habitual bias (McCracken, 2020). Such a process pertains to appropriate strategies for addressing researcher bias concerns (Chenail, 2011). Researchers' awareness of bias and removing themselves from entanglements of skewed study findings require thorough triangulation of data to give the intended results.

In the case of enforcement of social distancing due to COVID-19, I was prepared to use video or telephonic virtual conference tools. However, I audio recorded all interviews after the rules were lifted. I used the interview protocol to introduce myself as a researcher, explained the process, and made other clarifications. The advantage of a face-to-face interview is that the process permits body language reading and elicits

confidence. Verbal interview methods that are object-centered stimulate emotional responses during information gathering (Opiniano, 2021). There are fewer disadvantages to the interview method due to the member-checking process for extracting more information to supplement data gaps (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Member checking soliciting feedback from selected participants about data interpretations after transcription enhances trustworthiness and ensures validity (Motulsky, 2021). I used the member-checking process for the accuracy of data captured and improve the instruments' reliability and validity and data collection process.

### **Data Collection Technique**

The data collection process started after the IRB examination and approval of documents on participant selection. The interview methods are classified into structured, semistructured, and unstructured are appropriate instruments used to gain additional insights to reinforce data triangulation to add credibility to the interpretations of collected data (Saunders & Bezzina, 2015). The data collection technique of a semistructured face-to-face interview focuses on the frame of a qualitative multiple-case study using the central research question as an instrument (Sah et al., 2020). Conducting face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions enabled me to explore the topic nuances and enrich the data. All interviews require time for planning to conduct. I did not use the virtual or telephonic interviews requiring tools for connectivity in equipment and technology. A telephonic interview can be disadvantageous for the success of the data-gathering technique because of nonfacial interaction and extended timelines for the data collection process (Sah et al., 2020). Therefore, in addition to a face-to-face interview, I did not use

a contingency for video or telephonic interviews. All participant interviews were audio recorded using primary and backup recording devices.

I used the interviewing technique which helped generate participants' trust and confidence to provide an opportunity for interaction. The face-to-face interviewing technique is characterized by a sense of body cues in the interaction process through robust interview transcription, and consistent interview protocol methodology enriches data (Saunders & Bezzina, 2015). The method plays a role in research relationships of power shifts and trust, an effective strategy for addressing gaps in data collection for depth and collusion (C. A. Miller & Wyborn, 2020). Besides the interview, I used data from business artifacts and data related to business records and probed participants regarding the documents.

Using explanatory, semistructured interviews to evaluate, explain, and explore strategies requires aggregation with a literature review aligned with the study's conceptual framework. Interviewing techniques used by qualitative researchers contain lists of themes and critical questions that may vary from interview to interview depending on the context and flow of the conversation (Saunders & Bezzina, 2015). As the researcher, I used the entrepreneurship ecosystem model and BCM attributes to create literature review topics and themes. The technique ensures the validity of the research method used; incorporating other data sources and techniques, such as documentation as required.

I focused on a semistructured interview technique to gain flexibility in acquiring in-depth insights to explore strategies for the study within the lenses of composite

entrepreneurial ecosystems and the business continuity management conceptual model. Many small business owners use their business models to augment long-term success; therefore, the researcher should align semistructured interviews with the appropriate business models to enhance the study's objective (Fuchs, 2021). The use of open-ended questions and additional probing questions helps enrich participants' detail (Yin, 2018). I used semistructured interviews to elicit insights and align strategies for the study using the ecosystem and business continuity models as a guide for interview questions. Among the benefits of using the interview as data, the collection technique focuses on study case topics and allows probing and follow-up questions to clarify meaning (Yin, 2018). The probing questions are designed to shed light and clarity on the topic by adding the advantage of expanding the data's significance.

The researcher's disregard for an interview protocol could result in data interpretation inaccuracies and pose a disadvantage without member checking. Though data collection techniques pose many advantages, some disadvantages of data collection techniques are the unreliability of the participants' interpretations and nonpeer-reviewed data (Yin, 2018). Member checking is a reflexive participant collaboration technique used as a gold standard for rigor in qualitative research (Motulsky, 2021). I conducted member checking by confirming answers and interpretations from the participants' interviews. The process assists in avoiding misunderstandings and interviewer bias and assists in reaching data saturation. I used business owner documentation and records about the business revenue to gather additional information to validate the information gathered in the interview. I prepared for unforeseen difficulties in acquiring documents

related to small businesses by exploring and using websites or business brochures and documents.

### **Data Organization Techniques**

Using a variety of data collection techniques that align with the relevance and nature of research is an appropriate researcher intervention. Data organization is for easing referencing and augmenting data differentiation by coding all interview notes (Yin, 2018). There are three steps necessary for data organization that include data gathering through the coding and clustering process as follows, (a) highlighting research responses to research questions, (b) creating codes to denote a general thematic area, and (c) categorizing themes with crucial connection points to codes (Yin, 2018). The data collection techniques and clustering process by the researcher helps in systematic data analysis.

Emerging understanding in creating codes and themes follows another essential step of the data transcription process. This step in recorded data undergoes transcription software for the recorded interview data into text. Jenkins et al. (2021) argued that transcription is integral to qualitative data organization and analysis. The computer-assisted transcription software can affect the transcribed data but paying attention and proofreading can correct the unanticipated gaps (Jenkins et al., 2021). Further, crosschecking helps with data cleansing, specifically merging repetitive themes into coding. I used the codes to create order in categorizing data and store electronic data through secure protocols such as creating passwords for confidentiality. I tracked interview data in an Excel spreadsheet and will keep all data secure for the next 5 years.



Then, I will permanently destroy the data by shredding all hard copies of the data, deleting all electronic copies, and erasing all audio and recordings.

I coded and created labels with themes in different colors and fonts to participants' responses. Such included organizing handwritten field notes and printed materials related to the interview in a marked file to ensure organization and data management. Developing practical standards and approaches to data organization creates opportunities for data authenticity and alignment (Condry, 2021). I used a Sony recording device as the primary audio device for each interview. I downloaded the contents into my laptop computer and an external device for safe keeping and backup. I used my Android phone as the secondary backup device for documentation as necessary. Creating and using a data organization roadmap enables tracing information and accuracy reflective of the original data collected (Kayabay et al., 2022). I will keep the confidentiality of stored data for the next 5 years per Walden University policy on the retention of research data.

### **Data Analysis**

Creating codes and themes is a precursor for a reliable data analysis process. The transcription and pattern identification precedes the next phase of theme formulation for data analysis in qualitative research (Oluwafemi et al., 2021). Oluwafemi et al. (2021) added that data transcription facilitates an interpretive analysis in a study. I started transcribing and analyzing data within a week to keep observations and notes fresh and memorable.

The case study design aligns with triangulation to answer the study's central research question. There are four types of triangulation: data, investigator, theoretical,

and methodological triangulation (Yin, 2018). Yin added that the types of triangulations and thematic analysis are the correct analysis process for the case study design. I used methodological triangulation to use different methods for the same topic by developing converging lines of inquiry in qualitative research by navigating thematic analysis and setting values to address the central research question. Other triangulation, such as data triangulation, involves comparing multiple data types from different times and sources (Yin, 2018). I did not use data triangulation because I concentrated on the timeline and not a comparison of data, which is more appropriate for quantitative research in validating construct validity. The theoretical and investigator triangulation were not appropriate for multiple-case study analysis, as I did not analyze varying perspectives of research nor investigated the multiple researcher differences, respectively. The sequential qualitative data analysis approaches support the idea that transcription provides the notion of interpretive meanings, evolving concepts, and setting conclusions in codes, clusters, and themes correlating to the study's central research question (Yin, 2018). Conducting rigorous thematic analysis builds valuable results by drawing and exposing subtle interpretations of data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Therefore, using appropriate analysis tools for a case study that would supplement participants' perspectives and enrich thematic differentiation is more consistent with methodological triangulation.

I used NVivo Pro 12 software for part of the data analysis to establish patterns and themes and explore consistencies within themes, the literature reviewed, and conceptual frameworks. I used an Excel spreadsheet to list similar words to establish patterns and themes. Yin (2018) described five distinct steps in data analysis, (a) data

compilation, (b) data disassembling, (c) data reassembling, (d) data interpretation, and (e) data conclusions. I briefly followed the five steps by first compiling the interviews, documentation, and physical observations. I disassembled the data as a second step identifying various terms, segments, and themes through data analysis software and spreadsheet; thirdly, I reassembled the data by putting the like words and themes together. The fourth step was interpreting data by assigning meaning and codes and finally provided conclusions for the overall data. The data conclusions incorporated awareness about the constructs in interrogating the research subject and methodological underpinnings to reflect the research competence and trustworthiness of the analyzed data (Evans et al., 2022). Conducting data exploration to find inconsistencies in the data segmentation includes personal editing and software analysis to produce comprehensive results.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Data documentation awareness enhances researcher's integration of data through methodological triangulation leading to valid and reliable results. The emphasis on the importance of reliability and validity are key research quality characteristics hinging more on documenting the data collection procedures by using a case study protocol database to maintain a chain of evidence that enhances the researcher's progress and validity for outside reviewers (Hall & Van Ryzin, 2019). The organization and traceability of notes and recordings add to the thoroughness of the work undertaken. Such an organization enhances the dependability and transferability of the research, whereas credibility and confirmability add to the reliability of the research (Mitchell & Rich,

2020). The researchers' focus on the revision of obtained documents adds rigor to data reliability and validity.

### **Reliability**

Instituting an inclusive framework for study design and approach helps in setting dependable measurements for data analysis that promotes the credibility of information. In qualitative research, dependability occupies the conceptual underpinning of maintaining study reliability following a semistructured interview design replicability or repeatability of the same results for the study (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) added that the case study design provides ample guidance on appropriate data collection reliability through the researcher's highlight of the everchanging research context and describing the effects of the study approach. Additionally, using multiple data sources of evidence augments the credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability of content (Yin, 2018). However, the trustworthiness of the analysis requires consistency as a measure of reliability through aligning assumptions, conceptual frameworks, methods, and analysis techniques (Rose & Johnson, 2020). Practices impacting data reliability include participants and researchers' errors and bias in a general stance of methodology (Saunders & Bezzina, 2015). Such practices include specific issues around the research environment and subtle, less documented challenges related to factors altering accuracies such as culture, space, comfort, and one's subjective view (Narag & Maxwell, 2014). I included knowledge factors through literature review, conceptual framework, interview protocol, methodical triangulation, and member checking. Member checking helped address and ensure the dependability of the collected data, furthering the reliability of the

data collection process.

### **Validity**

Validity concerns are intertwined with data saturation conclusions, which pivot on research design by setting an adequate population sample to reinforce validity and reach data saturation. The literature provides tactics and design tests to ensure validity for research design, data collection, composition, and data analysis (Yin, 2018). The data quality legitimacy tenets are mainly dependability, credibility, confirmability, transferability, and data saturation concerns (Saunders & Bezzina, 2015). Saunders and Bezzina (2015) stated that a strategy to reach data saturation is by preparing for a case study method requiring small population samples. I ensured data saturation by using member-checking follow-up interviews to reinforce the validity of the results.

Adhering to measures of checking researcher bias complements the study-established protocol in ensuring the results' creditability. In qualitative research, credibility and transferability address the data validity concerns, which is achievable by adhering to tactics to the operational set of measures that guard against researchers' preconceived notions (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) posited that creating valid data starts by using a case study protocol, proper documentation in the design, and the data collection process. Azeroual et al. (2018) authored that the researcher ensures validity by checking the credibility of the data collected compared to the intended questions by considering participants' audits of their responses. Credibility is reflected in results accuracy elements that center on participants' perspectives (Liao & Hitchcock, 2018). Ensuring the credibility of the data collected is through member-checking techniques. Member

checking incorporates the participants' feedback and validation that improves the accuracy and credibility of the data and results. I helped ensure credibility by methodological triangulation of data collected and conducting participant member checking to ensure no new information, coding, and theme are required to reach data saturation.

The study's results may have limited transferability determined by the researcher's specific study. Yin (2018) posited that the data collection phase is appropriate for the researcher to explore the original research question on whether it hinders or influences the transferability of strategies used for the study. Study transferability is about the context, assumptions, and generalizations central to the research and more sensible to persons transferring the data (Yin, 2018). Yin posited that the transferability of the research is by applying research findings to a different setting or context. Qualitative researchers use unique strategies to corroborate results to ensure validity through study confirmability (Azeroual et al., 2018). I used the following unique strategies for confirmability and establish trustworthiness: first, I immediately took notes regarding insights after each interview. Second, I probed the participant for clarification and to ensure their perspective. Third, I allowed the participants to expand on answers based on their narratives and words. Fourth, I conducted an audit trail to uproot any possible biases in the study process and results.

### **Transition and Summary**

Section 2 of the research project included a discussion of the purpose of the study, the role of the research, participants, research method and design, population and

sampling, and ethical research. Section 2 included the data collection, instruments, techniques, organization, and analysis. In my data collection technique, I used semistructured interviews and observation. I adopted a multiple-case study for the research method and design. The aim of the study is for the researcher to explore strategies used by revitalized immigrant-owned small businesses to sustain growth following emergencies. Section 3 will include a presentation of findings, a discussion of the application to professional practice, the implications for social change, recommendations for action, and further research, reflections, and conclusion.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

#### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges for immigrant small businesses. Immigrant small businesses nationally lost 36% of revenue between January to April 2020 due to the pandemic (Fairlie, 2020). Because immigrant-owned businesses account for 28% of the main street businesses in the United States (House Small Business Committee, 2021), this qualitative multiple-case study was conducted to explore strategies used by revitalized immigrant-owned businesses for growth sustainability following emergencies. The themes evolved from interviews, documentation, and artifacts from immigrant business leaders in South Dakota. The range of data collected included the details of continuous business performance until the COVID-19 disruptions and following the post emergencies revitalization effort, and elucidating factors that helped business sustainable growth to date. Documentation included artifacts of brochures, web material, flyers, and artifacts and documents on business finances, registration and business good standing located at businesses' physical locations, properties, buildings, products, operational structures, and physical workspaces.

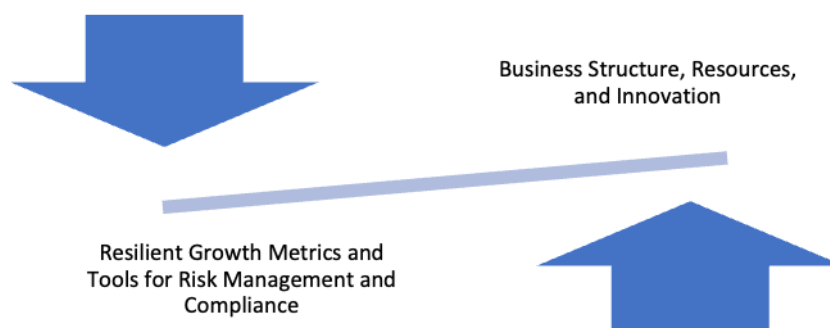
I weighed thematic similarities and differences in findings to recognize strategies used for enterprise revitalization and sustainable growth after emergencies. The strategic aspects were categorized into two aspects under six thematic areas that emerged during data analysis (see Figure 1). Each aspect is aligned with properties of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and business continuity management models. The first aspect contains three themes: developing resilient personal capabilities and foster business structure for



growth; improving engagement and communications to enhance trust; and leveraging financial, linguistic, and technology resources for business continuity. The second aspect contains also three themes: ensuring resilient tools for business sustainability, establishing business risk mitigation and compliance practices, and employing business continuity measurement tools aligned with the composite conceptual framework (see Figure 1).

### **Figure 1**

*Two Strategic Aspects of Immigrant-Owned Businesses Including Six Themes*



This section includes (a) presentation of the findings, (b) application to professional practice, (c) implications for social change, (d) recommendations for action, (e) recommendations for future research, (f) reflections, and (g) the conclusions for the study.

### **Presentation of the Findings**

The research question for this study was “What strategies are used by revitalized immigrant small business owners for growth sustainability following emergencies?” The collected data included innovative management and financial strategies from participants’ interviews including conditions that contributed to business revitalization, recovery, and

growth. I used semistructured interview questions from the study's qualitative framework. Four participants agreed to participate in the study, which is an ideal participant size for the study after reaching the point of data saturation and the interviews stopped.

Keywords from the interview and related evidence of documents and artifacts were clustered from coded responses and cataloged into themes (see Table 1). The six themes fall under two aspects. First, business structure, resources, and innovation, and second, resilient growth metrics and tools for risk management and compliance. The themes for the first aspect are (a) developing resilient personal capabilities and fostering business structures for growth; (b) improving engagement and communications to enhance trust; and (c) leveraging financial, linguistics, and technology resources for business continuity. The themes for the second aspect are (d) ensuring resilient tools for business sustainability, (e) establishing business risk mitigation and compliance practices, and (f) employing business continuity measurement tools. Themes were aligned with the study's conceptual framework. The themes under the first aspect are supported by tenets of the entrepreneurship ecosystem model (a) entrepreneurial learning, (b) entrepreneurship ecosystem intersectionality of resources (Bradley, 2019), (c) components of strategic management, (d) engagement and interaction, and organizational evaluation and sustainability (Fiore et al., 2020). The themes under the second aspect are supported by tenets of the business continuity management model through analyzing, identifying, and addressing (a) disruptions and vulnerability, (b) adaptability, (c) resilience and continuity management and planning, (d) measuring constraints,

opportunities, and costs of recoverability, and (e) evaluation of compliance and critical success factors (Lindstedt, 2017; Xing et al., 2019).

**Table 1**

*Presentation of Findings*

Composite Conceptual framework	Aspects	Themes	# of Participants	% of Participants
Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Model	Business structure, resources, and innovation	Developing Resilient Personal Capabilities and Fostering Business Structure for Growth.	4	100
		Improving Engagement and Communications to Enhance Trust.	4	100
		Leveraging Financial, Linguistic, and Technology Resources for Business Continuity.	4	100
Business Continuity Management	Resilient Growth Metrics and Tools for Risk Mgt and Compliance	Ensuring Resilient Tools for Business Sustainability.	4	100
		Establishing Business Risk Mitigation and Compliance Practices	4	100
		Employing Business Continuity Measurement Tools.	4	100

The results revealed obstacles and challenges faced by immigrant business owners and measurements taken to monitor business growth sustainability after emergencies. The information shown in the tables under thematic areas further supports thematic solutions, followed by tables outlining specific quotes of participants denoting immigrant small business owners' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in a coded manner to provide confidentiality.

### *Business Structure, Resources, and Strategic Innovation*

**Theme 1: Developing Resilient Personal Capabilities and Fostering Business Structure for Growth.** Personal capabilities are essential for business visualization and management structure for resource innovation. Information from interviews and artifacts presented by participants portrayed business owners' lack of capacity impacting business results, further corroborating the research literature and conceptual framework. Business structure and strategic innovation for ISBOs in the post-emergency environment centered on personal knowledge and capacities, support received from third-party mentors, spaces, and entities that develop capacity, a tenet of entrepreneurship ecosystem model (Moore, 1993).

The level of business owners' confidence contributes to formidable internal structural management of business that directly connects entrepreneurship learning with business activities (Khurana & Dutta, 2021; Tejero et al., 2019). The theme confirms that the critical success factors are increased by modeling the capability and leadership competencies in the business and market (Lindstedt, 2017). The theme addresses the linkages in participants' knowledge as assumed accelerators of strategy innovation. The pattern is effective for business recovery strategies employed by all participants interviewed for evaluation of critical success points that lead to growth.

The process of developing personal capabilities related to internal business structuring and financial management knowledge for ISBOs was described by three of four (75%) of the participants. Therefore, developing and accessing ecosystem platforms for mentorship and consultancy for developing personal capabilities in financial

knowledge and other support are critical for ensuring a resilient innovative business strategy. The responses corroborated that the challenge facing ISBOs is the lack of capacity (Lung-Amam, 2021). Proactive connection with external stakeholders through knowledge acquisition enriches and empowers a firm's sustainability (Inigo et al., 2020). Therefore, connecting personal knowledge of the industry to business management structures such as financial records-keeping systems and creating innovative strategies, coupled with the determination to succeed are hallmarks of ensuring strategy success for growth sustainability at a personal level. Systematic change requires adapting and retaining capabilities in accessing resources, such as social and business connections (Sadeghi et al., 2021). The social/business level, individual, family, financial institutions, and community are equal factors fostering strategies for business revitalization (see Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Elements Supporting Levels of Personal and Sociobusiness Ecosystem*

Levels	Elements	%
Personal Knowledge	Business structure, innovation, determination, and resilience	50%
Social/Business Ecosystem	Mentorship, family, customer, community, technology.	75%

Participants 1, 2, and 4's (75%) knowledge of customer preferences aided their confidence and allowed them to tailor services to target traditional customers.

Participants 1 and 2 (50%) used innovative delivery strategies while using family and

relationships as enduring customers. Participants' 1 and 3 (50%) responses indicated a lack of financial records, data, and structured documentation, but their connection to external mentors helped them understand their business industry requirements.

Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 sought ways to acquire learning and financial resources to scale up their businesses. Participants 1 and 3 (50%) used technology as a means of maintaining repeated business relaxation of COVID-19 rules for service delivery. Such technology included adapting to the use of new point of sale computers to give authenticated receipts. Participants 1 and 3 (50%) further used resilience and innovation for targeting customers.

The documentation and artifacts presented related to participants' capabilities varied from consulting agreements, education, profit and loss statements, credit statements, utility bills, business plans, and registration documents. Participant 4 presented an organized list of registrations and profit and loss statement. All participants presented registration certificates of good standing and had some level of education in business management. Participants 1 and 4 (50%) are using credit and are paying high interest rates. Participants 1, 2, and 3 (75%) presented up to date software for computing for documentation and financial systems but did not offer financial statements.

There is an indication that Participants 1, 2, and 3 (75%) may have not shared their financial structure due to lack of organization or capacity. However, the use of financial systems software by the same Participants 1, 2, and 3 (75%) is evidence that there is acceptance and capability in learning and using software to support their business internal structures. Observation and inspections of business registration documents for all

participants provides evidence of ISBOs' compliance with external structural requirements to maintain their businesses and grow. The use of credit by 50% of participants and the subsequent defaulting and payment of penalties in interest is indicative of the need for capacity and skill development strategies:

- P1: "I did not receive COVID relief funds, but I used credit and family savings ... engaged with customers through personal connections."
- P2: "I cut down on my expenses through service reduction and targeted loyal customers coupons"
- P3: "I used money from family to stay open and pay bills ... and adapted methods acquiring resources from friends."
- P4: "I used savings that I kept for emergencies ... and I learned other ways to get credit and remained confident that my business is growing."

### **Theme 2: Improving Engagement and Communications to Enhance Trust.**

Engagement and communications are conduits of enhancing trust among most business entities. All responses were indicative of points of engagement and communication to build trust. The BCM model offers consistent tenets for communication and engagement through enhancing collaboration, exchange, and learning through sustainable value creation (Breuer et al., 2018). The use of BCM's proactive framework assists in mitigating disruptive events from impacting business operations, while the entrepreneurship ecosystem model consists of collaboration for enhancing business sustainability (Imasiku & Ntagwirumugara, 2021; Xing et al., 2019). It is through proactive engagement that business owners mitigate issues impacting business and

confirmed by all 4 participants agreed that engagement and communications foster business connections. This is consistent with the literature that communication helps in the identification of accessible markets, human capital, social culture, infrastructure business support, and government policies to support and sustain small businesses in an ecosystem (Duan et al., 2021; Flores & Kovács, 2018). Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 corroborated the research literature that engagement and communication enhance relationships and trust, further impacting business social responsibility and influencing business growth (Viviani & Maurel, 2019). Each participant narrated engagement and communication as a strategy for space usage to help sustain their business growth.

All four participants shared their business artifacts that included correspondence with city and health authorities, including certifications, and papers of good business standing. Participant 1, 3, and 4 (75%) had compliance issues and the fines levied by city agencies and Participant 1 and 4 (50%) discussed difficulties communicating with authorities to ease penalties. Each of the four participants discussed impactful responses from customers and business entities. Participants 1 and 2 (50%) used their spaces for community and cultural activities to further cement trust and as a fund-raising outlet and continue connections for referrals. Participants 3 and 4 (50%) used their spaces for pro bono support and resource allocation for their clients to further build trust and act as a resource for third party contractors. Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 in various services provided their spaces for engagement and exchange services. Three of four participants understand the need to create sustainable communication channels with authorities, and 50% would need help with connecting with compliance agencies to build trust and



manage their business growth. Fifty percent of participants understand the importance of engagement with customers for trust building (see Table 3).

**Table 3**

*Participants' Space Use and Types of Engagement Results*

Participants	Space usage	Main services	Engagement results
1	Community events	Food services	Community Crowdfunding/support and referrals
2	Cultural Gala	Tailored consulting services	Resource allocation and trust building
3	Information services	Language services	Pro bono support services
4	Information hub	Marketing and sales	Customer referrals

Participants 1 and 4 (50%) underscored that seeking information about businesses was mainly through engaging with family and friends. That includes whom to consult and ensuring the trustworthiness of the information. The reason for not going beyond family and friends was trusting the source of information. Participants 2 and 3 (50%) emphasized the need for accuracy of information during interactions to foster continual communication but did not indicate the source of information. Fifty percent of participants agreed on getting professionals to seek information for accuracy of information, which is not the case with 50% of participants. It is evident that all participants indicated the need for trustworthy information. Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 used the word “trust” repeatedly as the basis for monitoring engagement outcomes. Participants used engagement to communicate circumstances leading to price and rate hikes to customers as a trust building measure. Participants 1, 2, and 4 (75%) mentioned that customer communication is important and lack of it may impact business growth. All participants confirmed that all financial and funding strategies require communication,

innovation, trust for obtaining credit, buy-in, and consistency on fee payment issues.

Partner engagement to elicit trust has been an issue with many immigrant business owners due to poor communication. All four participants included due diligence or its lack of trusting other parties as an issue for their businesses, confirming the literature that there is a lack of comprehensive due diligence activity for prospective independent small business operators (Buchan et al., 2018). All participants demonstrated a motivation to understand communication strategies to communicate with customers and business entities based on a trustful evidential process. Participants' quotes reflect communication and engagement strategies used and challenges for their revitalized businesses:

- P1: "It is easy to reach out to family and friends for information and trust the information they provide...here are my business good standing certificate and health certificates that keep my business compliance ... sometimes the papers I have do not help me in obtaining credit and acceptance from financial partners."
- P2: "I constantly have updates from the city through our community leader on requirements for my business ... but do not know the level of accuracy of information I receive"
- P3: "I use my space to keep social engagement for customers and build relationships ... it is intimidating to reach out to ghost officials charging fees and understand the reasons for such ... I do feel there are many entities trying to do the same thing within the city."
- P4: "I trust those I know through community networks and city interactions ... I know that customers can either promote or destroy your business

depending on their experiences ... I engage customers for feedback to improve communications. I have been having issues with double paying fees and look forward to finding a forum to engage with regulators.”

### **Theme 3: Leveraging Financial and Technology Resources for Business**

**Continuity.** Honing strategies to leverage resources in emergencies requires understanding the prerequisites for resource access and retention. Each participant mentioned finding go-to areas and spaces for understanding and harnessing technology and linguistic literacy development. The entrepreneurial ecosystem framework by Moore (1993) espouses ecosystem spaces for resource access. The entrepreneurial ecosystem model confirms the adaptation of approaches for resource-enhancing growth venues or technology for stimulating resourcefulness (Xiang et al., 2021).

Business owners’ evidence from all participants arising from resource disruption or scarcity is confirmed by research literature that outlines the prioritization of business owners’ continuity plans involving resource allocation (as described by Sahebjamnia et al., 2018). The BCM framework backs integrated business continuity and planning facilitating simultaneous and sequential responses aiming at internal and external resources. Participants corroborated the literature by relating their experiences by evaluating behavior, institutional, and societal tools during COVID-19 (Corchia, 2020; C. A. Miller & Wyborn, 2020). The resource impact on business requires functional tools and sources of business continuity management after interruptions (see Table 4).

**Table 4***Tools and Sources for Resource Utilization and Management*

Resources/tools	Behavior	Institutions	Societies
Family	Relationship	Literature	Mentorship
Learning	Culture	Languages/legal	Confidence
Technology	Motivation	Improvement	Suitability

Participants 1, 2, and 4 (75%) narrated difficulties in navigating language barriers in obtaining federal, which confirmed these disproportionate difficulties in funding because of language barriers (Javed, 2020; Soebroto, 2021). Each participant narrated the conditions faced during recovery. Participants 1, 2, and 4 (75%) related conditions of language limitations as a barrier to accessing economic opportunities and financial resources. Participants 3 and 4 (50%) further added that learning is resourceful for understanding culture and confidence and that mentors play a great role in society, which requires relationship and literacy acquisition.

Participants 3 and 4 (50%) mentioned the need for adequate legal protection and insurance as a way of protecting financial savings and accessing government loans. Participants 1 and 4 (50%) used their savings when they both failed to receive COVID-19 relief funds elsewhere. Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 used personal and family savings to remain afloat and used determination and grit for business resilience.

Participants 1 and 2 (50%) narrated obstacles in accessing resourceful persons, such as mentors and consultants because of limitations in language and their choice to rely on themselves, thus creating silos within immigrant bubbles. Participants 1 and 2

(50%) believe that language is an important leverage in the use of technology and innovative approaches. Participants 3 and 4 (50%) narrated that finding information on government resources was often delayed because of COVID-19 related issues.

Participants 1 and 4 (50%) settled that the need for consultant fees is an obstacle and upgrading a software that helps in automatic calculation of taxes, while participant 1 (25%) believes that consultants help bridge the language gap in preparing paperwork. Participant 3 (25%) lamented the conditions of immigrant customers with low income and limited use of technology as a major reason for dwindling ethnic business. Participant 2 (25%) that the pay situation and resources for the retention of contractors require software upgrades and lessons for social media use.

All four participants voluntarily shared artifacts about resources they use such as translated menus, pamphlets, financial savings associations, cash registers panels and software for business management and transactions. Participants 3 and 4 (50%) said they only use money from lending groups that do not charge interest, such as private religiously affiliated lenders. Participant 1 and 2 (50%) used translated pamphlets in various languages for their customers to access resources and spent money to reach their customers. All participants recognized the use of social media and language skills for their business continuity. Therefore, creating and accessing platforms and resources for immigrant business owners and regulators are an important process for advancing growth:

- P1: “I don’t understand the process of paid consultants ... so I use friends. Learning the English language eases communications and understanding.”

- P2: “I believe staying with immigrant community’s resources and not reaching out deprives many of us of useful and current resources.”
- P3: “We have learned of traditional fundraising programs to help those businesses in need ... an educated customer is a retained customer ... I could not get resources for COVID-19 on time ... insurance helps me during emergencies by sharing costs.”
- P4: “there is a lot of paperwork and software to learn and use ... but we found a new place that uses a simple cash system and sales tax retention system ... I used a lawyer to protect against litigation and noncompliance.”

***Ensuring Resilient Growth Metrics and Tools for Risk Management and Compliance***

**Theme 4: Ensuring Resilient Tools for Business Sustainability.** Participant responses are consistent with BCM model components and systems that assess and set minimum tolerable periods of disruptions through resiliency (Sahebjamnia et al., 2018; Xing et al., 2019). A critical element in ensuring the use of business systems as tools for business resilience and recovery is using internal systems as competitive advantage. Resilience tools foster a competitive edge for business owners in the strategic planning process to achieve desired goals (Soewarno & Tjahjadi, 2020). Participants aligned their interventions with results to show responsibility and resilience. All participants (100%) prioritized their customers, thus confirming the literature that resilience tools include adaptive mechanisms such as prioritizing customers over resources to enhance enterprise revitalization through knowledge and understanding (Andreeva et al., 2018; Han et al., 2021; see Table 5).

**Table 5***Resilience Tools for Sustainable Enterprise Revitalization*

Resilience Tools/Areas	Personality/Culture	Resource	Structural	Percentage
Flexibility	P1, P3	P1, P2, P3, P4	P1, P2, P3, P4	83%
Experience	P1, P3	P1, P2, P3, P4	P1, P2, P3, P4	83%
Self-assurance	P1, P3, P4	P1, P3, P4	P1, P3, P4	75%
Network	P1, P2, P3, P4	P1, P2, P3, P4	P1, P2, P3, P4	100%
Optimism	P1, P3, P4	P4	P4	42%

All four participants recognized elements of vulnerability within their businesses that helped them refine strategies to resiliently fit objectives consistent with the business continuity framework. Participants 1 and 3 (50%) mentioned cultural flexibility and experience and flexibility to change the narrative and imagery to introduce selective strategies for reaching out to customers. All four participants used experience and flexibility for resources and structural resilience. All participants used the same tools for resource and structural resilience. Participants 1, 2, and 4 (75%) mentioned personal grids and self-assurance for cultural, resource, and structural resilience. All four participants interviewed narrated the importance of networking and that they have used cultural and resource networks to enhance their business growth after COVID-19.

The participants also shared their artifacts voluntarily that were used for measuring growth and resilience, such as the documentation of their spaces, business certifications, and business good standing. Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 used their space for resource, cultural, and structural networking for business compliance through using their spaces and being adherent to regulations. Participants 1, 3, and 4 (75%) were personally optimistic about their business revitalization and growth outcome through showing

positive revenues a year after COVID-19. All participants, except for Participant 4 (75%), were less optimistic or did not mention optimism about receiving needed resources or had structural optimism about their business pointing to different exorbitant costs of compliance. Participant 2 (25%) did not show optimism in the resilience of their business in all areas. There was an understanding among the participants that successful structuring, resource, and individual networking are measurements of business growth. It is evident that 75% of participants are optimistic of emerging better personal, structural improvements to boost their revitalization outcomes for their business more than during COVID-19:

- P1: “I did not have experience with bookkeeping when I started my business, but I know what I am selling, and I live on it.”
- P2: “I lived through tough environments in the past, though COVID was new, I used support from friends and rent out my space for fees and cultural networking.”
- P3: “I was determined that if I close my business, it will be a shame to me and my community.”
- P4: “I was flexible with changes and worked according to demand.”

However, 75% of participants were either neutral or less optimistic about resource provisions and revenue improvements because of no documentation showing venue or connections to resource pools. One of the four participants did not show ability to measure growth and resilience through personal, structural and resource fields.



**Theme 5: Business Risk Mitigation and Compliance.** Diligent business and regulatory compliance processes confirm sustainable business growth through the mitigation of disruptive events from impacting business operations and reducing potential damage (Xing et al., 2019). Participants use of the compliance process confirms BCM and entrepreneurial ecosystem composite framework on disruptive change management steps during emergencies by creating systems for robust accident assessment of risks and requirements of survivability, profitability, and better business knowledge and acumen (Kehbila, 2021). The purpose of the regulatory system is to enhance compliance to ease business recovery leading to meaningful social impact (McHenry, 2021; see Table 6).

**Table 6**

*Participants' Challenges in Risk of Compliance and Management Mitigation Efforts for Business Growth*

Challenges	Risks of Compliance	Risk Management	# of participants' mitigation efforts
Policy: State and safety obligations Privacy	Risk of estimated tax proceeds	Provided quarterly taxes using 3 <sup>rd</sup> party software.	P1, P2, and P4 (75%)
	Risk of financial obligations	Emergency saving and credit.	P3 and P4 (50%)
Due diligence: Insurance	Risk of Registration and safety standards	Provided and updated registration and safety records	P1, P2, P3 and P4 (100%)
	Risk to customer privacy		P2 and P3 (50%)
Fraud		Customer records check	P1, P2, P3, P4 (100%)
Market environment		Share experiences. Resiliency methods	P1 and P4 (50%)
Forfeiture/layoff		Business owner status	P1, P2, P3 and P4 (100%)
			P1 and P2 (50%)

The participants interviewed mentioned conditions exacerbating business risk and regulatory compliance. Participants 1 and 2 (50%) mentioned the risks of work layoff but mitigated such fear through business owner status. Participants 1, 2, and 4 (75%) mentioned the quarterly state tax proceeds based on recovery revenue. Participants 3 and 4 (50%) worried about the risk of not meeting financial obligations for rent and utilities. Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 each mentioned that general business regulatory compliance is one of the most persistent risks and that business documents must be updated regularly to avoid fines. All participants discussed that regulation should be consistent with the emergency environment confirming that regulatory evaluation to improve compliance prioritizes relations for sustainable results (Shapiro & Borie-Holtz, 2020).

The documents and artifacts presented included documentations of compliance including updated licenses, health and hygiene certification, space occupancy standards, insurance, bills, and tax documents. Participant 1 (25%) lost business registration license once more than six years ago and reminded me of penalties associated with regaining the document when he missed a quarterly sales tax to the authorities while offering registration certificates and up to date tax documents. Participants 3 and 4 (50%) showed me registrations, insurance documents, contract, employment, and payroll documents used for third party contractors to mitigate risk and liability.

All four participants agreed that regulatory compliance goes a long way in sustaining their business growth. All participants recognized the importance of compliance through ethical practices and regulatory adherence:

- P1: “I frequently paid quarterly sales taxes, and it was difficult during COVID-19.”
- P2: “There is a lot of paperwork and registration and certifications, insurance is required before getting real revenue.”
- P3: “I was afraid my business would close due to nonpayment of city fees; the officials created a schedule for me to catch up.”
- P4: “I prioritize utility bills and rent because the foundation of business is threatened.

All participants understand taking some risk but do not understand the risk mitigation and management procedures. However, 50% of participants fully understood the effectiveness of insurance for business and assets during and after emergencies.

**Theme 6: Business Continuity Measurement Tools.** Strategy formulation and implementation require results evaluation to measure the success and impact. The composite conceptual framework of the entrepreneur ecosystem and BCM represents the relationship between variable interdependence intersecting technological, social, and technical resources (Bradley, 2019). Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 (100%) use the tools for measurement are confirmed by literature to assess and identify the connection of business activities that improve small business performance and sustainable growth (Khurana & Dutta, 2021; Tejero et al., 2019). Table 7 shows business growth sustainability metrics for assessing and identifying measurement tools.

**Table 7***Business Growth Sustainability Metrics*

Measurement Tools/Value	Technical Value	Social/Ethical	Techn/Environ.	Participants
Assessment	(100%)	(50%)	(75%)	4(100%)
Stress Remedy	(75%)	(75%)	(75%)	4(100%)
Adaptability	(100%)	(50%)	(100%)	4(100%)
Innovation	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	4(100%)
Continuity Plan	(100%)	(50%)	(100%)	4(100%)

The participants interviewed measured their continuity plans through the value of the effort exerted for business revitalization. Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 used assessment of the value of technical input in management, finances, and favorable market to be a very likely factor determining the value of their growth. Participants 2 and 4 (50%) mentioned assessments of social and ethical inclusion for betterment of their business growth. Participants 1, 2, and 3 (75%) mentioned that assessing technological and environmental conditions beforehand would help mitigate losses.

Participants 1, 2, and 3 (75%) identified a process of collaboration and learning as a condition to make sense of economic, social, and environmental values. This is further confirmed by literature as a stress remedy through enhancing collaboration, exchange, and learning for sustainable technical and social conditions (Breuer et al., 2018).

Participants 1, 2, and 4 (75%) mentioned that they have coordinated their efforts with colleagues in the same businesses or sought help from through technological means or technical resources. All four participants weighed the social value of adaptability to gain satisfied customers to be the absolute reason for sustainable growth. All four participants (100%) pointed out technical, social, and technological adaptability as the measure of

growth sustainability. Participants 1, 2, and 3 (75%) identified that constant technical and structural adaptability is key to growth sustainability. Participants 2 and 3 (50%) identified the use of technology and other environmental factors as determinant conditions that contributed to growth. The findings confirm the literature that the management of sustainable entrepreneurship adaptation and environmental efficiency are desirable processes within the intersection of research and practice (Kvach et al., 2020).

Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 underscored the need for managerial innovation to reduce risk by recognizing economic, social, and technological conditions for the sustainable growth of business. Participants 1 and 4 (50%) added that assigning value through ethical dealings and relationships is key to growth sustainability. All participants interviewed stressed that social capital innovation is central to technical, social, and technological spheres. Such further confirms the literature that entrepreneurship growth entails the knowledge, confidence, and innovation to respond to challenges and opportunities alike in fostering skills and strategies, organizing resources, and bearing risks through knowledge frameworks, creativity spillover, resource-based view, and the entrepreneurship ecosystem perspective (Belitski et al., 2021; Oyedokun & Somoye, 2019). Participant 1 (25%) mentioned that post COVID-19 environment made him think of business continuity plan, while participants 2, 3, 4 (75%) have stated that they scrambled for a temporary continuity plan to sustain their growth. Participant 1 (25%) stated that they may not be ready for similar environmental disasters, while all four participants (100%) perceive opportunities in social solidarity to advance their continuity plans. Participants 2 and 3 (50%) shared their plans to include business insurance and

blueprints of credit portfolios for emergencies. All participants understand their updated documentations as additional support measurements to business continuity:

- P1: “Assigning social value is more important than short-term profit. Being successful is measured by how I managed my plan to continue my business after COVID-19. “
- P2: “my knowledge to manage and learn helps me reduce business mistakes.”
- P3: “adapting to a new culture and learning to grow my business is the measure of my success.”
- P4: “I see my success when I am doing what is right and I expect the same from my customers.”

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The findings in this qualitative case study may provide immigrant business owners with practical application of strategies for business revitalization and growth sustainability. The immigrant business owners can apply the findings to solve the specific business problem that some immigrant business owners lack strategies to sustain business growth after emergencies.

The study findings include six themes aligned with two aspects: first, business structure, resources, and innovation, and second, resilient growth metrics and tools for risk management and compliance. Themes for the first aspect are (a) developing resilient structures and capabilities for business growth; (b) improving engagement, and communications, and enhancing trust; and (c) leveraging financial, linguistic resources, and technology for business continuity. Themes for the second aspect are (d) ensuring

resilient tools for business sustainability, (e) establishing business risk mitigation and compliance practices, and (f) employing business continuity measurement tools.

The findings, recommendations, and conclusions can help ISBOs acquire knowledge through accessing resources to strengthen their business structures in consistency with entrepreneurship ecosystems to increase revenue growth and sustainability. The conclusions can further help ISBOs mitigate risk factors associated with the business by measuring monetary and nonmonetary values of the business's social impact consistent with business continuity management tools. ISBOs who use themes (a), (b), and (c) can effectively seek capabilities and resources to manage, market, and communicate their business niches such as ethnic food and commodities to unchartered markets and customers, by effective innovating strategies. Themes (d), (e), and (f) may use newfound resilient tools for risk mitigation and readjust mitigation measurement tools with inherent realities of culture and perceptions.

ISBOs have less likelihood of receiving institutional financial support and are more at pushback with compliance due to personal and structural factors. This study may help ISBOs access resources through available entrepreneurial spaces and use the connections to mitigate risks and challenges through the application of acceptable social value-ridden business practices.

### **Implications for Social Change**

ISBOs face insurmountable conditions, obstacles, and challenges in running their businesses. The barriers are durable, but their resolve is sturdy. The lack of strategies for understanding internal structures, resource utilization, and communication in themes



would likely negatively reflect on the viability and growth of immigrant-owned businesses. This study's findings could help enable ISBOs to develop strategies consistent with the resources available and adjust and readjust such strategies for continued and sustainable business growth. Sustainable growth includes social, cultural, and behavioral adjustments. Further formulate and employ specific strategies to address the need for innovation in business performance improvements, including profitability and growth.

Successful ISBOs would likely enact a greater change in the community, starting with contributions to family and communities' financial and social resilience and general economic stability. Dependable immigrant-owned businesses remain as bubbles for immigrant communities and foster harmony in the communities they live in by exuding trust and confidence, belonging, and social cohesion. Successful immigrant-owned businesses increase the viability of their cities and localities by bringing the sales and income taxes to the state translating all to benefits to society, and further providing hope to communities that prepared companies can survive disasters and provide economic security and stability within society.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The findings provide successful strategies that ISBOs use to revitalize their businesses and grow sustainably. ISBOs in different sectors and industries should decide whether the results of this research align or coincide with their strategies for business revitalization to sustain growth in an emergency. Based on the findings of this study, I propose the following actions for ISBOs can take to revitalize their businesses and

sustain growth. First, ISBOs and future researchers need to broadly align their core values along with two thematic aspects. First, business structure, resources, and innovation; second, resilient growth metrics and tools for risk management and compliance and follow through with each theme recommendation for action.

The theme 1 findings showed that developing resilient structures and capabilities for business growth is a means for ISBOs to understand the importance of maintaining the internal structure of management and finances linked to investing in time for knowledge acquisition resulting in capability and confidence delivering successful strategies. The first recommendation is for ISBOs to determine the link between personal and organizational capacity and the role of third-party skill use and mentorship impacting the results through strategy innovation for business success. Future researchers may disseminate the findings through conferences and training sensitizing immigrant business owners about the cycle of structure knowledge, entailing vision, mission and objectives and internal systems of a business, importance and steps for resource acquisition and management, and innovation. The consultants and mentors may carry out training targeting immigrant business owners on the need for self-development as a bridge for business recovery and growth sustainability.

Theme 2 showed the importance of improving engagement and communications to enhance trust for business owners, customers, and partners. ISBO deficiency in engagement limits communications, which is the basis of trust building. The first recommendation for the ISBO is to continue developing communication skills and channels to enhance engagement with customers and business partners in the industry to

realize business and social value. Future researchers should explore the links between community views of business on ethnic entities enriching small business industry and community prosperity. Local entrepreneurship spaces may use the recommendations to further dialogue through conferences and trainings on including ISBOs in small business impact in communities and engage them in discussing commonalities and unique conditions through enhance communications and building trust and bridging the gaps.

Theme 3 revealed that leveraging financial, linguistic, and technology resources for business continuity is a thread connecting capacity and resources. The availability of resources through many government and private outlets tends to be clouded and murky for many ISBOs. The first recommendation for ISBOs is to use the family as the first resort for resources and sustaining the unit unlocks a trusted source for ISBOs. Business owners use entrepreneurship ecosystems to access tailored learning of literature, and connection to financial and technical resources. Business consultants may recognize and use specific financial needs, and linguistic and technological resources required by ISBOs to update their knowledge. Business owners may calibrate technology to serve their businesses through special classes and decide on suitability. Learning institutions and immigrant resettlement agencies may use the findings to update their curriculums to include business language, business culture, and technology proficiency courses for new immigrant business aspirants.

Theme 4 uncovered the resiliency of ISBOs by ensuring the use of tools of resiliency for business sustainability. The first recommendation for ISBOs to use tools for resiliency such as grit and self-assurance provides a cushion to survive and remain

operational. Immigrant business owners use tools for resiliency such as learning curve of experience, flexibility, business and social networking, and optimism for business growth and sustainability. Future researchers may explore more resiliency tools not mentioned in this study. Future researchers may seek to understand the levels of resiliency tools in business resilience and growth and examine which tools have a greater impact on business resiliency, profitability, and growth sustainability. ISBOs, researchers, and business consultants should pay attention to the role played by tools and other factors that may have contributed to the advancement and success of the resiliency tools mentioned above. Researchers may explore more business resiliency factors that may contribute to future findings and recommendations for action.

Theme 5 exposed the steps taken by ISBOs to establish strategies for business risk mitigation compliance practices. the recommendation is for ISBOs to be aware and respond to two areas for compliance and risk management, (a) policy, which includes compliance with state obligations on regulation and safety, and (b) individual due diligence in mitigating managing insurance, fraud, the market turns, and environment. ISBOs are aware of business conditions and prepared to navigate obstacles and challenges and recommendations for action. Regulatory authorities may use engagement in policy through symposiums with ISBOs' compliance efforts and delineate noncompliance issues from mismanagement. The results of recommended action may be used for ISBOs and consultants to tackle inadvertent noncompliance.

Theme 6 showed that employing business continuity measurement tools is a compass for ISBOs to recognize strategies to measure business growth and success. A

first recommendation for action is for the ISBO to measure the value of technology, technical skills, and social impact results to determine their contributions to growth sustainability. Secondly, I recommend that the ISBOs assess, remedy stress, adapt, and innovate for business continuity. Third, that ISBOs adjust and readjust measurements of success and base the process on business continuity management plans with considerations on emerging situations and environment. Fourth, ISBOs and future researchers should compare the distinctions or agreements of business continuity plans in different emergencies and adopt suitable plans for future study. Fifth action by ISBOs and future researchers is to use stress remedy as a measurement tool for behavior and social and technical calibration to predict disaster tolerance among business owners. Lastly, ISBOs use the measurement of success by balancing the monetary revenues and structural adherence and assessing the business's social value for the business owner and the customer.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The findings of this study add to the body of knowledge in the small business field. Future researchers may use the study to recognize gaps that may need further research. Immigrant business owners in future studies may learn new strategies building on successful strategies used for business sustainable growth. More strategies may be added by future researchers to enhance the current business practice.

Researchers may further explore the relationships between structure adoption and resource acquisition to develop a deeper understanding of requirements for innovation driven by personal knowledge, value for business growth, and sustainability. Secondly,

recommendations for further research may include discovering more refined strategies and relationships between elements of the entrepreneurship ecosystem and BCM for engagement and communications in fostering trust and successful results for business growth and recovery.

I focused on the limitations identified and provided recommendations for further research. The first limitation of the study was due to COVID-19 social distance requirements standing as an obstacle for face-to-face personal interviews. The study was restricted to immigrant small businesses in South Dakota, where some ISBOs have no access to virtual technology. A recommendation for further research is that personal interactions further add to rich data through personal observations on artifacts and documentation and is a more appropriate interview engagement method for ISBOs. The second limitation is the English language fluency limitation among some immigrant business owners. Such limitations may create obstacles in interview questions comprehension. A recommendation for further research should include ISBOs who are more proficient in the English language, and when needed break down or translate texts in their languages to elicit rich and contextual responses. A recommendation for further research should be studying the relationship between language fluency, cultural adaptation, and the use of successful strategies. The third limitation was immigrant business owners' experiences and perceptions of research. The assumption was fear may relate to a lack of trust due to issues with compliance or immigrant status. A recommendation for further research is to initiate building trust building blocks with business owners through their communities before conducting any research.

## Reflections

My doctoral study comes from my experience with being a lifelong learner, a term I discovered during my MBA studies at Walden University 10 years ago. I first registered for my studies in 2018 but withdrew. My current doctoral journey started during the COVID-19 pandemic realizing the availability of time and the need to remain mentally active. The first classes were challenging but aided my foundation for academic research. Navigating COVID-19 and the havoc it inflicted in the lives of individuals and businesses made me decide to take an interest in the phenomenon. Seeing some immigrant business owners struggling with unprecedented closures and some families getting impacted, I developed an interest in studying the resilient business leaders sustaining growth in such an emergency.

I started my doctoral study with a lot of misconceptions. One is that doctoral studies were an extension of an MBA and similar in all aspects of form and content. I realized that the academic delivery and research requirements require different formats of writing and rigor. I fast learned that my professional writing needed more evidence-based research with constant feedback. My doctoral journey was intense and only determination, resilience, and peer and academic advisor support encouraged me to persevere. I learned and refined my skills in time management, family, work, and study balance. I intended to use my doctoral study to inspire my children and impress colleagues, but I realized that the process impacted and humbled me immensely.

My 25 years of experience in leadership and management in the public and private domains prepared me to tackle more challenges in academia by translating my

experience to research prevailing phenomena. Managing disaster risk reduction strategy in the public sector and overseeing investment regulatory and compliance systems, and my 6 years working as a private consultant with small businesses in financial management and regulatory compliance increased my interest in small business strategies for enterprise revitalization during and after emergencies was a perfect mix for my capacity to explore research on strategies intersecting all my experiences.

My cross-cultural knowledge and education strategically helped develop innovative ways to manage business feasibility and continuity. Nevertheless, I had to realize and navigate my personal biases dealing with immigrant business owners. Being an immigrant, I thought I understood fully the extent of struggles experienced by small businesses through reading the literature about small businesses. I realized that my knowledge changed as I interacted with personalities who emotively narrated their experience and strategies and I realized that my previous knowledge was superficial. Immigrant business owners provided unique insights that could not be generalized without research findings. After completion of my study, I could now see my research progress blueprint creating opportunities to contribute to the body of knowledge through my research findings and to add more innovative strategies for business revitalization and growth sustainability in emergencies.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study aims to explore strategies used by revitalized immigrant-owned businesses for growth sustainability following emergencies. Responses from insights of the respondents explained the aspects of the



success of ISBOs in using strategies that aligned with themes for business growth and sustainability to answer the central research question on what strategies are used by revitalized immigrant small business owners for growth sustainability following emergencies?

The composite conceptual framework of the entrepreneurship ecosystem and BCM provided a foundation for the implementation of the themes under two broad aspects: First, business structure, resources, and innovation, and second, resilient growth metrics and tools for risk management and compliance. The study findings include six themes, (a) developing resilient capabilities and fostering structure for business growth, (b) improving engagement and communications to enhance trust, (c) leveraging financial, linguistic, and technology resources for business continuity, (d) ensuring resilient tools for business sustainability, (e) establishing business risk mitigation and compliance practices, and (f) employing business continuity measurement tools.

To achieve such resilient and innovative strategies, immigrant business owners should improve required implementation mechanisms to reinforce regulation and accountability through tools and constant strategies during and after emergencies (Hamilton, 2020; Palanisamy et al., 2020). Further, to assess structural factors that are appropriate through a framework through explaining the due diligence process study perceptions of small businesses' survival ability as a function of learning from specific stakeholders, such as lawyers, accountants, and bankers (Buchan et al., 2018).

ISBOs should develop and implement managerial and structural capacity for business record keeping through time investment in business learning and mentorship.

ISBOs should implement engagement and communication protocols to gain trust with customers, colleagues, and partners. ISBOs harness and implement their financial resourcing through family and individual savings for emergencies and appreciate third-party consulting in technical areas including translation services. ISBOs should improve resiliency tools such as networking, self-assurance, and other remedies to achieve business growth and sustainability. ISBOs respond and implement policy provisions for regulatory compliance and institute due diligence measures to avert risk and adhere to successful business obligations and practices. ISBOs implement business measurement tools to include revenue and sales and business value by using continuity plans for readjustments consistent with community and business expectations. ISBOs could implement new strategies consistent with findings. The results confirm the employment of some of these strategies by some ISBOs for the implementation of these themes would contribute to sustaining business growth and success in emergencies.

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## Appendix: Interview Protocol

Location:

Participant: Coded

Date and Time:

A. Introduction:

- Thank the participant for accepting and giving consent to participate.
- Certify that each participant meets the established criteria to participate in this study before beginning the interview process.
- Introduce myself and explain the mode of the interview.
- Share the consent form with the participant once more and answer concerns from the participant.
- The participant signs the consent form.
- Provide each participant with a duplicate copy of the consent form while the participant keeps the signed consent form in a locked cabinet for five years
- Present the interview, research topic, and research question, and explain the purpose and scope of the study over the participant's preferred meeting medium.
- Assure each participant that all the collected information will be kept confidential, ask permission to record the interview, and inform the participant of the right to stop the interview.
- Inform each participant of the storage and destruction process as a means of enhancing confidentiality.
- Code the participant and date at the top of the paper.

- Turn on the recording device.
- Time questions to include a follow-up question.
- Begin interview questions in sequence.

The questions for the interview are as follows:

1. What strategies have you used to revitalize your business and sustain growth after emergencies?
  2. What financial strategies did you use for your business's sustainable growth following the emergencies?
  3. What social, economic, and environmental conditions affected your business growth sustainability following emergencies?
  4. What key obstacles did you face in implementing your strategies for revitalized enterprise and sustainable growth?
  5. How did you address the key challenges faced towards enterprise recovery and sustainable growth?
  6. What measures do you use to monitor your success to determine your strategies and implementation plans' effectiveness for enterprise recovery and sustainable growth after an emergency?
  7. What additional information can you provide to help me understand the strategies you used to revitalize your business and sustain growth after emergencies?
- End interview.
  - Discuss member-checking with the participant and arrange a follow-up meeting to test the accuracy of my interpretations of data collected for ensuring the reliability



and validity of data.

- Inform participants of receiving a complimentary summary of the finds after the completion of the study.
- Allow time for clarification from myself and the participants.
- Thank the participants for their part in the study.
- End Protocol