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Small Ethnic Restaurant Business Owner Strategies to Remain Operable Beyond 7 Years

Nam Phuong Le
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Nam Phuong Le

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Review Committee

Dr. Carol-Anne Faint, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration
Faculty

Dr. Charles Needham, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Rocky Dwyer, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2015

Abstract

Small Ethnic Restaurant Business Owner Strategies to Remain Operable Beyond 7 Years

by

Nam Phuong Le

MScIB, University of Hertfordshire, UK, 2012

MBA, Vancouver Island University, Canada, 2011

BBA, Simon Fraser University, Canada, 2010

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

December 2015

Abstract

The failure rate among small businesses is high. More than half of all small businesses fail within the first 7 years of operation. The purpose of this multi-case study was to explore the strategies that successful small ethnic restaurant owners employed to remain operable beyond 7 years. Three successful ethnic restaurant owners who have been operating their restaurant for at least 7 years in Greater Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada were selected. Data were gathered from participant interviews and from an examination of available physical artifacts such as the locations, premises, websites, and social media pages. The resource-based view by Edith Penrose was the underlying conceptual framework for this research. *Within-method* triangulation was used to ensure the rigor of the study. In the study, 5 themes were identified: hard work, interest or passion, family support, location, and food and service quality. These findings underscore the importance of hard work, business interest, family support, prime location, and quality food for successful small businesses. Current and future small ethnic restaurant business owners may apply these findings to improve their business performance and survival rate.

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Dedication

To my family and friends for your love and support.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Small businesses account for a significant portion of the Canadian economy (Chandler, 2012). In 2012, the country had 1.08 million small businesses, 98.2% of all Canadian businesses (Industry Canada [IC], 2013a). Small business leaders' contribution is 41% of the total private sector Gross Domestic Products (GDP) in 2008 (IC, 2013a). Furthermore, small business is the major source of job creation in Canada. In 2012, 7.7 million employees were working for small businesses (IC, 2013a). On average, from 2002 to 2012, Canadian small businesses have more than 100,000 new jobs open each year (IC, 2013a). Despite the significant contributions to the national economy, small businesses in Canada have numerous challenges (Chandler, 2012). Small businesses have limited resources, knowledge, and market power because of the small size (Hunter, 2011). Thus, the survival rate among small businesses is low. Less than one-third of new small businesses will survive after a decade (IC, 2013a). Moreover, Macdonald (2012) noted most small businesses in Canada fail within the first 7 years after start-up. Consequently, business failures might increase the unemployment rate and negatively affect the country's economy. The objective of this study is to explore the factors that make small business successful or failure.

Background of the Problem

The public and leaders in government bodies across Canada recognize the importance of small businesses for national prosperity (Ruddy, Kastelen, & English, 2014). Small business owners contribute significantly to the local community and the

Canadian economy in general (Troster, 2011). Approximately 25 to 41% of Canada's GDP comes from small businesses (IC, 2013a).

Small business leaders are creating jobs for the community, paying taxes toward government revenue, expanding tourism, improving diversity in Canadian culture, and providing funding for local charities, community organizations, and projects (Ruddy et al., 2014). However, small businesses have more disadvantages than larger businesses, such as access to financial resources, business information, and international customers (De la Garza Carranza & Egri, 2010). In addition, many small business managers lack general management skills such as marketing and financial management (Barbero, Casillas, & Feldman, 2011). Consequently, the failure rate among small businesses in Canada is high (IC, 2013a).

Problem Statement

The failure rate among Canadian small businesses is high despite the important contributions to the Canadian economy (Gill & Biger, 2012; Hunter, 2011). Small businesses account for 98.2% of all businesses in Canada (IC, 2013a). Although small business owners employ 69.7% of the total labor force within the private sector (IC, 2013a), and of this number, only 27% of small businesses survive after the first 7 years (Macdonald, 2012). The general business problem is small ethnic restaurant owners who do not adopt successful operational strategies may struggle with business sustainability (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015; Parsa, Rest, Smith, Parsa, & Bujisic, 2015). The specific business problem is some small ethnic restaurant owners lack strategies to remain operable beyond 7 years.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the qualitative multi-case study was to explore strategies small ethnic restaurant business owners use to remain operable beyond 7 years. The population for this study was small ethnic restaurant business owners in British Columbia, Canada. This population was appropriate for the study because small ethnic restaurant owners in British Columbia might reflect all small ethnic restaurant owners across Canada. The result of the study is a guidance for small business owners or potential business owners in the ethnic restaurant service industry to improve the business success rate. The small business owners might learn from successful business owners and apply the knowledge to business practices. As a result, the performance of small business owners might improve, and the unemployment rate may decrease. Furthermore, because small businesses owners contribute significantly to the national GDP, successful small businesses positively influence the national economy. As a result, people living standards might improve (Lyons, 2012).

Nature of the Study

I chose qualitative research methodology in the study because qualitative research methodology was the most appropriate way to answer the research question. Research in the management field can include any of three methodologies including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Cameron & Molina-Azorin, 2011). A qualitative method researcher explores a study topic by answering how, who, and why questions (Doz, 2011). Qualitative data include words, semistructured interviews, pictures, and nonnumeric symbols (Doz, 2011; Marais, 2012). On the other hand, quantitative method

researcher uses numerical indicators and statistical methods to understand and predict the phenomenon (Marais, 2012). For instance, with quantitative methodology, researchers use hypothesis testing to learn about the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. In addition, quantitative method involves testing hypotheses or performing regression analysis of numerical data (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010). Mixed methods research includes both qualitative and quantitative traditions in one study (Cameron & Molina-Azorin, 2011). A qualitative research method was the most appropriate choice because the nature of the study was to explore the factors contributing to the success of small businesses in Canada. Testing the relationship among quantitative variables is not appropriate for the study because no variables are available. As a result, both quantitative and mixed methods were not appropriate in this study because of the explorative nature of the research.

Regarding research design, narrative analysis is appropriate to study the individual but not the organization (Wolgemuth, 2014). Furthermore, ethnography design is used to study behavior in a given cultural context (Robinson, 2013). Phenomenological is a research design to understand the lived experience of individual when interacting with the external environment (Lien, Pauleen, Kuo, & Wang, 2014). However, the success of a business might come from the whole organization, not just one individual. Therefore, case study is more appropriate. However, in a single case study, the number of business in this study is too small to represent the population. Therefore, a multi-case study was the best choice for the study. In addition, I used a multi-case study to ensure better validity.

Case study is a design to explore the strategies employed by small ethnic restaurant businesses to remain operable beyond 7 years. Yin (2014) also identified researchers employ case study to answer how and why research questions. In a case study, controlling the behavior of the participants is not possible. Furthermore, clear having cases' boundaries is an important requirement for case study (Yin, 2014). As a result, in the study, I employed a qualitative case study to explore the factors that influence the performance of small Canadian restaurant business owners.

Research Question

The central research guiding this study is what strategies did small ethnic restaurant business owners employ to remain in business after 7 years? I collected data by conducting face-to-face interviews and examining the available physical artifacts of the businesses.

Interview Questions

The strategy related interview questions for this study included the following:

1. What factors contributed to your business success?
2. Which factor did you think is the most critical to your business' success?
3. What are the three internal and three external barriers that made your business unsuccessful? How did you react to the barriers to make your business successful? What were the results of your actions?
4. What are your strengths and weaknesses in managing your business?
5. What type of resources helped you to increase the chances for business success?

6. What kind of support did you receive from the internal and external stakeholders of the business (e.g., family or government)?
7. What advice do you have to other business owners in the ethnic restaurant business for success in the future?
8. What additional information do you have to help me understand other factors contributing to your business success?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study includes the resource-based view (RBV), which originated in the 1950s by Edith Penrose, who stated leaders of firms could create competitive advantages using internal tangible and intangible resources (as cited in Lockett & Wild, 2014). In the RBV theory, Penrose (1959, as cited in Jacobsen, 2013) viewed firms as a collection of resources. Firm leaders acquired and developed tangible and intangible resources to create barriers to entry; thus, the owners could create competitive advantages for the firms (Perrigot & Pénard, 2013). The RBV theory is relevant in the study because a key reason for small business failure is limited resources (Shirokova, Vega, & Sokolova, 2013).

Resource-based view refers to the business leaders' abilities to derive efficiency and effectiveness from their resources (Seshadri, 2013). Seshadri showed a positive relationship between the firm performance and the number of resources owned. Szymaniec-Mlicka (2014) indicated the success of businesses comes from internal resources because businesses are operating in an unpredictable and unstable environment.

The key characteristics of the resources are valuable, rare, inimitable, and nonsubstitutable (Barney, Ketchen, & Wright, 2011).

A resource is valuable when business leaders can use the resource to improve the effectiveness of the firms. In other words, business leaders use valuable resources to decrease production costs and increase total revenue (Kozlenkova, Samaha, & Palmatier, 2014). Moreover, the resource is rare because only a small number of firms own it. The resource is also inimitable, which means competitors cannot easily copy or duplicate the resource (Kozlenkova et al., 2014). Thus, the cost to duplicate the resource is significantly high. Moreover, the resources have no close substitute (Kozlenkova et al., 2014). As the theory has matured, scholars began using resource-based theory (RBT) instead of RBV (Barney et al., 2011). For example, the resources of the firm are people, organizational culture, relationship with suppliers, and managerial goal commitments (Seshadri, 2013). Therefore, small business leaders should focus on developing and acquiring more resources in becoming successful (Seshadri, 2013).

Two other relevant and comparable concepts are system thinking, and value chain theory. The major contributor to system theory is Forrester (as cited in Caldwell, 2012) who stated the system's structure is critical for the organization's success. In the value chain theory, Porter (as cited in Fearne, Garcia Martinez, & Dent, 2012) groups firm activities into primary and support activities for analytical purposes. More detail on the two theories is in the literature review section.

Operational Definitions

The operational definitions to help readers understand the meaning of some technical terms are the following:

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Association of Southeast Asian Nations includes Thailand, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar (Burma), Singapore, and the Philippines (Luu, 2012).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR). Corporate social responsibility means businesses should be responsible and not harm the stakeholders. Furthermore, the management of corporations should consider economic, social, and environmental dimensions in making decisions (Azmat & Zutshi, 2012a).

Crowdfunding. Crowdfunding is a new source of funding for entrepreneurs. Using crowdfunding, entrepreneurs raise a small amount of fund but from a large group of investors by using Internet technology (Belleflamme, Lambert, & Schwienbacher, 2014).

Enterprise resource planning (ERP). Enterprise resource planning is a computer system helps to integrate all the aspects of a business to develop organizational competitiveness further. ERP is the nervous system of the organization (Ahmad & Pinedo Cuenca, 2013).

Gross domestic product (GDP). The gross domestic product includes the total output of the economy within national borders. GDP includes consumption spending, business investment, government spending and net exports (Lyons, 2012).

Gross national product (GNP). The Gross national product index includes the total economic output of country's citizens in a given year both inside and outside of the country (Mujtaba, Williamson, Cavico, & McClelland, 2013).

Nascent entrepreneurs. Nascent entrepreneurs are business people who initiate new businesses (Renko, Kroeck, & Bullough, 2012)

Serial entrepreneur. A serial entrepreneur is a businessperson who launches one business after the other (Plehn-Dujowich, 2010).

Social network. A social network consists of the relationship or connection of business owners and the external environment (Abou-Moghli & Al-Kasasbeh, 2012).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions in a study are facts not verified (Knight & Cross, 2012). A number of assumptions impact the study. First, I assumed qualitative case study is an appropriate methodology and design to explore the factors influence the success or failure of small Canadian service businesses. Second, I assumed the businesses are the bounded cases. The clear definition of the case boundaries is a critical requirement for using case study design (Yin, 2014). Third, I assumed that the interviewees had adequate knowledge of the organization and I responded to the questions truthfully and honestly. Fourth, I assumed the responses of the interviewees contained minimal or no personal bias. From the result of the assumptions, the interview data should prove reliable. Fifth, I assumed the small ethnic restaurant businesses in the study represent general small ethnic restaurant businesses across Canada. Sixth, I assumed the classification of Canadian small

businesses, which is fewer than 100 employees, according to Industry Canada, is relevant for the study (IC, 2013b)

Limitations

Limitations are the potential weaknesses of the study (Connelly, 2013). The main limitation is the inability to generalize the finding because of two reasons. First, the number of cases is small. Second, the geographic location of the study is only in British Columbia. The study contains only three cases in British Columbia making generalizability impossible. Another limitation could include the biases in the response of the research participants.

Delimitations

Delimitations of the study involve the sizes of the organization, the geographic location of the study, and the sector of the industry. First, I only focused the study on ethnic restaurant businesses because my purpose is to explore the factors that influence the success or failure of small ethnic restaurant businesses. Second, I only included small size ethnic restaurants. Small businesses are businesses with fewer than 100 employees (Alsaaty, 2011). Larger size businesses are not in the study. Third, the geographic location of the study is limited to British Columbia in Canada.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

The results of the study are an important contribution to current business practice of small ethnic restaurants. The owners can use the knowledge from the study to formulate sound strategies for the businesses. First, the results of the study may

contribute to the reduction of gaps in the current literature, which may add to the body of knowledge on small business management. Other small ethnic restaurant business owners, with adequate understanding of the successful factors, might find success by improving better management practice in the future.

Second, small ethnic restaurant business leaders and policy makers in Canada may find the results of the study valuable. The results of the study may explain the potential influencing factors on small ethnic restaurant business performance. Therefore, through the study, I might provide vital information for major stakeholders of new start-up small ethnic restaurant businesses and government policy makers (Arasti, Zandi & Talebi, 2012). The ethnic restaurant owners may recognize the level of influence from the elements on ethnic restaurant business operations. Teng, Bhatia, and Anwar (2011) noted business leaders might make better management decisions based on the understanding of the main reasons for success or failure. The owners may learn and apply better practice from the successful businesses. Consequently, the survival rate among small ethnic restaurant businesses in Canada might increase.

Implications for Social Change

The small business sector is a critical component of the Canadian economy (Ruddy et al., 2014). Small business owners employ a substantial portion of the private labor force in Canada (Macdonald, 2012). Moreover, a significant portion of the country's GDP comes from small businesses (IC, 2013a). The contributions of small ethnic restaurant business owners are also significant to small businesses and the

economy (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015; Chen & Elston, 2013). Thus, the success of small ethnic restaurant businesses is vital for the prosperity of Canadian society.

Small ethnic restaurant business owners might acquire strong knowledge on the elements that may make the businesses succeed or fail from the study. Knowledge from the study might prove helpful for the owner to make better business decisions to improve the survival rate. Furthermore, the owners may utilize available resources to overcome obstacles to become successful. The results of the study may inform policy makers to support small ethnic restaurant businesses. Consequently, small ethnic restaurant business owners may have an opportunity to create employment and support for the communities (Ruddy et al., 2014). Hence, the results of the study may not only prove beneficial to the owners but also to the employees and the Canadian society.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Small and medium size businesses are important to the national economy (Arasti et al., 2012). Small business leaders contribute significantly to the job market, economic growth, and innovation (Teng et al., 2011). Furthermore, small business leaders contribute to stabilize society and promote regional economic integration (Arasti et al., 2012). However, Arasti et al. (2012) also showed a number of small businesses have failed because of poor performance. As a result, many academic and professional researchers have become interested in understanding the nature of small business. Arasti et al. (2012), Hunter (2011), and Siemens (2010) identified important factors for success and failure including management skills, access to resources, and the environment.

In the literature review section, I offer a general background on previous literature regarding the success and failure factors of small businesses. The purpose of the literature review is to provide the reader with overall knowledge about the topic in the following areas. First, I will discuss literature on small businesses in Canada and small businesses' failures despite the large contributions to the Canadian economy. Second, I will present the impacts of businesses characteristics and owners' characteristics on firm performance. Third, I include past literature on the internal factors that influence small business performance. The factors include financial management, business planning, and owner attitude. Fourth, I will provide an overview of external factors such as macroeconomics, the industry, and government regulations.

Most of the materials in the section are from academic peer-reviewed journals. The major search terms I used were *small business failure*, *small business success*, and *small business in Canada* conducted from research using Google Scholar and various databases such as Business Source Complete and ProQuest Central. The other materials include books, dissertations, and Canadian government publications. More than 85% of the references are peer-reviewed journal articles within the last 5 years (2011-2015), which complied with doctoral study requirements. Table 1 provides a list of the different sources used.

Table 1

Summary of Resources Used

	Older	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total	Percentage
Peer-reviewed journals	4	32	41	34	27	5	143	92.86
Dissertations	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.65
Government publications	0	0	1	2	0	0	3	1.95
Books	1	1	1	0	1	0	4	2.59
Websites	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	1.95
Total	6	34	43	37	29	5	154	100

Note. The table includes a summary of all the references used in the study. The resources include peer-reviewed academic journals and doctoral dissertations, publications from government agencies or organizations, books, and websites. Most of the peer-reviewed resources (90%) are within 5 years of the expected graduation date (2011-2015).

Relevant Theories and Concepts

I included some theories, which are relevant to the study, including the resource-based view, system thinking, and value chain theory. The theories are relevant to the study of business organizations. As stated in the resource-based view, the main cause of business success or failure is its resources. Regarding system theories, analyzing of the business system structure is important to understand the relationship and interaction among the components. Magretta (2012) showed the usefulness of value-chain theories in understanding the business ability to create value for the customers. Of the three theories, the resource-based theory is the most relevant to the study of small business because resources are significant factors contribute to the success of small businesses (Hunter, 2011).

The resource-based view. The resource-based theory is an appropriate lens to look at the study. In the theory, firm owners use tangible and intangible resources to create competitive advantages (Perrigot & Pénard, 2013). The low performance of small businesses is a consequence of limited resources (Keen & Etemad, 2012; Thomason, Simendinger, & Kiernan, 2013). Moreover, Hunter (2011) indicated small businesses have limited resources because of the size, which constrain growth. De la Garza Carranza and Egri (2010) stated accessing financial resources is hard for small businesses. Devigne, Vanacker, Manigart, and Paeleman (2013), determined business owners with more resources outperform others with limited ones. Thus, small business owners should use resources strategically to remain successful (Blackburn, Hart, & Wainwright, 2013).

The resource-based view or theory is relevant in the present study. One of the reasons for small business failure is not having adequate resources. Small firm owners with limited financial resources cannot develop competitive advantage (Thomason et al., 2013). In addition, a shortage of intangible resources is a critical matter for small businesses. Keen and Etemad (2012) stated newly started up small firms are facing more difficulty with constrained resources in terms of management knowledge and experience. Small businesses also have fewer good quality human resources (Thornton & Byrd, 2013). As a result, limited resources can determine the high-failure rate among small businesses.

Traditionally, the main characteristics of resources are valuable, rare, inimitable, and nonsubstitutable (Barney et al., 2011). A newer version of RBV is a combination of inimitable and nonsubstitutable characteristics with the addition of a new dimension

organization (Kozlenkova et al., 2014). Kozlenkova et al. (2014) stated even if firms have valuable, rare, and imperfectly imitable resources, the firms could still have lower performance because the leaders' inability to use the resource properly. Therefore, organizational dimension refers to management's ability to exploit the full potential of company resources.

System thinking. System thinking is a process of understanding how a system or a structure works (Bendoly, 2014). Ludwig von Bertalanffy was one of the initial developers of the general system theory in early twentieth century (Pouvreau, 2013). System dynamic is another approach of the same theory (Caldwell, 2012; Tang & Ng, 2014). The main difference is system dynamic is a better concept in studying business or government organizations to formulate management strategy (Tang & Ng, 2014). In 1958, Forrester was a major contributor to the system thinking theory (Caldwell, 2012; Tam, Li, & Cai, 2014). Resources are not the main issue with system thinking theory, but the system structure is the most important issue. In general, a system consists of many parts or components, which work and influence each other (Caldwell, 2012). In the system thinking theory, Forrester studied the relationship among factors and the information feedback loop (Tam et al., 2014). System thinking theory is suitable in various disciplines including nature science, education, business management, and social science (Caldwell, 2012; Tang & Ng, 2014). When applying the system thinking theory in the field of business management, business organizations are the systems. A business system includes human capitals, which are working toward a common goal (Bendoly, 2014).

Beyond interactions among internal parts, the systems also interact with the external environment (Caldwell, 2012). Caldwell (2012) stated the usefulness of system-thinking theory in exploring how organizations function. For analyzing purposes, researchers break down the system into smaller parts. Analyzing the relationships among different parts of the organization is important for formulating appropriate decisions (Bendoly, 2014). On the one hand, the system is successful when all parts interact with each other properly. Business owners can improve system performance with good system structure or relationships (Tang & Ng, 2014). Good management, integration, commitment, and communication are the keys to high system performance (Cezarino, Junior, & Correa, 2012). On the other hand, system performance is poor when the parts fail to work together. The causes of system failure include weak information linkage, cooperation, inflexibility, and lack of capacity to adapt to changes (Cezarino et al., 2012).

Value chain. Porter developed value chain theory in 1985. Porter refers the value adding activities of the firm as value chain (Fearne et al., 2012). Some researchers and management professional can apply the theory to understand and analyze any business or industry. Porter classified the firm activities into primary and support activities. Primary activities include manufacture, sales, and distribution while support activities include planning, finance, and human resources (Fearne et al., 2012). Business leaders or researchers use value chain to understand the firm processes. Business leaders can use value chain theory to identify the weaknesses in the process. Therefore, managers can make improvements to the process (Fearne et al., 2012). The theory of value chain is important in studying business strategy (Magretta, 2012). The main objective of business

is to increase profit by satisfying customer need. Business managers use value chain analysis to formulate appropriate strategies (Magretta, 2012). The success or failure of business organizations is dependent on how well management can create values for the customers.

Overview of Small Business

The scope of the study includes Canadian small businesses. Small business leaders make a significant contribution to national economies around the world (Uddin & Bose, 2013). Small businesses account for a significant proportion of all businesses. Small firms are in many sectors of the economy such as manufacturing, mining, service and are contributors of economic growth. For example, almost all businesses (99.85%) in Bangladesh are classified as small businesses (Uddin & Bose, 2013). The situation is similar in Singapore where 99% of businesses fall under the classification of a small business. Small Singaporean business owners employ approximately two-thirds of all the labor and account for almost half of the country's total value added (Teng et al., 2011). In other countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), small business also accounts for about 99% of all businesses (Teng et al., 2011). Gill and Biger (2012), Okpara (2011), Omri and Frikha (2011) emphasized the importance of small businesses in terms of contributions to the national economy and job creation.

Innovation is an important factor that improves business competitiveness. Kang (2012) identified research and development (R&D) activities have a positive relationship with the firms' productivity, revenue, and profitability. Furthermore, management professional can implement innovation to increase the productivity of the economy,

which will lead to higher GDP growth (Halabí & Lussier, 2014; Lyons, 2012). In the United States, R&D spending of small businesses is twice as much compared to large companies (Teng et al., 2011). Small business owners are better in filling customer demand (Kang, 2012; Teng et al., 2011). Innovation is critical for small businesses. A similar situation exists in South Korea where the government does recognize the important of small business innovation. However, many small firms lack adequate funding for R&D resulting in decreased (Kang, 2012).

Definition of small business. The definition of *small business* varies across countries and across different industries. Several criteria exist for determining the size of a business such as number of employees, total revenue, and total assets (Hatten, 2011). Hunter (2011) defined small businesses as privately held with no stock publicly traded. For example, small businesses in the manufacturing industry in the United States are businesses have fewer than 500 employees (Hatten, 2011). In another example, in Thailand, small businesses are businesses have the value of total assets less than 50 million Thai baht (Chittithaworn et al., 2011). The Ministry of Industry in Bangladesh defined a small business by one or both of the following criteria (a) the total fixed assets of the business between 0.05 million Tk. to 5 million Tk, and (b) the number of employees as fewer than 25. However, in Canada, small businesses are businesses with one to 99 employees (IC, 2013b). In the study, I only focus on businesses have fewer than 100 employees.

Other relevant concepts in this study are microbusiness and entrepreneurship. Microbusinesses are a subgroup of small business and are small. The sizes of

microbusinesses vary in different countries. For example, in the United States, microbusinesses are with fewer than 10 employees (Seo, Perry, Tomczyk, & Solomon, 2014). In New Zealand, microbusinesses have five or fewer employees (Samujh, 2011). The definition is different in Saudi Arabia where micro-businesses are businesses with fewer than 25 employees (Ahmad, 2012). Entrepreneurs are people who organize, manage, and assume the risks of a business (Chang, Chen, & Tsai, 2011).

Small business in Canada. Small business is a critical component of many economies including Canada. Gill and Biger (2012) noted small businesses are important to the Canadian economy. Most Canadian businesses are small businesses (IC, 2013a), which are the main source of employment for Canadians. As reported by Industry Canada (year needed), a government organization, small business owners employ more than half to the total private labor force. Small firms account for a significant portion of the country's GDP (IC, 2013a). Furthermore, small business owners are not only operating domestically but also contributing to the country's exports. In 2006 small businesses in the province of British Columbia alone exported \$12 billion to international markets (Gill & Biger, 2012).

The numbers of newly established small businesses every year are significant. In 2012, the number of new small businesses established in Canada was 1.08 million (IC, 2013b). Although small businesses are an important part of the economy, the failure rate among small firms is alarming. Less than one-third of new start up small businesses survives within 10 years (Hunter, 2011). The failure rate is too high, and negatively affects the Canadian economy. Looking at the factors, which make small businesses

either succeed or fail, is critical. Management executives and policy makers can improve small business performance by understanding the success or failure factors.

Halabí and Lussier (2014) showed if small business owners understand the reasons leading to business success or failure, the failure rate among small businesses may be lower. Small business owners should recognize the factors which might affect the success or failure of the businesses. As a result, the small business owners could make better business decisions to lower the failure rate. Previous literatures on the subject matter of small business performance include both qualitative and quantitative studies. Hunter (2011) explored the controllable and uncontrollable factors influence the success of small businesses in Canada using a qualitative approach. In another qualitative study, Miles (2013) identified the successful factors for small businesses in the United States in the 21st century. Furthermore, Gill and Biger (2012) conducted a quantitative study to examine the relationship between financing, management skills, market situations, regulatory issues and the growth of small businesses using Canadian data. Gill and Biger (2012) looked at Canadian small businesses instead of focusing on one group. Thus, past studies do have some limitations.

In general, Hunter (2011), Gill and Biger (2012), and Miles (2013) only provided an overall examination of small businesses. A detailed study of a specific subgroup of small businesses is necessary. One can classify the subgroups by the industry or the characteristics of the owner. Small businesses include different industries such as manufacturing, hospitality, and components and materials (Chen & Elston, 2013; Kang, 2012; Mohiuddin & Su, 2013). Additionally, one can categorize small businesses into

different groups based on the owners' characteristics such as immigrant business owner, female business owner, or Aboriginal business owner (Foley & O'Connor, 2013; Robb & Watson, 2012; Vries, 2012).

Expanding the study into more and different businesses in various contexts can help to improve the generalization of previous studies. In this study, I provide small business leaders information on the major factors that have an impact on the success of small businesses. Thus, my purpose was to explore how and why some Canadian small businesses have been successful regardless of the limited resources. My focus is on the ethnic restaurant service sector. Understanding the factors that make small businesses succeed or fail is critical for small business leaders (Halabí & Lussier, 2014). Business leaders might use the findings from the study to improve the business survival rate and future performance. Moreover, government officials may create appropriate economic policies based on the knowledge gained from the study (Gomezelj & Kušce, 2013). In addition, I might contribute the results of the study to the body of knowledge on the success and failure factors for small business.

Measurement of success or failure. Defining what success or failure means is important because the purpose of the study is to explore the success or failure factors of small Canadian restaurant businesses. The basic measurement of business success is the ability to survive (Toledo-López, Díaz-Pichardo, Jiménez-Castaneda, & Sánchez-Medina, 2012). However, some other measurements include the firm's revenue or growth, wealth creation, profitability, sustainability, and turnover (Makhbul & Hasun, 2011). Makhbul and Hasun (2011) noted several measurements of small business success

are the firm's revenue or its growth and profitability. On the other hand, Toledo-López et al. (2012) showed the ability to survive is a critical measurement of success among small businesses. Additionally, Gorgievski, Ascalon, and Stephan (2011) listed 10 criteria for business success. The top four criteria include (a) profitability, (b) growth, (c) innovation, and (d) firm survival or continuity.

Regarding small business failure, Hunter (2011) defined such failure as discontinuance of ownership or discontinuance of business. The transfer of business ownership because of poor performance is discontinuance of ownership. The other definition, discontinuance of business, includes a cessation in business operations. Lastly, failure is the firm's value is below the opportunity cost of running a business (Hunter, 2011). In addition, Arasti et al. (2012) provided some other measures of business failures such as entrepreneurial exit, firm closures, insolvency, dissolution, discontinuance, bankruptcy, and organizational mortality.

Research methods and designs. Previous studies on the successful or failure factors of small business include different research methods and designs. Hunter (2011) used qualitative narrative study to document the comments of the research participants. Hunter explored the past experience of the research participants using interviews. Hunter used general and non-directive questions to gather the response from the participants without distorting the response.

Arasti et al. (2012) conducted a study on the failure factors of new small businesses using mixed-methods. In the first phase, Arasti et al. chose businesses that have less than 50 employees and operated for at least 3 years for the study. Arasti et al.

conducted interview with the participant until data saturation point. As a result, Arasti et al. interviewed 10 people for approximately 80 minutes each. The last two interviewees did not provide any new information. Arasti et al. generated 4 hypotheses from the qualitative phase. In the second phase, Arasti et al. used questionnaires to collect data for the hypothesis testing.

Chittithaworn et al. (2011) did a quantitative study to find the successful factor for small businesses in Thailand. Chittithaworn et al. formulated 8 hypotheses. Data collection technique includes self-designed questionnaires with five-points Likert scale. On the Likert scale, the response range is from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. The number of response questionnaire was 143 out of 200 questionnaires. Chittithaworn et al. used Cronbach's Alpha to ensure high quality of the data before analyzed the data using SPSS.

The qualitative case study is popular for small business research because of its explorative, inductive, and descriptive nature (Werner & Herman, 2012). A case study is an appropriate design to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in a real life context. Each case is independent. Some researchers can measure, record, interpret and understand the participants' experiences. A case study is appropriate to answer the how and why questions. Werner and Herman (2012) conducted a case study on the human resource management practice of small businesses. Data collection process included seven interviews. Each interview was approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Werner and Herman used field notes and tape recorder to record the interviews. Transcribing the interviews was the following step before data analysis phase.

Qualitative case study. A qualitative case study is appropriate in the present study to explore the success and failure factors of small businesses in Canada. First, a qualitative methodology is appropriate to answer the explorative nature of the research question. Second, according to Yin (2014), in a case study, the researchers should answer the how and why questions. In the study, I intend to explore the factors, which cause small businesses in Canada to succeed regardless of limited resources. Moreover, case study is appropriate to explore contemporary issues without the need to control the behavioral event (Yin, 2014). As Wiklund, Davidsson, Audretsch, and Karlsson (2011) stated, small business research is a dynamic field. Thus, the study of small business is a contemporary issue. The cases in the study are small business organizations. Yin (2014) required clear boundaries of the case for case study design. For the case study, I will collect data using semistructured interviews with the research participants, examination of business documents, and physical artifacts. According to Azulai and Rankin (2012), researchers use at least two data collection method to ensure *within-method* triangulation. *Within-method* triangulation is a useful cross-validation tool (Azulai & Rankin, 2012).

Characteristics of the Firm and the Owner

I will indicate previous literature on the success or failure of small businesses. I will summarize the characteristics of the firm and its owners, which contributed to the firm's performance. The characteristics are owner education level, experience of the management, age of the business, and owner or managers' perceptions on corporate social responsibility. Furthermore, I will review the literature on several groups of minority business owners including female, immigrant, and native Indian owners.

Small business owners' profiles. In Canada, almost 50% of small business owners are between 50 to 64 years of age (IC, 2013a). In contrast, Aguilar-Morales et al. (2013) showed the profile of small and medium size business owners in Mexico. The owners of small firms are usually young adults who start-up businesses after completing some business training or gaining relevant business experience. The finding of Aguilar-Morales et al. is similar to another study in Saudi Arabia by Ahmad (2012) showing entrepreneurs are usually young, 25 to 45 years old. Furthermore, the person should spot new business opportunities and obtain all necessary resources to start up a business. Additionally, some vital characteristics of the entrepreneur are self-confidence, acceptance of risks, leadership, originality, orientation towards the future, and will power (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013).

The failure rate among small businesses is high. Only 20% of Canadian small businesses survive after a decade (Arasti et al., 2012). Either the internal and external environment of the business or the owner's characteristics can cause business failure. The owner's managerial experience, motivation, and financial management are critical to a firm's survival in Canada. Many business owners have failed because of poor management skills (Arasti et al., 2012). Additionally, some personal characteristics of the owners contribute to failures such as lack of insight, inflexibility, and emphasis on technical skills (Arasti et al., 2012). Collett, Pandit, and Saarikko (2014) confirmed the same result in which management skill is critical for the success of small business owners. Furthermore, successful small business owners are optimism, independence, flexible, and risk tolerance (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013). New businesses usually have

higher risks than established businesses (Arasti et al., 2012). Thus, the entrepreneurs should take more risks compared to managers. However, Arasti et al. (2012) stated some entrepreneurs failed because of over optimistic. Table 2 includes some factors, which influence the success or failure of small businesses (Arasti et al., 2012).

Owner education. Willebrands, Lammers, and Hartog (2012) showed that owner educational level has a direct impact on business performance. The education level of small business owners varies across countries. In Canada, 66.6% of small business owners have post-secondary degree or diploma (IC, 2013a). The percentage of small business owners with college education is smaller in other developing countries. For example, in Saudi Arabia, about 50% of the entrepreneurs studied have a college degree (Ahmad, 2012). However, in Turkey, fewer than 20% have a college degree (Akbaba, 2012). Lack of business education is a disadvantage for small businesses (Arasti et al., 2012).

Table 2

Factors Affecting Business Failure in Newly Established Small Businesses

Categories	Factors
Motivations	Change of motivation over time
	Lack of motivation for continuation of the job
	Disappointment in the business
Skills	Lack of management skills
	Lack of marketing skills
	Lack of crisis management skills
Capabilities	Lack of proper education
	Lack of proper time spent for the business
	Lack of proper knowledge and experience
Characteristics	Have a traditional look at the business
	Family problems psychological pressures
	Over confidence on others
	Insist on mistake and continue the job

Note. The table includes some traits of the business owners or managers, which influence the success of small business. According to Arasti et al. (2012), four critical categories of the factors are motivations, skills, capabilities, and characteristics. Adapted from “Exploring the Effect of Individual Factors on Business Failure in Iranian New Established Small Businesses” by Z. Arasti, F. Zandi and K. Talebi, 2012, *International Business Research*, 5(4). Copyright 2012 by Canadian Center of Science and Education. The permission email is in Appendix B.

Lack of education is one of the reasons for business failure. Halabí and Lussier (2014) found the educational level of the owners has an impact on business performance. However, Halabí and Lussier noted the relationship between education and small business performance is weak. Halabí and Lussier's finding conflicted with the finding of Millán et al. (2014). Millán et al. (2014) stated educational level is one of the most important factors contribute to business success. In addition, the educational level of the surrounding population also has a positive impact on business performance (Millán et al., 2014). The educational level of the customers will shape the demand for the output. The educational level of the employees will also improve productivity. Business owners with high educational level are able to address risks and thus improve the chance of business survival. Furthermore, educational level increases chance the individual can move from worker to employer (Millán et al., 2014).

The owner business, management experience. Halabí and Lussier (2014) showed managerial and industrial experience is a relevant factor, which contributes to the success of small businesses. Consistently, Arasti et al. (2012) also showed the experience of the owners does contribute to the success of small businesses. Experience is valuable for small businesses. For example, serial entrepreneurs have obtained business experience from previous failures (Parker, 2013). Thus, serial entrepreneurs will have an opportunity to transfer previous knowledge to manage the businesses. Parker (2013) referred to the process as the spillover effect. Moreover, inexperience in business is one of the causes for failure among small businesses (Ahmad, 2012).

Family business background. The business backgrounds of the entrepreneurs have significant influence on the business (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013). Past studies have consistently included the positive impact of the families on the business owners. In some cases, the current business owners inherited the business and experience from the family. Aguilar-Morales et al. (2013) showed a clear implication of family background on business owners. Moreover, Ahmad (2012) showed most of the businesses in Saudi Arabia are family-owned. Similarly, Alam, Jani, and Omar (2011) found many business owners have family backgrounds in business or self-employment. Teng et al. (2011) showed the business owners whose parents did own businesses are less likely to fail. Indeed, the business owners could learn from the parents' advice and experience.

Age of business. In previous studies, the longer businesses exist, the higher the survival rates. Halabí and Lussier (2014) found age of business has a positive relationship with business performance, although the relationship is not significant (strong). The finding is consistent with Salman, von Friedrichs, and Shukur (2011) who stated the chance young firms fail is much higher than for older firms. The ability to survive is a measurement of success (Toledo-López et al., 2012). Most small businesses in the previous studies exist for about 5 years. For example, in a study by Alam et al. (2011), most of the businesses are about 2 to 5 years old.

Business mentality and perception. Successful business owners are usually serious about the businesses. For many people, the motivation for starting up a business is to be own boss (Akbaba, 2012). The commitment to the business can also make the entrepreneurs successful (Alam et al., 2011). Thus, hard work is an important

contribution to business success (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013). The most successful owners usually have full-time commitment to the business. Moreover, the successful business owners are usually ambitious and take initiative toward a business opportunity.

Good business owners always try to do the best (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013). For example, the successful business owners care about the quality of service and the customers. In addition, good business owners usually develop a good relationship with the suppliers. As a result, the business will receive support from the latter such as longer credit terms (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013). Moreover, successful business owners develop a good relationship with people surrounding the businesses to improve business performance. For example, female business owners in Canada, Singapore, and Ireland have used networking to speed up the business development (Alam et al., 2011).

The motivation to start up is different among business owners (Gomezelj & Kušce, 2013). While some people just want to become their own boss, some other people decide to become business owners because of dissatisfaction and negative experience with the current jobs (Gomezelj & Kušce, 2013). Furthermore, Gomezelj and Kušce (2013) stated people who want to start business are usually willing to take risks. The small business owners are self-confident, and have a high internal locus of control, and want independence and achievement (Gomezelj & Kušce, 2013).

Renko et al. (2012) stressed on the importance of motivation, intention, efforts, and behaviors on the success of nascent entrepreneurs. Alam et al. (2011) showed several psychological factors which contribute to business success such as self-perception of management skill, the ability to handle work-stress, and the level of business

commitment. Lastly, business owners should show confidence and think positively to lead to success (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013). Gomezelj and Kušce (2013) stated personal traits are more important to business success than are financial reasons.

Leadership. Successful business owners should possess good leadership skills (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013). As Aguilar-Morales et al. (2013) stated, good business owners should have a vision about the future and inspire and motivate others to reach goals and seek new challenges. Indeed, business owners should influence others to work enthusiastically toward the common goals of the business. The leaders should empathize, understand people, and listen. Aguilar-Morales et al. also presented two major theories of leadership: transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Under transactional leadership, the leaders can motivate the followers to achieve the assigned goals. However, transformational leaders can encourage people to do more than the original expectations. Transformational leaders can identify new change and motivate others to follow (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013). Suh and Kim (2014) also stated leadership is critical for the success of small and medium size businesses in the current global economy.

Business ethics and corporate social responsibility. Similar to large enterprises, business ethics is important for small- and medium-size enterprises. Past researchers have not paid enough attention to business ethics among small businesses (Baldo, 2012). For small businesses, the ownership and management are not separate. As a result, the owners can exercise personal values on the management of the businesses (Baldo, 2012). Similarly, Thornton and Byrd (2013) stated because of the flat structure, the owners of

small businesses are the drivers for social responsibility. Thornton and Byrd (2013) determined spreading ethical values is easier in a small business through informal relationships (trust) or formalized CSR value (code of conduct).

The idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is businesses should try not to harm the stakeholders who are people influenced by business decisions and include employees, investors, suppliers, and customers (Azmat & Zutshi, 2012a). Corporate social responsibility is a voluntary activity rather than a legal requirement (Azmat & Zutshi, 2012b). Azmat and Zutshi identified most of the previous studies on CSR link to large companies. Thornton and Byrd (2013) stated previous researchers only focus on studying big businesses' CSR. Currently, small business owners' CSR focuses on the employees and families rather than on external stakeholders.

Azmat and Zutshi (2012a) revealed the perception of CSR varies among small business owners. Azmat and Zutshi conducted a study on immigrant-owned small businesses. Azmat and Zutshi found small businesses are less involved in socially responsive activities than are larger firms. Small business owners do not practice CSR for many reasons. For instance, small firms lack brand image and attract little public attention. In addition, small businesses are usually isolated and disconnected from the local community. Therefore, for the owners, CSR does not seem to have a large impact on the business. Hence, small business owners do not pay much attention to CSR (Azmat & Zutshi, 2012a). Most small business owners see CSR is charity related work such as volunteering and donating. Consequently, small business leaders do not have a comprehensive CSR strategy in place (Thornton & Byrd, 2013).

Understanding CSR varies depending on the different backgrounds of the owners (Azmat & Zutshi, 2012b). In developing countries, people care more about politics and economics. In contrast, in developed countries, people care more about the environment, ethics, or stakeholder issues. Furthermore, Azmat and Zutshi stated culture could have a significant influence on the perception of CSR. For example, immigrant entrepreneurs' home-country cultures influence the perceptions of CSR. However, the perception is not stable but changes over time (Azmat & Zutshi, 2012b).

Different small business owners have different CSR practices (Azmat & Zutshi, 2012a). Even within developing countries, CSR practices are different. On the one hand, many small business leaders do want to sacrifice part of the profits; therefore, some of the actions are socially irresponsible. For example, some business owners may have poor human resource practices, but do not respect human rights, and pollute the environment. Indeed, developing countries have lower CSR standards compared to the CSR standards of developed countries (Azmat & Zutshi, 2012a). On the other hand, many other small business leaders unintentionally perform socially responsible acts. The business owners may not know the acts are CSR related. Additionally, Azmat and Zutshi (2012a) claimed small businesses are better than large businesses in terms of preserving the environment. Lastly, contributing to society is also a criterion for small business success (Gorgievski et al., 2011).

Female-owned small businesses. The role of a female entrepreneur is becoming more important (Alam et al., 2011). More opportunities are available for women to start up businesses compared to a few decades ago. However, the number of women in

entrepreneurial activity is still small compared to the involvement of men (Alam et al., 2011). For instance, in Malaysia, women account for 50% of the workforce but female business owners only account for 15% of business owners (Alam et al., 2011).

The motivation for women to start a business is to have flexible jobs, which balance between work and family (Alam et al., 2011). Many female business owners struggle with obstacles. For female entrepreneurs, success has two aspects. On the one hand, the intrinsic factors include independence, freedom, and being own boss. On the other hand, extrinsic factors include income and wealth. Other ways to define success include return on assets, sales, profits, employee survival rates, customer satisfaction, personal development, and personal achievement. Many women define success from an economic point such as income (Alam et al., 2011).

Similar to other groups of business owners, good management and the ability to access finances, human resources, and government support are critical factors which contribute to women's business performance (Alam et al., 2011). The socially constructed barrier is a major force, which prevents female business owners' success. Internal factors such as family, social ties and internal motivation have significant influence on the success of female business owners (Alam et al., 2011). First, family and friends can provide support to help stabilize the emotions of the business owners. Ekpe (2011) identified successful business owners are less emotional than are unsuccessful owners. Second, for female business owners, belonging to a group, which shares similar experiences, is necessary to the success. Furthermore, people in the social networks can provide female business owners with more ideas for business development. Third,

internal motivation such as self-fulfilment also is a significant contribution to the performance of female-owned businesses (Alam et al., 2011). Regarding the level of education, most female entrepreneurs in the study by Alam et al. (2011) have less than an undergraduate degree. Most of female business owners, 82.5%, have business experience.

Immigrant-owned small businesses. Hulten and Ahmed (2013) noted small and medium businesses are an important component of the national economy. In addition, immigrant business owners provide a significant role within the small business sector. Immigrants are people who leave home countries and move to a new host country, and globalization has increased the number of immigrants around the world (Chang et al., 2011). For example, in Australia, the percentage of small business owners among the immigrant community is higher than the percentage of native-born Australians (Hulten & Ahmed, 2013).

Basu (2011) expressed a similar finding in the United States. Furthermore, immigrants are important to exports because of the unique roles (Hulten & Ahmed, 2013). Despite immigrants' important contributions to the national economy, Hulten and Ahmed (2013) revealed accessing external financial resources is more challenging for immigrant business owners compared to the experience of the host country native-born counterparts. As a result, immigrants have to give up some business opportunities because of inadequate financial resources.

Understanding the immigrant business owner's profile is important. Regarding education, immigrants are more likely to hold a post-secondary degree compared to the native-born (Hulten & Ahmed, 2013). However, Basu (2011) discussed a different aspect

in which many immigrants lack educational qualifications. Indeed, the different group of immigrants is an explanation for the conflict in Basu's finding and Hulten and Ahmed's finding. When Chrysostome (2010) examined two groups of immigrant entrepreneurs, he identified the groups as either opportunistic or necessity immigrant entrepreneurs.

Necessity immigrant entrepreneurs usually have low educational levels and face disadvantages in the labor market. To survive, some immigrants unwillingly become entrepreneurs. Indeed, a similar study found some immigrants face disadvantages in the labor market (Basu, 2011). The other group, opportunity immigrant entrepreneurs, have higher educational levels. Opportunity immigrants become entrepreneurs after perceiving business opportunities in the market (Chrysostome, 2010).

Immigrant entrepreneurs face many obstacles in starting up and growing businesses. As mentioned previously, immigrant entrepreneurs lack adequate financial resources. Furthermore, immigrant entrepreneurs usually do not have credit histories and personal wealth. The immigrants have to find an alternative source of finance from either family or friends (Hulten & Ahmed, 2013). Immigrant entrepreneurs usually have to use personal assets to secure loans. Basu (2011) found a consistent result with Hulten and Ahmed (2013). In the United Kingdom, immigrant business owners also find accessing funding for start-ups is hard (Basu, 2011).

Other obstacles, which immigrant entrepreneurs are facing, include difficulties in getting customers and building business reputations (Basu, 2011). Immigrant entrepreneurs also face challenges in cultural and leadership aspects (Chang et al., 2011). In many cases, immigrant entrepreneurs are not familiar with the host country

environment. In addition, many immigrants lack knowledge of the host country language. Lack of market knowledge can significantly contribute to the failures of business owners (Basu, 2011). Thus, the challenges faced by immigrant business owners is an indirect prevention to economic growth for the country and job creation.

Native Indian-owned small businesses. Aboriginal people in Canada face more disadvantages than do non-Aboriginal people (Todd, 2012). Similarly, in Australia, indigenous Australian business owners also face many social and economic disadvantages (Wood & Davidson, 2011). In both countries, Aboriginal people have significantly lower life expectancies compared to other groups. Indigenous entrepreneurs are ethnic minority entrepreneurs (Wood & Davidson, 2011). For example, in Australia, indigenous entrepreneurs are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Wood & Davidson, 2011). Wood and Davidson (2011) stated indigenous Aboriginal entrepreneurs have important implications for the national economy in Australia.

Despite the important contributions, indigenous entrepreneurs face several obstacles including discrimination, lack of formal education, lack of access to finance, and exclusion from networks (Wood & Davidson, 2011). Ethnic minority business owners choose to startup businesses because of the limited opportunities in the job market (Wood & Davidson, 2011). The finding is consistent with Todd (2012) in which Aboriginal people lack education and employment opportunities. In Canada and Australia, the employment rates for Aboriginal people are much lower than for non-Aboriginal people (Todd, 2012; Wood & Davidson, 2011). Another reason which Aboriginal people become entrepreneurs is to have a better quality of life, overcome

poverty, enhance personal status, and obtain economic independence (Wood & Davidson, 2011).

Internal (Controllable) Factors

In the previous studies, researchers identified several internal factors, which have a significant impact on the performance of small businesses. Business owners can influence the factors for success. Thus, internal factors are under the control of the business owners. The following controllable factors discussed in the section are (a) business planning, (b) accessing mentoring programs, (c) financial management, (d) marketing skill, (e) general management skill, and (f) use of technology.

Business planning. Hunter (2011) revealed business planning is a critical factor for small business success. Indeed, Halabí and Lussier (2014) came to a similar conclusion, which emphasizes the importance of business planning. Many small business leaders fail because the owners did not develop adequate long-term plans. Instead, the owners just keep running the businesses and only solve problems when arising (Hunter, 2011). Small business owners should prepare a comprehensive and detailed business plan to increase the chance of success. The leaders should have an idea on how much financial resource is adequate for the business.

Furthermore, cash flow is important for newly started up businesses (Hunter, 2011). Owners should project most major expenses to avoid surprises. Business owners should prepare a cash flow projection for 3 to 5 years, and plan for alternative sources of financing. Small firm owners should consider the cost of borrowing and emergency funds. However, most business owners do not have the skills to prepare a cash flow

projection (Hunter, 2011). In addition, many small business owners underestimate the initial investment. Uddin and Bose (2013) conducted a statistical analysis of the relationship between having a business plan and the success of small businesses. Uddin and Bose's study took place in Khulna City in Bangladesh. Uddin and Bose used the regression model to show a significant relationship between the business plan variable and business success. Uddin and Bose determined having a business plan could benefit not only small businesses but also all businesses. Over a long-term period, business owners with good business plans can improve the operational effectiveness and efficiency (Uddin & Bose, 2013). As a result, small firm owners should develop and implement a sound business plan for success. Moreover, Uddin and Bose suggested small business owners should use available consulting or counseling services to develop a proper business plan.

Using Mentor or Counseling Services. Many business owners have limited management experience, skills, and knowledge; consequently, the owners should use available advice from experienced mentors (Ahmad, 2012). Small business owners can attend workshops, seminars, or one-on-one mentoring programs. The services are available locally from public, private, and non-profit organizations (Ahmad, 2012). Ahmad stated the supportive programs could help especially business owners with low literacy to develop a sound business plan.

Additionally, the business owners who take advice from the experts are more likely successful (Hunter, 2011). Still, Arasti et al. (2012) showed many small business owners had limited skill expertise but were not willing to take professional advice.

Furthermore, in developing countries, many small business owners reported a lack of external support (Akbaba, 2012). As a result, Akbaba (2012) stated small businesses are more likely to fail because of limited support, which consistent with Halabí and Lussier (2014), who stated using professional advice has a positive relationship with firm performance.

Social networking. The social networking of entrepreneurs can have a significant impact on the business success. Abou-Moghli and Al-Kasasbeh (2012) defined the social network of the business owners as relationship with the surrounding environment. Using social networking, business owners can access valuable information, resources, and potential business opportunities. Indeed, as reported by Abou-Moghli and Al-Kasasbeh, people in the social network will provide inexpensive resources, which are not typically available on the market. People in the social networks can provide support to help business owners to overcome many obstacles. Social networking is a plus for entrepreneurs who want to start up businesses (Abou-Moghli & Al-Kasasbeh, 2012). Aguilar-Morales et al. (2013) showed similar findings in which formal and informal networks of the entrepreneurs are valuable because people in the network can provide support and resources to the entrepreneurs. People in the network also help the entrepreneur to identify and test business opportunities. Furthermore, entrepreneurs in the networks can update entrepreneurs with new trends and technology, which are important in the contemporary business world (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013). Additionally, Aguilar-Morales et al. stated family and friends have strong influences on entrepreneurs. Ahmad (2012) confirmed the finding by stating most entrepreneurs received advice from family.

In many countries, such as Saudi Arabia, personal networking or connections are critical to business success, and lack of connections can hinder the growth of small businesses.

Social networking is also important in human resource management practices in small businesses. Many small business owners employ family members instead of outsiders (Akbaba, 2012). Furthermore, if small business owners do decide to hire outsiders, Akbaba revealed many of owners hire employees through word-of-mouth. Therefore, without a good social network, small business owners are not able to access qualified human resources. For female entrepreneurs, family members in the social networks can help to solve conflicts between work and life (Alam et al., 2011).

General management skills. Arasti et al. (2012) found general management skills have an important implication on the success or failure of small businesses. However, many small business owners have poor management skills (Ahmad, 2012). Ahmad stated many small business owners did not have adequate training for managerial skills and market research. Many small business owners do not have necessary skills in bookkeeping, marketing, and inventory management. Furthermore, crisis management skills are important to the success of small business owners. Arasti et al. noted many failed business owners reported a lack of management skills.

Marketing skill. Marketing skills are critical for small business success. Teng et al. (2011) showed a positive relationship between marketing skills and small business performance. Some business owners recognize the importance of marketing in the business performance. Jamaican business owners stated marketing is a vital factor, which

contributes to the business success (Alam et al., 2011). Arasti et al. obtained similar findings in which lack of marketing skills can cause business failure.

A marketing plan is also vital for the success of small businesses because the plan includes a detailed road map for the owners (Akbaba, 2012). However, Akbaba (2012) reported only 58% of small business owners in the UK and New Zealand prepared marketing plans. The number of small business with a marketing plan is even lower in Turkey, in which only 12.6% of respondents had a formal marketing plan (Akbaba, 2012). In addition, small business owners only develop a marketing plan because of the requirements from external forces. The motivation is to prepare a marketing plan to comply with the banks or other financial institutional requirements (Akbaba, 2012).

Small business marketing is usually simple, informal, and haphazard (Parry, Jones, Rowley, & Kupiec-Teahan, 2012). Moreover, the level of market research is low (Akbaba, 2012). Thus, small business leaders cannot make a large impact in the competitive market (Parry et al., 2012). Parry et al. also stated small business marketing problems come from lack of resources, expertise, and strategic planning. Small business owners usually cannot conduct market research properly because of limited resources (Parry et al., 2012). Emarketing is becoming crucial for businesses. Eid and El-Gohary (2013) stated small business leaders could build competitive advantage using emarketing. Eid and El-Gohary (2013) determined more business owners are using the Internet to communicate with suppliers and customers. Thus, business managers can use emarketing to change the nature of small businesses around the world. However, small businesses

have limited resources to implement emarketing compared to large businesses (Eid & El-Gohary, 2013).

Human resource management and training. Human resources are a critical aspect of a successful business, yet many business owners have not paid enough attention to develop such resources. Investing in employee education and management skills is a significant contribution to the productivity of the business (Lyons, 2012). Thus, a good small business owner should care about employee life such as investing in education to motivate employees to work effectively. Nonetheless, some entrepreneurs view employee training as an investment, while other entrepreneurs view training as an expense (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013).

Ahmad (2012) found many small business owners do not have the ability to manage employees. Moreover, small business owners have poor human resource management skills (Arasti, et al., 2012). Arasti et al. indicated many small firms lack middle managers because of limited access to human resources. As a result, the owners have to perform more tasks. Thus, small business owners have more complex role compared to larger businesses.

Financial management. According to Ahmad (2012), Arasti et al. (2012), Gomezelj and Kušce (2013), Halabí and Lussier (2014) and Kirsten (2013), financial management is a critical factor contributing to the small business success. Good record keeping and financial control are critical factors, which influence the performance of small businesses (Halabí & Lussier, 2014). However, many small business owners still lack critical skill (Ahmad, 2012).

Moreover, Kirsten (2013) confirmed short-term financial management is important to the survival and growth of small businesses. In other words, Kirsten (2013) stated poor financial management skills have led to failure among small businesses. Thus, formal training is vital to the performance of small business (Gomezelj & Kušce, 2013; Kirsten, 2013). As small business owners directly manage the firm, the owners should have some basic understanding of record keeping, tax and legal entity compliance, working capital, forecasting future profitability, and measuring past performance (Kirsten, 2013).

Technology and innovation. Innovation and small businesses have two-way effects. On the one hand, a significant portion of national innovation comes from small businesses (Akbaba, 2012), which is consistent with Arasti et al. (2012) where the authors stated small business leaders help to promote innovation. On the other hand, business owners can contribute to the success of small businesses by using technology, in particular, Information Communications Technology (ICT), to lower costs and improve return per customer (Alam et al., 2011). Consistently, innovation and creative destruction are important forces to start-up businesses (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013). Still, many small business leaders fail to use technology to develop competitive advantage (Akbaba, 2012).

Business leaders implement technology not only to improve productivity but also to improve the quality of work life (Alam et al., 2011). Although information technology is a vital tool for modern business success, many small business owners do not use computers (Akbaba, 2012). Akbaba (2012) identified 67.81% of Turkish small business

owners and 59% of small business owners in the United Kingdom and New Zealand do not use computers (Akbaba, 2012). Indeed, many owners that failm did not utilize Internet technology in the businesses (Halabí & Lussier, 2014). However, Alam et al. (2011) found a weak relationship between using technology and the success of female business owners in Malaysia. Alam et al.'s finding is conflicting with other studies such as Akbaba (2012) or Ahmad and Pinedo Cuenca (2013) that emphasized the importance of technology in small business performance. However, not all types of businesses will benefit from using technology.

Business leaders can use the enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to improve business competitiveness. With the ERP system, business leaders have solved the problem of disintegration among current business modules such as accounting, human resource management, marketing, customer relationship management, and other business functions. The integrated system can process large amounts of data accurately. Many large size businesses have ERP systems. Recently, Ahmad and Pinedo Cuenca (2013) identified many small- and medium-size business leaders are aware of the benefit of an ERP system. However, small and medium size business owners failed to to utilize the value of ERP because of the complex and costly process of implementing such a system (Ahmad & Pinedo Cuenca, 2013). The complexity of implementing an ERP system includes the configuration or customization of the system along with staff training (Ahmad & Pinedo Cuenca, 2013).

Internationalization. Expanding internationally is a trend for small- and medium-size businesses (Mura & Buleca, 2014). To adapt to the rapidly changing

environment, small business leaders have decided to expand across borders. Going global is a way for small businesses to gain more customers, revenue, and profits (Suh & Kim, 2014). Furthermore, Suh and Kim (2014) showed internationalization could improve the firms' competitiveness, and recover the marketing and R&D expenditures. Thus, the relationship between internationalization and the firms' performance is positive. The knowledge of the foreign market is an important factor, which contributes to the success of internationalized small businesses (Suh & Kim, 2014). Table 3 includes a summary of major factors that impact the success or failure of small businesses from Teng et al. (2011).

Table 3

Success and Failure Factors for Small Businesses

Factors	Descriptions
(1) Capital (capt)	Businesses that start undercapitalized have a greater chance of failure than firms that start with adequate capital
(2) Record keeping and financial control (rkfc)	Businesses that do not keep updated and accurate records and do not use adequate financial controls have a greater chance of failure than firms that do
(3) Industry experience (inex)	Businesses managed by people without prior industry experience have a greater chance of failure than firms managed by people with prior industry experience
(4) Management experience (maex)	Businesses managed by people without prior management experience have a greater chance of failure than firms managed by people with prior management experience
(5) Planning (plan)	Businesses that do not develop specific business plans have a greater chance of failure than firms that do
(6) Professional advisors (prad)	Businesses that do not use professional advisors have a greater chance of failure than firms using professional advisors. A more recent source of professional advisors is venture capitalists
(7) Education (educ)	People without university education who start a business have a greater chance of failure than people with one or more years of university education
(8) Staffing (staff)	Businesses that cannot attract and retain quality employees have a greater chance of failure than firms that can

(table continues)

Factors	Descriptions
(9) Product/service timing (psti)	Businesses that select products/services that are too new or too old have a greater chance of failure than firms that select products/services that are in the growth stage
(10) Economic timing (ecti)	Businesses that start during a recession have a greater chance of failure than firms that start during expansion periods
(11) Age (age)	Younger people who start a business have a greater chance of failure than older people starting a business
(12) Partners (part)	A business started by one person has a greater chance of failure than a firm started by more than one person
(13) Parents (pent)	Business owners whose parents did not own a business have a greater chance of failure than owners whose parents did own a business
(14) Minority (mior)	Business owners who are ethnic minorities have a greater chance of failure than non-minorities
(15) Marketing (mrkt)	Business owners without marketing skills have a greater chance of failure than owners with marketing skills
(16) Good customer relations (rela)	Businesses with not-so-good customers' relations have a higher chance of failure than those with good customer relations
(17) Niches market (Niche)	Businesses without a niche market will have a higher chance of failure than those with a niche market
(18) High cost of doing business (cost)	Business with high costs of doing business have a higher chance of failure than those with lower costs of doing business
(19) Ability to develop and sustain technology edge (tech)	Businesses that have the ability to develop and sustain their technology edge will have a better chance of success than those without the ability

(table continues)

Factors	Descriptions
(20) Competition (Compete)	Businesses with strong competition from competitors will have a higher chance of failure than those without/less competition
(21) Strong top leadership (Lead)	Businesses with strong top leadership will have a higher chance of success than those without strong leadership
(22) Significant “people bonding” in firm (PeoBond)	Businesses with significant “people bonding” will have a higher chance of success than those without “people bonding”
(23) Strong organizational capability (Org Cap)	Businesses with strong organizational capability will have a higher chance of success than those without strong organizational capability
(24) Access to broad support and resources (Broad Access)	Businesses with good access to a broad range of support and resources will have a higher chance of success than those without good access
(25) Local knowledge (LKnow)	Businesses with good local knowledge of the local business environment will have a higher chance of success than those without good local knowledge
(26) Government policy (govt)	Existence of good government policies will increase the chance of businesses succeeding than without good government policies

Note. Teng et al. (2011) have developed the table to summarize all the factors, which influence the success of small businesses. Teng et al. (2011) synthesized the factors from various studies, which include the firms and its owner characteristics, the internal and external factors. Adapted from “A Success Versus Failure Prediction Model for Small Businesses in Singapore” by H. S. S. Teng, G. S. Bhatia, and S. Anwar, 2011, *American Journal of Business*, 26(1), 50–64. Copyright 2011 by Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Permission to use the table is in Appendix C.

External (Uncontrollable) Factors

In the following section, I provide information on the factors, which are beyond the control of the business owners. The external factors are accession to resources, the macroeconomic environment, the tax system, government policies, and regulations. Small business owners cannot make changes to the factors but rather develop strategies to adapt to the environment.

Access to resources. Small business leaders have problems accessing financial resources (Ahmad, 2012). External finances are usually not available to small businesses, even if previous researchers have found a positive relationship between the amount of start-up capital and business success (Ahmad, 2012). Most of the respondents (90.96%) said accessing financial resources is the main problem (Ahmad, 2012). Ahmad (2012) expanded on the idea even if business owners were able to get credit from financial institutions, the interest rate is usually high. Therefore, many business owners have to use personal savings to finance the start-up businesses. Other important financial sources for small business owners are from family or friends (Ahmad, 2012). Akbaba (2012) confirmed similar findings in which the business owners have to use personal funding or family members. Ahmad's and Akbaba's findings are consistent with the resource based theory.

Accessing traditional financing is hard for small business owners because new small businesses have fewer assets and low profits during the first few years of operation (Gale & Brown, 2013). Crowdfunding is a new alternative for a new entrepreneur to access financial resources. Small business owners can raise start-up finances from a large

audience of donors through such funding (Aitamurto, 2011). By using crowdfunding, outsider equity can appear more important for start-up businesses in the future (Gale & Brown, 2013).

Besides financial capital, accessing qualified human capital is also challenging for small business owners (Ahmad, 2012). Many employees prefer to work for the government because of a low workload and higher pay (Ahmad, 2012). Other employees prefer to work for larger enterprises for similar reasons. Thus, small business owners have fewer options regarding human resources compared to larger firms (Sheehan, 2014). The employee turnover is high for small businesses; thus, the employee training costs for small businesses can also increase (Ahmad, 2012). Small business owners cannot obtain information about opportunities, threats, and market trends with limited resources. Consequently, limited resources restrict the growth potential. To overcome the problem of inadequate resources, Akbaba (2012) suggested small business owners should get together in networks or associations to support each other.

Social capital. Social capital includes the resources available through the business owners' network (Stam, Arzlanian, & Elfring, 2014). The resources are financial or human. Small business owners can use social capital to overcome the difficulties in accessing traditional resources. In other words, social capital can substitute other sources of finance or human resources. Social capital has a direct relationship with the performance of small businesses (Stam et al., 2014). Furthermore, Azmat and Zutshi (2012a) showed the relationship between the owners and the surrounding network affects the ability to obtain social capital. Thus, owners need to find a way to build strong

relationships with people surrounding the businesses. Business owners can use CSR to build relationships and trust with stakeholders. For example, many small business owners implement CSR to build relationships, which will have an impact on social capital (Azmat & Zutshi, 2012a).

For small business owners, trust is more important than formal contract (Azmat & Zutshi, 2012a), a finding which is consistent across various studies. Todd (2012) also found the significant role of trust in obtaining social capital. The relationships of reciprocity and trust are a form of social capital, which potentially benefits small business owners (Todd, 2012). Similarly, share of value and trust is important for having social capital (Li, Wang, Huang, & Bai, 2013). However, social capital has some disadvantages. Using social capital puts restrictions on the decision making of the entrepreneurs because a strong tie to the community is a liability to the entrepreneurs (Li et al., 2013).

The natural environment. Natural disaster can cause economic losses and business disruptions for small businesses (Schrank, Marshall, Hall-Phillips, Wiatt, & Jones, 2013). Schrank et al. (2013) stated small businesses are vulnerable. In addition, small firms are less stable compared to large businesses. For example, the results of Hurricane Katrina caused a challenging problem for small businesses. Small business owners struggled to recover from such a natural disaster. Furthermore, some businesses cannot survive after a disaster because the disaster caused economic downturns and family problems for business owners (Schrank et al., 2013).

The business and macroeconomics environment. Strong competition is a major problem for small businesses (Ahmad, 2012). Small business leaders struggle to compete

with large companies in the market (Parry et al., 2012). Small businesses are not competitive compared to large businesses because small businesses lack resources, brand image, and international reputation (Parry et al., 2012). In addition, the success or failure of small business depends on the industry. For example, retail industry leaders tend to have higher failure rates compared to other industries (Halabí & Lussier, 2014). One possible explanation is the retail industry is more competitive compared to other industries.

Unstable economic conditions can have a great impact on the small business. During economic downturns, demand shrinks significantly (Lyons, 2012), as such circumstances include obstacles to the growth of small businesses. For example, the economic crisis in 2008 and 2009 decreased the business startup rate. Balasubramanyan and Coulson (2013) showed the relationship between the housing market and a business startup. Usually, business owners use personal property such as houses to secure loans. According to Balasubramanyan and Coulson (2013), during the crisis, housing prices dropped. As a result, small business owners could not easily obtain adequate financial resources (Balasubramanyan & Coulson, 2013). Large business managers do not encounter the similar financing problems because the managers do not depend much on using houses as loan collateral as much as small businesses (Balasubramanyan & Coulson, 2013). Others macroeconomic factors which influence the success or failure of small businesses include level of industrial activity, money supply, Gross National Product (GNP), and economic openness rate (Salman et al., 2011). Furthermore, Salman et al. (2011) showed globalization, technological change, investment liberalization, and

privatization have important implications for small businesses. Imports, exports, and the exchange rate also affect small businesses. For example, low currency value can improve competitiveness and business profits (Salman et al., 2011).

The governments' regulatory and tax issues. Tax systems and business regulations are the obstacles for small business in many countries (Ahmad, 2012). Ahmad also indicated inadequate government support is another problem for small businesses. Especially in the developing countries, corruption adds significantly to obstacles, which small business owners face. Unfriendly government is yet another problem for small businesses. In many cases, the government does not support small businesses. Small business owners do not have access to important market information, which limits the growth. Although many government officials have tried to support small businesses, many failed because specific needs and characteristics of small businesses were not taken into consideration (Akbaba, 2012).

The impact of the external environment on small business varies across countries. In Turkey, government regulations, unstable national conditions, and low customer demand are the major obstacles for small business (Akbaba, 2012). However, in the United Kingdom and New Zealand, the situation is slightly different; small business owners showed major obstacles such as high competition. Shukla and Shukla (2014) expressed the U.S. federal and state governments were trying to create a supportive environment for small business to grow. Government officials at all levels understand the contribution of small businesses to national economic growth. The Small Business Survival Index (SBSI) prepared by staff personal of the Small Business and

Entrepreneurship Council (SBE Council) helped to measure the business environment across different states in the United States. SBE Council listed 21 government-related factors, which influence the business environment (Shukla & Shukla, 2014). Table 4 lists the factors.

Table 4

Twenty-One Measures of the Small Business Survival Index (SBSI)

Factors	Factors	Factors
1) state's top personal income tax rate,	8) whether or not the state imposes an alternative minimum tax on corporations,	13) consumption-based taxes (i.e., sales, gross receipts, and excise taxes),
2) state's top individual capital gains tax rate,	9) whether or not the state's personal income tax brackets are indexed for inflation,	14) whether or not the state imposes a death tax,
3) state's top tax rate on dividends and interest,	10) the progressivity of the state's personal income tax brackets,	15) unemployment taxes,
4) state's top corporate income tax rate,	11) the progressivity of the state's corporate income tax brackets,	16) whether or not the state has a tax limitation mechanism,
5) state's top corporate capital gains tax rate,	12) property taxes,	17) whether or not the state imposes an Internet access tax,
6) any added income tax on S-Corporations,		18) "Amazon" taxes,
7) whether or not the state imposes an alternative minimum tax on individuals		19) gas tax,
		20) diesel tax, and
		21) wireless taxes

Note. The table lists some important government related factors, which influence the ability to survive of small businesses by Shukla and Shukla (2014). The measurements include various personal income taxes, corporate taxes, and other sales taxes. Adapted from "Small Business Survival Index Traction And Movement In Rankings Of States (2000-2013)" by P. K. Shukla and M. P. Shukla, 2014, *Journal of Business & Economics Research (Online)*, 12(2).

Small Restaurant Service Business

Small restaurant owners significantly contribute to the job creation and social stabilization (Chen & Elston, 2013). Nevertheless, the restaurant failure rate is high. Ninety percent of new small restaurant business owners fail within the first year of operation (Parsa et al., 2015). Restaurant business owners share many similar experiences with other small business owners. The reasons for high failure rate include lack of education and training, unable to access formal financial resources, limited management skill, and poor location (Parsa et al. 2015).

Small ethnic restaurants. Ethnic restaurant owners offer different foods and experience from traditional restaurants of host countries (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015). Moreover, ethnic restaurant owners serve the growing immigrant population. Ethnic restaurants include Italian, Mexican, Chinese, Indian, Korean, and Thai. Sometimes, the consumers perceive Chinese, Italian and Mexican as mainstream foods because of wide availability and familiarity. Customers of ethnic restaurants are well-educated urban professional with above average income (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015).

Agarwal and Dahm (2015) showed many ethnic restaurants are independent. Independent restaurants are more likely to fail than franchise or chain of restaurants. Franchise restaurant owners usually have more resource, good organization structures, well-known brand, better training and competitive location. Franchise restaurants also have consistent food quality because of using standardize recipes. Customers of independent restaurants usually care more about the service than food quality.

The restaurants' and the owners' characteristics. Each restaurant owner has a different motivation to enter the restaurant business. However, pursuing autonomy and living a desirable lifestyle are the main reasons for becoming restaurant business owners in many developed economies such as Canada, the US, Australia, and New Zealand (Chen & Elston, 2013). Some characteristics of the owners affect the restaurant performance such as attitude, expectation, skills, knowledge, control, and ambition. Moreover, male owners of small restaurants are more likely to stay in business and earn more profit than female owners (Parsa et al., 2015).

For the small restaurant business, size and type of operation, competition, and restaurant concept or segment are the main factors contributing to the success or failure of restaurant business owners (Parsa et al., 2015). Competition in the restaurant business is high and lead to business failure, especially at the downtown location. Agarwal and Dahm (2015) shared similar finding in which the high density of restaurant in an area will cause higher failure rate. In addition, the age of the restaurant has an inverse relationship with the failure rate.

Additional, the ages of the population in the neighborhood area also affect the failure rate of small restaurant businesses (Parsa et al., 2015). Restaurant failure rate tends to be low in the area where many young adults from 18 to 24-year-old resides. Also, low-income and middle-income families do support small restaurant businesses. Restaurant in the area with middle and low-income families have the lowest failure rate. Furthermore, restaurant failure rates have a positive relationship with the local unemployment rate (Parsa et al., 2015).

Chen and Elston (2013) reported the main contributing factors to the success of the restaurant business include hard work, honesty, and good customer service. Agarwal and Dahm (2015) added other successful factors such as good restaurant concept and marketing strategy. However, small restaurant business owners do not have good food-quality control, cannot manage rapid business growth and lack of customer satisfaction (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015). Moreover, most of the business owners have no business plan and lack of financial management knowledge (Parsa et al., 2015). Work-life balance is important to many successful restaurant owners (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015). However, many restaurant owners failed because of pressure from family, and unable attain work and life balance.

Experience and educational level of the restaurant owners. In general, the educational level of restaurant business owners is low. For example, in China, only 4.6 percent of business owners have some college-level education. Moreover, less than one percent of the owners has formal training in restaurant operations (Chen & Elston, 2013). Regarding work experience, most of the restaurant business owners have worked at another restaurant before starting a restaurant (Chen & Elston, 2013). Both Agarwal and Dahm (2015) and Parsa et al. (2015) showed a direct relationship between the owner education, work experience, and the business performance.

Accessing resources for small restaurant business. Most of the restaurant owners started with small amount of investment. The financial resources mostly come from personal savings, families, and friends. Only 3.8 percent can get loans from financial institutions (Chen & Elston, 2013). Small business owners found difficulty in

obtaining a formal bank loan (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015). Restaurant business owners with bank loans are more likely become successful. Larger size restaurants have lower failure rate because the owners have more financial resource and extensive experience. Since restaurant owners have limited resource, accessing high-quality labor is a challenge. Regarding human resource practice, most of the restaurant hire family member (Chen & Elston, 2013). Support from family members is important to the success of small ethnic restaurant (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015). Other uncontrollable factors affecting the success or failure of small restaurant business include economic condition, and government regulation (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015).

The main limitation regarding previous research is no case study on small business exists, particularly on the ethnic restaurant service industry in Canada. As a result, in the study, I will fill in the literature gap by conducting a multiple three cases study on small ethnic restaurant service businesses in Canada. The potential finding of the study includes some business owner characteristics as well as internal and external factors. For example, the success of small businesses can come from having adequate resources, good management, and experienced business owners. However, the reasons for business failure include poor management skills in experienced business owners and inadequate resources. Therefore, I can provide suggestions to policy makers to improve business management skills for small business owners and provide the businesses with adequate resources. Thus, the rate of small business success can increase. I can contribute the findings of the study to the body of knowledge on success factors for small businesses in Canada.

Transition

In section 1, I provided an overview of small businesses, particularly the problems that small businesses encounter. Small business is an important component of any national economy. Small business outputs account for a significant portion of the national GDP and are the main source of job creation. Still, the failure rate among small businesses is high (Gill & Biger, 2012). Business leaders, who understand the factors, which cause the businesses to succeed or fail, can formulate better strategies. Thus, small business leaders can use the study results to improve the current practices and lead to better performance.

Section 2 included the research process. More specifically, I explained in detail the research methodology, the role of the researcher, the participant, data collection and analysis, and other related information. Then, I described my process of conducting a multi-case study of three small ethnic restaurant businesses in Canada. The factors, which influence the success or failure, have received exploration. A case study is relevant in answering the how and why questions regarding business success or failure. Section 3 included the results of the study.

Section 2: The Project

Small businesses contribute significantly to the national economy. Additionally, small businesses are the major sources of job creation in the country (Cant, 2012). However, the failure rates among small businesses are high. In Canada, on average 125,000 small businesses fail annually (Hunter & Kazakoff, 2012). Understanding the factors, which cause success or failure among small businesses, is vital to improve the survival rate. In section 2, I explained the research methodology. The major topics in section two include the role of the researcher, the research method, research design, the participants, and ethical consideration in research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore strategies small ethnic restaurant business owners use to remain operable beyond 7 years. The population for this study was small ethnic restaurant business owners in British Columbia, Canada. This population was appropriate for the study because small ethnic restaurant owners in British Columbia might reflect all small ethnic restaurant owners across Canada. The result of the study is a guidance for small business owners or potential business owners in the ethnic restaurant service industry to improve the business success rate. The small business owners might learn from successful business owners and apply the knowledge to business practices. As a result, the performance of small business owners might improve, and the unemployment rate may decrease. Furthermore, because small businesses owners contribute significantly to the national GDP, successful small businesses positively influence the national economy. As a result, living standards of residents might improve.

Role of the Researcher

My role as a researcher was to collect data and analyze the data from the research participants. Researchers from outside of the organizations can ensure objectivity of the research (Unluer, 2012). As I am an outsider of all the cases and do not belong to the business organizations, I can ensure the objectivity of the research. Awareness of personal biases and ethical issues is a way to avoid the research bias. I tried not to influence the research subjects' response. Additionally, having a neutral standpoint when analyzing the responses is critical to enhance the research quality (Unluer, 2012).

Furthermore, the proposal for this study received approval by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the data collection process took place. The IRB ensured the research complies with ethical standards and the three fundamental ethical principles in the Belmont Report. The Belmont Report protocol has included a solid foundation for ethical research involving human subjects (McLaughlin & Ifaro-Velcamp, 2015). The idea of the report was to protect vulnerable people who have limited capacity for self-determination such as children under the age of majority, the elderly, prisoners, or people with mental health problems (McLaughlin & Ifaro-Velcamp, 2015).

The three Belmont principles are respect-for-persons, justice, and beneficence (Brakewood & Poldrack, 2013). Respect-for-persons involves protecting the autonomy of the human subjects in the study. The human should fully agree to participate in the research. All researchers should use informed consent to ensure the research participants understand the scope, costs, and benefits of being in the study (McLaughlin & Ifaro-

Velcamp, 2015). Justice is the idea regarding fair and equal treatment to everyone. Lastly, beneficence is the idea of minimizing the harm and maximizing the benefit to the human subjects of the study (Brakewood & Poldrack, 2013). Complying with the Belmont Report's ethical principles is a way to ensure the research is ethical (Wester, 2011).

For the qualitative case study, I had to collect data from at least two main sources. I initially collected data from the face-to-face semistructured interviews with small business owners. Appendix A includes the interview questions. Interviewing is an important way of obtaining information in qualitative research study (Rowley, 2012). Secondly, I examined the business physical artifacts. From the perspective of Yin (2014), researchers use multiple sources of data to ensure the quality of the research through triangulation. According to Barratt, Choi, and Li (2011), researchers use multiple data sources as a cross-reference helps to eliminate bias in each case or each source. After collecting the data, I had to organize the data in forms, which facilitate the analyzing process. For example, I recorded, transcribed, and coded the interviews. In the analysis phase, I used pen and paper to analyze the participants' responses. I identified major themes from the collected data. My last task was to write up the results of the study.

Participants

Selecting the participants was a critical task in the study. For this study, I used purposive sampling to get access to three successful small ethnic restaurant service owners. Three-cases was an appropriate number in the study because the number of cases was both small and multiple. Barratt et al. (2011) noted with a small number of cases, the

researcher could explore the case in more detail. Alternatively, Barratt et al. also stated multi-case study could ensure external validity. Yin (2012) suggested researchers should collect data from multiple sources for case study to ensure rigorous research quality. I randomly selected and interviewed three owners of ethnic restaurant businesses in British Columbia, Canada. The participants' businesses needed to exist for at least 7 years under current ownership to be considered successful and a participant in the study. Moreover, the small ethnic restaurant service businesses should include fewer than 100 employees (IC, 2013b). I collected data from interviews of the participants and exploration of physical artifacts using *within-method* triangulation. *Within-method* triangulation means including two or more data sources (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). Thus, from the perspective of Azulai & Rankin (2012), researchers can use *within-method* triangulation to improve the quality of a research study.

To develop a working relationship with the participants, I took the following steps:

- I introduced the research project and myself orally and in written form.
- I explained the purpose and the scope of the study.
- I ensured the participants that I would keep all the collected information confidential.
- I asked for permission to interview the owners, record the interview, and examine some physical artifacts.

Each business owner signed a consent form, which allowed me to conduct research on the businesses. I began the data collection process after getting approval from

Walden University's IRB (Approval No. 10-08-15-0358760). The interviews took place at the participants' premises.

I collected some demographic information about the participants and general information regarding the businesses (origin of the foods, restaurant hours, years of operation, restaurant capacity, and number of employees) before the interviews. Then, the participants answered the prepared strategy questions. During the semistructured interview, I asked further questions to collect more data based on participant responses. Each interview was about 20 to 30 minutes. I recorded and transcribed all the interviews for analysis. The participants also had an opportunity to clarify information during the member-checking process.

Research Method and Design

Choosing an appropriate research method and research design is critical in a study. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2010) claim that researchers derive good research methodology and design from the research question. Three methods exist in management research are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Jogulu & Pansiri, 2011). According to Parylo (2012), quantitative research reflects the post-positivist view. Furthermore, quantitative researchers address numerical data to test or verify the hypothesis using statistical procedures (Parylo, 2012). Qualitative researchers, however, address socially constructed and advocacy/participatory views (Parylo, 2012). Some researchers use qualitative methodology with nonnumerical data such as interviews, observations, focus groups, documents analysis, and field notes. Mixed-methods research

is the last method, the combination of the other two methods. A mixed-methods approach is appropriate with a pragmatic worldview.

Research Method

Research method is the way researchers acquire knowledge about the world (Khan, 2014). Qualitative research was the most appropriate methodology for the study because of the explorative nature of the research question (Khan, 2014). The quantitative method is to test the relationship among variables by testing hypotheses (Balkin, 2014). However, I did not make any predictions about the factors influence the success of small businesses. Therefore, no hypothesis received testing in the research. Thus, both quantitative and mixed methods were not relevant. The only appropriate methodology for the study was qualitative.

According to Fisher and Stenner (2011), qualitative research is a valuable and legitimate research method, which is gaining respect among scholars. Indeed, researchers use qualitative research to get a generalizable understanding of the various aspects of the phenomenon and to answer the how and why questions. An explorative study is relevant because the research question is about an unstructured research problem (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010). The idea is consistent with Thomas and Magilvy (2011), in which qualitative research builds knowledge by exploring a specific phenomenon or experience. Thus, researchers apply qualitative research to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon or experience (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Research Design

Parylo (2012) determined several major designs for qualitative research include phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case study, and narrative analysis. Researchers use phenomenological research to understand the lived experience of individuals and the interactions with the external environment (Lien et al., 2014). Similarly, researchers use narrative analysis to understand the individual experience (Wolgemuth, 2014). The two methods are not appropriate, for the goal of the study is to understand the business organization, which is a bounded case. Ethnography was also not relevant because researchers use ethnography design to study human behavior within the context of culture (Robinson, 2013). Finally, grounded theory is popular in the doctor of philosophy research. Therefore, grounded theory is more appropriate for a doctor of philosophy study rather than for a professional Doctorate of Business Administration study (Idrees, Vasconcelos, & Cox, 2011).

Case study was the best choice of design for the study because the purpose of the study is to explore how and why small businesses become successful (Yin, 2014). Barratt et al. (2011) stated case study is an empirical research method, which mainly uses contextually rich data from bounded real-world cases to study a particular phenomenon in detail. In addition, case study design is appropriate for management and organizational studies (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). De Massis and Kotlar (2014) also showed case study is an in-depth study of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life settings (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Case study is popular among the Doctor of Business Administration projects (Miller & Cameron, 2011). I collected data from the cases until

reaching the data saturation point. I will use interviews, and examination of documents or physical artifacts until saturation occurs. Data saturation point will occur when no new information emerges (Arasti et al., 2012).

Population and Sampling

The population for the study included small ethnic restaurant businesses in British Columbia, Canada. Ethnic restaurant owners provide food from ethnic minority community such as Korean, Indian, or Italian (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015). In the study, I used a purposeful sampling method. I selected three owners of small ethnic restaurant businesses whose businesses have been operating for more than 7 years. Purposeful sampling is a popular sampling method in qualitative research (Palinkas et al., 2013). Researchers use purposeful sampling method to study the cases with rich information content (Duan et al., 2014). Palinkas et al. (2013) noted the purposeful sampling method is the most effective use of limited resources. The small ethnic restaurant businesses came from the Greater Vancouver Region, British Columbia in Canada. The successful businesses should have existed for more than 7 years under current ownership. Moreover, the businesses should have less than 100 employees to consider small business by Industry Canada (IC, 2013a).

Toledo-López et al. (2012) considered the ability to survive as a successful factor for small businesses. Most small businesses failed within 7 years (IC, 2013a). Thus, I chose the ethnic restaurant businesses that have existed for more than 7 years. Choosing a good number of cases is critical for the study to ensure both validity and detail of analysis (Barratt et al., 2011). Three cases were reasonable for the study because I could explore

the cases in detail and ensure generalization of the study results. Data saturation is the point where new information is just a repetition of previously found information (Kolb, 2012). For most of the qualitative research, five to 30 participants are enough for achieving data saturation (Dworkin, 2012). Furthermore, Rowley (2012) suggested 12 interviews comprise a good number for new researchers. However, in the study, I used multiple data sources, so interviewing three business owners was appropriate to provide enough data.

After my proposal was approved, I contacted the business owners and introduced the research project. Second, I obtained written consent from the business owners to conduct a study on the businesses including interviews of the owners, in addition to examination of the business' physical artifacts. I performed the interviews at the participants' premises. Third, after the participants signed the consent forms, I proceeded to the data collection phase which involved conducting interviews and examining physical artifacts. During the interviews, I performed member-checking by summarizing the interview information for the participants to clarify the accuracy. Finally, I followed up by sending thank you letters to the participants.

Ethical Research

Protecting the participants is important in ensuring ethical research (Wester, 2011). I ensured minimal risk to the research participants. I have completed the training for Protecting Human Subject Research Participants by the National Institutes of Health Training on Human Participants. For the doctoral study, I obtained approval to conduct the research from Walden University's IRB, which needs to approve research involving

human subjects to ensure compliance with the guidelines for ethical research. Blee and Currier (2011) indicated researchers should ensure ethical for research on human subjects. I analyzed the data collected from the study to help expand further understanding of success or failure factors for small businesses in Canada. I will keep all the collected data confidential. Connelly (2014) suggested researchers should keep research data confidential. I will not use the data for any other purpose outside the scope of the study. Getting IRB approval and keeping the research data confidential are vital steps in helping to ensure appropriate protection of the study participants.

I explained the research project to the participants before collecting data. Furthermore, I answered the researcher participants' questions, if any, regarding the project. The research participants had the right to understand the potential cost and benefit of the research process (Wester, 2011). Therefore, I obtained the letters of consent to use the provided information in the doctoral study from the research participants. The participants should know the right of withdrawal from the study at any time (Connelly, 2014). Furthermore, the participants had the right to review all the collected data that they provided such as recordings of interviews and the transcribed documents. All of the participants' identities are protected by using acronyms. Grossoehme (2014) indicated protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the research participants means readers cannot determine the participants from the study. I did not mention any names of the individual or organization in the study. I protected personal identifiers of the interviewees by using acronyms rather than actual names. I will keep the data collected from the research project for 5 years. After 5-years period, I will destroy all the collected data.

Data Collection Instruments

Xu and Storr (2012) noted one of the data collection instruments in qualitative research is the researcher. Pezalla, Pettigrew, and Miller-Day, (2012) noted that the researcher is the active respondent to collect data in the research process. Therefore, I collected the study data by myself. Connelly (2014) stated researchers should carefully develop the research procedure to avoid deception to the research participants. Several ways to collect data for a qualitative study include interviews, observations, focus groups, document analysis, and field notes (Parylo, 2012). Additionally, according to Yin (2014), a researcher can use the following sources of evidence in case study research documentation: archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts.

Furthermore, implementing a triangulation strategy is critical for ensuring the quality of the research (Azulai & Rankin, 2012). In other words, triangulation is the use of multiple data sources to improve reliability of the data (Barratt et al., 2011). Two types of triangulation are *across-method* and *within-method* (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). Across method is about having two different methods in a study such as qualitative and quantitative. However, within-method is about having multiple sources of data within a research method. In this study, I used multiple instruments to collect data: the semistructured interview, exploration of the physical artifacts. I carefully reviewed the research instruments to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected. During the interview, I asked clarification as needed. Before the research began, I asked for consent from the research participants and then used face-to-face semistructured interviews to

collect data. Appendix A includes the interview questions. I recorded the interview with the permission of the interviewees. In the next step, I examined some physical artifacts related to the businesses such as menus, websites, or social media pages.

Data Collection Technique

According to Rowley (2012) interview is a popular procedure to collect data for qualitative research. Indeed, researchers use interviews to collect factual data or gain insightful understanding of opinions, attitudes, experiences, processes, behaviours, or predictions. Face-to-face interview is still a dominant way to collect quantitative data (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). The advantage of face-to-face interviews is researchers can capture the social cues from the interviews (Vogl, 2013). Moreover, from the cues, researchers can develop trust in the interviewees. The social cues include non-verbal communication, voice, intonation, and body language. Therefore, researchers can collect rich information from the interviews (Vogl, 2013).

The disadvantages, according to Vogl (2013), are the interviewers may influence the response of the interviewees; thus, interviewer could cause distortions in the interview results. However, being aware of the personal bias is a solution to avoid distortion of the interview result (Opdenakker, 2006). According to Rowley (2012), semistructured interviews are the most popular with approximately six to 12 prepared questions. Follow up questions is necessary because the interview is semistructured. Compared to an alternative, the questionnaire, interviewing is easier. Moreover, Rowley, (2012) stated that the researchers do not need to have significant prior knowledge of the topic. In this study, I will explore the unknown factors contribute to the success or failure

of small businesses. Thus, interviewing is an appropriate method. Rowley suggested that new researchers should conduct interviews for approximately 30 minutes each.

According to Roy et al. (2015), and Yin (2014) three cases should be enough for a multi-case study to reach data saturation.

Qualitative interviews is the preference method to collect indepth understanding of the research participant experiences and perspectives (Merry et al., 2011). Moreover, semistructured interview is popular among many qualitative researchers (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). Good interview questions are critical to collect high quality data for the study. The questions should appear well organized and avoid *yes* or *no* questions (Rowley, 2012). Therefore, I will ensure the interview questions are open-ended and are able to capture rich quality data before conducting the actual interviews. I will also clarify the response with the research participants during the interview. I will ask the interviewee the prepared questions listed in Appendix A and follow-up with more relevant questions depending on the participants' answers. Additionally, according to Rowley (2012), a self-introduction and introducing the study is a good practice for the researcher because a good introduction will create a friendly atmosphere for the interview to take place.

Merry et al. (2011) and Rowley (2012) indicated researchers must ensure the confidential of the interview data. Furthermore, the researcher must ask for permission to record the interview. In addition, the interviewees have the right to decide whether to answer any specific questions (Rowley, 2012). After the interview, I transcribed the interviews. I ensured the information provided was accurate by using member checking.

According to Harvey (2015), member checking is the process of asking the researcher participant to review the response to ensure high quality data. Another term for the same process is member validation (Harvey, 2015). Moreover, by ensuring confidentiality, the interviewee will feel more open to sharing stories. As a result, I can collect useful information for the doctoral study.

I implemented data triangulation in this study. Azulai and Rankin (2012) suggested data triangulation as a way to improve the quality of research study. I examined the available business physical artifacts including website information. Examination of the physical artifacts is a way to access data, which is not available in the interview (Malagon-Maldonado, 2014). I collected and examined the business physical artifacts if available and use the data in the analysis phase. The multiple data sources may help to improve the quality of the study result (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Yin, 2014). I can look at the cases from multiple dimensions, which ensure a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the business success or failure. Furthermore, such a procedure is a cross reference of the collected information and helps to eliminate bias.

Data Organization Technique

In the section below, I will discuss my data organization technique, a critical step before analyzing the data. I used MS Word to create a log of my research progress. I kept track all the collected data such as recording of interviews, collected documents, and notes. I stored physical data in a secured locked cabinet. I recorded the interview by phone and transcribe into text documents. I also stored the data electronically on my

personal computer with a copy on the cloud drive. Cloud storage is a new technology where data are stored on a storage space on the Internet (Yalamarathi, Hephzibah, & Seelam, 2014). By keeping a backup of the data file on the cloud drive, I made sure to retain the data in case my personal computer breaks down. To protect the safety of the data, I will encrypt the data before transferring to the cloud drive (Wilcox et al., 2012). In other words, the data were password protected. Ensuring data privacy and confidentiality is critical (Connelly, 2014; Grossoehme, 2014). Walden University requires keeping research data for at least 5 years. Therefore, all the data will receive disposal after 5 years. Furthermore, I used Zotero software to help me manage all the references.

Data Analysis

Triangulation means collecting data from multiple sources to ensure consistency in response (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, triangulation is for eliminating bias and improves the research quality (Azulai & Rankin, 2012; Barratt et al., 2011). Yin (2014) described four types of triangulation: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation. Within-method triangulation is appropriate in the study in which I collected and analyzed data from multiple data sources: interviews, exploration of the available physical artifacts.

Analyzing the data and writing up the results were the most important step in the doctoral study. For the data analysis phase, first, the recorded interviews received transcribing. I used a computer application to assist me transcribing the interviews. Then, I coded and analyzed the data with the computer software. The coded words then will receive sorting into categories to determine themes (Pierre & Jackson, 2014).

Theme identification is important in a qualitative study (Conboy, Fitzgerald & Mathiassen, 2012). I identified the major themes from the interview data, and the examination of the business physical artifacts. Word repetition is the key to identify the themes. Moreover, I used NVivo® software to help me find the major themes from the collected data. NVivo® is computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) which can help to manage and analyze qualitative data more efficiently (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). The last step was to write up the findings of the study. Honest and clear representation of the finding is necessary (Connelly, 2014). I compared and contrasted the results and previous literature. I found the links between the findings and the resource-based theory. The resource based theory was a good foundation for the study. I focused on the resource aspect of the businesses. Usually, business owners with abundant valuable resources are more likely to be successful. Furthermore, from the literature review, the expected key themes can come from the owner characteristics such as business experience and education. Internal factors, that influence the success of small business, include management skill, using mentors, and preparing business plans. External factors are government assistance, the economic environment, and accessing resources. In addition, I tried to match the findings with new literature published after the proposal approved.

Reliability and Validity

Doctoral students and all researchers should ensure high quality in research studies. Drost (2011) stated high quality measurement scale in qualitative research is important to the quality of the finding. Indeed, reliability and validity help to improve

trust and confidence in the results (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Zohrabi, 2013). According to Thomas and Magilvy, researchers need to ensure reliability and validity in the study to achieve qualitative rigor, which refers to high quality research. Thus, I will discuss the two major concepts in research: reliability and validity.

Reliability

Reliability is about the degree of consistency and repeatability of the measurement (Drost, 2011). I ensured reliability by using a high quality research instrument by carefully developing the interview questions based on previous literature. I had to develop high quality interview questions to ensure reliability. Another way to improve the reliability of the study is to document all the decisions made in the research process (Grossoehme, 2014). Furthermore, according to Yin (2014), case study should include triangulation to improve reliability. Triangulation involves the use of multiple data sources in a research project. Thus, from the perspective of Jogulu and Pansiri (2011), many researchers use triangulation to strengthen the findings and quality of the research. In this study, I used several sources of data to get an adequate insight of the cases. I interviewed the participants and examine the business physical artifacts to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors contribute to business success or failure to increase the reliability of the study.

Validity

According to Drost (2011), with validity, researchers concern the meaningfulness of research components. Validity is an essential criterion when evaluating the quality of the research (Zohrabi, 2013). The two types of validity are internal and external validity.

On the one hand, internal validity is the conditions free of confounding factors. On the other hand, with external validity, Drost (2011) indicated that researchers ensure generalization of the findings. In this study, I used multiple data sources and multiple cases to improve the validity of the findings. A good qualitative study should include the following characteristics: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). I implemented several strategies to enhance the research quality by improving each component.

Dependability. Dependability is close to reliability, which is about the consistency in the research method, design, participation selection, data collection technique, and findings. According to Thomas and Magilvy (2011), dependability occurs when different researchers can follow the same decision trail used in the research. Triangulation is another way to enhance dependability (Zohrabi, 2013). During the interview, I used member checking to improve the reliability and validity of the data, a method to confirm information with the research participants (Harvey, 2015).

Credibility. Credibility is similar to internal validity. Wester (2011) stated researchers use credibility to ensure the study results show the truth. In other words, credibility is about an actual representation of what happens in real world situations. Appropriate sample size, field notes, and audit trail are several factors influencing credibility (Wester, 2011). Moreover, investigator triangulation such as member checking or peer review is methods to increase credibility (Azulai & Rankin, 2012). Looking for similar themes in various interview transcripts is a way to ensure credibility (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). In this study, to ensure credibility, I used member checking to make sure

the collected data meet the four characteristics of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Transferability. Transferability is similar to external validity. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) stated transferability means research findings should hold truth in different locations or businesses. I described the context and assumptions regarding the research process to enhance transferability. Triangulation is a method helps to improve research validity. Moreover, I ensured data saturation in the research process. O'Reilly and Parker (2013) indicated that data saturation happens when the collected information has achieved both depth and breadth. Dworkin (2012) stated, for qualitative research, data saturation is obtainable with five to 30 participants. Roy et al. (2015) stated three cases are enough for a multi-case study research. Data saturation is necessary to improve the generalizability of the research. At the data saturation point, information is redundant or repetition of previously collected data (Marshall et al., 2013). Thus, I can ensure data saturation by having three cases.

Confirmability. Houghton et al. (2013) noted a study with accurate and neutral data has confirmability. I ensured confirmability by using audit trail and reflexivity strategies. Audit trail is about making note of all the decision and judgment along the research process. Qualitative researchers should pay attention to the personal interest and history to ensure reflexivity. A reflective diary, which includes documentation of decisions during the research process, is necessary to ensure confirmability (Houghton et al., 2013). Moreover, a qualitative study possesses all other three characteristics: credibility, transferability, and dependability has conformability (Thomas & Magilvy,

2011). I will need to provide a detailed field note of the research process so other can confirm the result.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I introduced several phases and aspects of the research projects including the purpose of the study, the research method, research design, data collection technique, and analysis. In the study, I used a qualitative case study to explore the success or failure factors among Canadian small businesses. Regarding the data collection, I used face-to-face semistructured interviews and examination of the business premises to gather the data. I analyzed the data for common themes and will present in the next section. In section 3, I presented the findings from the study. I summarized the common themes from the collected data. I also discussed the implication of the findings to the business world and social change. Lastly, I discussed the recommendations for future research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the strategies, which owners of small ethnic restaurant businesses employ to remain operable beyond 7 years. Small business owners contribute significantly to the national economy; however, two-third of them failed within the first 7 years of operation (IC, 2013a). In this study, I collected data from three small ethnic restaurant owners by semistructured interviews, and examination of the business physical artifacts. The population of this study included ethnic restaurant businesses in Greater Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. I used a purposeful sampling method to choose the businesses that have been operating under the current ownership for more than 7 years.

The findings of the study included five main themes for the successful factors of small ethnic restaurant business owners (a) hard work, (b) interest or passion, (c) family support, (d) location, and (e) food and service quality. First, all participants mentioned hard working. Working hard is the most critical factor according to the restaurant owners. Second, three participants stated that passion or interest also contributed to their success. The owners' passion or interest in the business keeps them away from giving up in the first few years of operation. Third, the business owners emphasized the importance of having family support. Family members can provide labor as the backup to the business. Fourth, 67% owners stated the location is a critical role in the business success. Through an exploration of the restaurant's location, I can confirm the location factor. Fifth, the quality of food and services is also important for the restaurant businesses. My

examination of customers' feedback on the restaurant websites and social media pages revealed the majority of customers like the restaurant because of the quality of the food and service. In the next section, I will present a detailed analysis of each theme.

Presentation of the Findings

The central research question for this study was what strategies did small ethnic restaurant business owners employ to remain in business after seven years? In this study, I used semistructured interviews and examination of the business physical artifacts to explore the strategies that business owners of small ethnic restaurants employed to be successful. The interview questions on strategy used in this study included the following:

1. What factors contributed to your business success?
2. Which factor did you think is the most critical to your business' success?
3. What are the three internal and three external barriers that made your business unsuccessful? How did you react to the barriers to make your business successful? What were the results of your actions?
4. What are your strengths and weaknesses in managing your business?
5. What type of resources helped you to increase the chances for business success?
6. What kind of support did you receive from the internal and external stakeholders of the business (e.g., family or government)?
7. What advice do you have to other business owners in the ethnic restaurant business for success in the future?

8. What additional information do you have to help me understand other factors contributing to your business success?

After receiving IRB approval, I contacted the business owners by phone and confirmed that the owners have been operating the restaurants for at least 7 years. Then, I made appointments to interview the owners and collected physical artifacts on premises and online such as menus, websites, and social media pages. I conducted the interviews with the participants on their premises. This study includes three participants. Before interviewing the participants, I introduced the research project and myself. For those agreeing to participate, I requested each participant read and to sign the consent form so that they could understand the scope of the study, their rights, and the protection of personal information. I collected demographic information regarding the owners and the businesses before asking strategy related questions. Table 5 below includes demographic information regarding the restaurants and the owners.

Table 5

Demographic Information about the Restaurants and the Owners

	Characteristics	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
The Owner	Acronym	P1	P2	P3
	Gender	Male	Male	Female
	Age	39	53	40
	Educational Level	High School	High School	College
	Ethnicity	Indian	Indian	Vietnamese
	Native Language	Hindi	Punjabi	Vietnamese
	Business experience	16 years	23 years	18 years
The Restaurant	Type of food	Indian	Greek, Italian, Indian	Vietnamese
	Current ownership	10 years	11 years	8 years
	No. of Employee	16	8 to 11	11

For the interviews, open-ended questions were used to gather insightful information from the restaurant owners (Rowley, 2012). Since the interviews were semistructured, I asked additional questions based on the participants' response. During the interview, I used member checking to confirm the participants' answers to improve the collected data quality. I recorded, transcribed, and analyzed the interviews. I used pen and paper to code the transcripts to find themes. I also examined some physical artifacts of the business such as websites, social media pages, menus, and the restaurants.

All data collected for this research are confidential. Collected data is maintained in a locked storage, and electronic data is secured via a password protected folder on a personal computer and cloud drive. After 5 years, I will destroy all data. To ensure high quality of the research, I used triangulation. Two types of data triangulation are *across method* and *within-method* (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). In this study, I used multiple cases, multiple data sources, interviews, and examination of the business physical artifacts. Yin (2014) stated researchers using triangulation could improve the reliability and validity of the research study.

After analyzing the collected data, which included the interview transcripts and the physical artifacts, I identified five distinctive themes: (a) hard work, (b) interest or passion, (c) family support, (d) location, and (e) foods and services quality. I will discuss each theme in the following sub-sections.

Theme 1: Hard work

Hard work was the first factor that came out of 3/3 (100%) participants' minds. In the RBV, business owners create competitive advantages from using their resources

(Perrigot & Pénard, 2013). However, the small ethnic restaurant owners have fewer resources compare to large businesses. Inadequate resource limits the business performance (Keen & Etemad, 2012; Thomason et al., 2013). To compensate the limited resources, business owners have to work hard and perform multiple tasks. This theme confirmed the findings by Aguilar-Morales et al. (2013), and Renko et al. (2012) showing that successful small business owners work hard. Table 6 contains the participants' statements regarding hard work.

Table 6

Theme 1: Hard Work

Participants	Comments
P1	... some people work, at the end of the day, they're looking for money, you know, but that doesn't mean if you are in business [he mean owning a business], you have to keep working, working, working, and money comes later... so you keep working hard, then you forget everything, then you can get success...
P2	... work hard, keep on everything, work on the weekend... ... most important to the success is work hard...
P3	... we spent between myself and my husband, when we first started, we worked 7 days a week, no break, and when I went home from my 11 hours, I still have to do my paper works for GST and for payrolls, and that's a lot of hours...

Theme 2: Interest or Passion

Interest or passions are critical factors that keep the owners in the business. To remain successful, the owners have to love what they are doing. For example, when I asked P2 "... so, you like Greek foods?" He replied, "Not like, I love it." The business owners get motivation from their interest or passion. According to P3, the first few years of operation was challenging since there was low and unstable income. Gomezelj and Kušce (2013) indicated that a business is not usually profitable in the first few years of operation. Thus, financial risks are associated with the new businesses. However, the restaurant owners with passion for their businesses can avoid giving up. Furthermore, Alam et al., (2011) suggested commitment to the business, which derives from the owners' interest or passion, contributes significantly to make the business successful. Similarly, P1 stated, whatever people do, they have to be serious and have an interest in it. As stated in the RBV, passion, or interest is a valuable intangible resource that the business owners possess (Perrigot & Pénard, 2013). Table 7 below presents several comments of the research participants regarding interest or passion.

Table 7

Theme 2: Interest or Passion

Participants	Comments
P1	... you have to be serious, whatever you do, in anything, not even in business, in study too... plus, also if you don't have interest then don't do it...
P2	... not like, I love it... [when talking about Greek foods] ... you need interest in the work, keep focus on your work...
P3	... don't give up, love what you do, have passion toward what you do then you will do well at it...

Theme 3: Family Support

All the restaurant owners (3/3 100%) in this study received tremendous support from their families. Families provide a trustable human resource instead of financial support to the business owners. Chen & Elston (2013) stated most small restaurant owners hire family members. P1 often calls family members for help during a labor shortage. Additionally, P1 usually consults the spouse when making important business decisions. Agarwal and Dahm (2015) stated similar finding which family support is critical for small restaurant businesses. P2 bought the restaurant from his/her brother. P2's brother started the restaurant, and P2 worked for him for many years before taking over the restaurant. P2 stated learned a lot from working with his/her brother. Currently, P2's brother owns another restaurant and can provide P2 support and advice when

needed. Additionally, P3 mentioned that many family members are currently working in the restaurant. Small business owners found it hard to access qualified external human capital because of their limited resource (Ahmad, 2012). Applying the RBV, family is a valuable resource because family members can help to improve the business effectiveness and efficiency (Seshadri, 2013). Table 8 below includes the participants' comments regarding family support.

Table 8

Theme 3: Family Support

Participants	Comments
P1	<p>...I received helps from my family... when I am too busy, I call my family, they come over and help me...</p> <p>... whatever is happening [with the business], always discuss with my wife... she always support me... because most of the family and business decision, you have to have some kind of discussions... sometime I don't know, after I discuss with her, I get better solutions...</p>
P2	<p>... my brother started this one [the restaurant], I learned from him, and I worked for him...</p> <p>... family could help when I call... they're working with me, helping me a lot, not on the finance but they're just working with me...</p> <p>... my brother started [the restaurant] in 1982, I was working for him for several years, then I bought from him in 2004</p>
P3	<p>... a lot of helps from family... some work for us since the begging...</p>

Theme 4: Location

Location is a critical factor that contributes to the success of the restaurant businesses. As reported by Parsa et al. (2015), many small business owners fail because of having a poor location choice. Agarwal and Dahm (2015) found a similar result that small independent restaurants are more likely to obtain success if they have a competitive location. Furthermore, location can be a unique resource which the owners can use to create competitive advantages according to Penrose's RBV (Lockett & Wild, 2014). From the interview, P1 and P3 mentioned the importance of having a good location. All three businesses in this study are on the major streets in their cities. P1's and P2's restaurants are close to the sky-train station, a large shopping mall, and business center. In addition, a campus of a major university, many small colleges, office buildings, and residential areas surround the businesses. P3's restaurant is close to an amusement park and arena where many seasonal events and summer fairs take place. P3 indicated the location helps to create a competitive advantage for the business since events almost every weekend at the park. Furthermore, good walking traffic exists around the restaurant. Table 9 below includes the participants' comments regarding location.

Table 9

Theme 4: Location

Participants	Comments
P1	... I think location is number one... If you can find a really good location, then you will become successful...
P3	... location is very important, I have to admit... we are close to PNE, every Friday, Saturday, there are events there... a lot of walk in customers...

Theme 5: Food and Service Quality

Through the examination of the business websites, social media pages, and restaurant directory sites such as Zomato and Yelp, I found food and service quality are significant to the success of the businesses. Many customers gave the restaurants high rating because the foods are tasty, or the staff is attentive. Furthermore, many customers indicated that they would like to come back in the future, some of them referred the restaurant to their friends, and some of them were referred by other customers. The customers of P1's restaurant stated the servers were friendly and helpful. Moreover, a customer commented that the restaurant is willing to customize the meals to meet the customer preferences. A customer of P2's restaurant said that a colleague at work referred her to the restaurant. P2's customer loves the restaurant because of the tasty foods. For P3's restaurant, the customers commented that food and service quality are consistent. The price is also reasonable for quick and efficient services. The findings are

consistent with past literature. Agarwal and Dahm (2015) showed that consistency in the food and service quality can contribute to the restaurant success. Moreover, the theme of food and service quality is consistent with the RBV, in which ability to provide decent food and service is an intangible resource for the business (Lockett & Wild, 2014). The following Table 10 includes comments from the participant regarding food quality.

Table 10

Theme 5: Foods and Services Quality

Participants	Comments
P1	<p>... be fair enough with everybody... don't over charge [customers]</p> <p>... have international workers with more experience... so you can have better services, better foods... good quality... and make more money...</p> <p>... you know, it's Indian restaurant... ethnic Indian restaurant, so foreign workers [for the kitchen] from India, they worked in India, they know better recipes, better foods...</p> <p>... for the front, server, I hire locally...</p>

Interview Questions

The central research question in this study guided the research to explore the strategies that small ethnic restaurant businesses employed to be successful. Moreover, the interview questions were the tool to collect qualitative data (Rowley, 2012). Thus, in this section, I will analyze the answers to each strategy question. I did not include

answers to demographic questions in this section because the answers are in summary format in Table 5.

Question 1: What factors contributed to your business success? The research participants provided several factors they believe contributes to their business success. P1 stated that some of the factors that contribute to his success include hard work, being honest to other people, treating people fairly, having a good location, and always having a backup plan. By treating people fairly, he meant not to overcharge the customers. According to Chen and Elston (2013), hard work, good customer service, and honesty are important successful factors for small restaurant business. Moreover, the owner said he always has a backup plan for everything such as financial resources, workers, and suppliers. P1 stated “before you start up the business, you have to have money in your hand, on site... besides, you have to have backup, everything has to be backed up, in case it is not running, then you can cover up.” Having detailed plans are critical to the success of small businesses (Halabí & Lussier, 2014; Hunter, 2011). Financial resources, workers, and suppliers are critical resources that business owners can use to improve firm performance (Lockett & Wild, 2014). P2 specified hard work is a trait that every successful business owner should have. P3 added loyal employees helped to make the business successful. The reason for having loyal employees is that the owner treated her employees like family members.

Question 2: Which factor did you think is the most critical to your business’ success? As discussed previously, hard work is a critical factor contributing to the business success. All 3/3 (100%) business owners believe that they have become

successful because of hard work. Successful business owners have to keep focusing on the work and do not give up. The owners' interest and passion in the business can help to motivate them. According to P1, the owners' attitude toward the business should be serious. The owner did not target for money from the beginning. P3 stated similar idea. The first few years of the business was challenging, and income was inadequate. As the owners kept working hard, the business performance improved gradually (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013). Hard work is an important intangible resource for the business owners (Kozlenkova et al., 2014).

Question 3: What are the three internal and three external barriers that made your business unsuccessful? How did you react to the barriers to make your business successful? What were the results of your actions? The barriers that the business owners in this study experienced include high rent, employee conflict, bad customers, theft, lack of management training and high employee turnover rate. P1 shared some employees quit without notice. However, the owners always have a backup. The owner called for help from his family or friends. In some rare cases, some customers do not want to pay after finishing their meals. P1 has successfully developed his intangible resource, which are the backups (Perrigot & Pénard, 2013). the P2 did not have any formal management training and that can be a barrier to his business success. However, P2's strong history of work experience can compensate his lack of formal management training. P3 stated although the rent of the premises is high, the location is good. For P3, whenever employee conflicts arise, she listens to her employees carefully and tries to find the optimal solutions. An effective business leader should be able to

listen actively to the employees (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013). By listening and giving advice to employees, P3 can ensure everyone is happy, and productive.

Question 4: What are your strengths and weaknesses in managing your business? Interestingly, P1 listed *flexibility* is both his strength and weakness. The owner of the business needs to practice flexibility in any given circumstance. P1 should be able to find a backup for anything such as financial resources, employees, and suppliers. P1 shared “I am not depending on one thing.” Furthermore, when the employee makes mistakes, the owner gives them a chance to learn again. Previous researcher confirmed that flexibility is an essential characteristic of successful small business owners (Arasti et al., 2012). P1 stated that, however, the employee could take advantage of the owner’s flexibility. P2’s strength includes his long history of working experience in the restaurant industry. Business and management experience can significantly contribute to the success of the business owners (Halabí & Lussier, 2014). P3 stated “experience is the very important.” Thus, strong business experiences can offset the lack of formal training in management. P3’s strength includes management skills since she received a college education in business management. Arasti et al. (2012) and Willebrands et al. (2012) found a direct relationship between the owners’ level of education and the performance of the business. The strengths of the business owners can be the resources that help to improve the firm effectiveness, and efficiency (Seshadri, 2013).

Question 5: What type of resources helped you to increase the chances of business success? All 3-business owners have strong social networks that can provide helps to the business. The restaurant owners in this study have been able to utilize human

resources from their families. Moreover, P1 and P2 have the websites, and Facebook pages for their businesses. P1 stated social media is an essential resource he can use to improve his business performance. Internet technology is a low-cost resource that small business owners can utilize to create competitive advantages (Alam et al., 2011). Many small business owners fail because they do not implement new technology in the business (Akbaba, 2012). P1 is the most innovative restaurant owners among the three participants. P1's restaurant even has a mobile application for the business on iPhone, and Android. The mobile application includes the food menu, the business contact information, and some food recipes. In the RBV, firm existing resources are critical drivers for innovation (Perrigot & Pénard, 2013). Lastly, a good location is another valuable resource for the three businesses (Perrigot & Pénard, 2013).

Question 6: What kind of support did you receive from the internal and external stakeholders of the business (e.g., family or government)? Families of the restaurant owners in this study provide them with human capital, especially, when they are short of employees. Moreover, the family can help provide training as in the case of P2. P2 worked for his brother many years before taking over the restaurant. P1 and P3 have their spouses and other family members working for them. All 3/3 (100%) owners have their family members work for them. Besides family support, P1 received assistance from the government when he needs to hire foreign workers. Families are internal resources that help firm owners avoid failure and improve firm performance (Shirokova et al., 2013). Families are valuable resources to the business owners.

Question 7: What advice do you have to other business owners in the ethnic restaurant business for success in the future? P1 stated that to be successful, the business owners should develop trust on their workers. Moreover, the owners should provide the employees opportunities to learn from their mistakes. P2 suggested hard work is an important trait that all successful business owners should have. Beyond working hard, P3 added the business owners should have passion in what he or she is doing. Business owners with passion and interest are self-motivated and persistent. Thus, the owners do not easily give up. P3 said “don’t give up, love what you do, and have passion toward what you do then you will do well at it.” Compared with the RBV, passion is inimitable; therefore, passion is an essential resource of the business owners (Barney et al., 2011). In general, hard work and commitment are critical contributions to business success (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013; Alam et al., 2011)

Question 8: What additional information do you have to help me understand other factors contributing to your business success? Most of the crucial factors are included in the answers to previous questions. P1 emphasized on the importance of discussing any business-related matter with the spouse. The spouse can provide good advice and solutions to the business problem. P1’s idea is consistent with previous literature. Family can have an important impact on the success of the business owners (Aguilar-Morales et al., 2013)

Examination of the Physical Artifacts

Another source of data for this research is the examination of physical artifacts. I examined several physical artifacts such as the locations, the restaurants premises, the websites, social media pages, and restaurant directories. Discussion of the result is below.

The location. All three restaurants are on different major streets in their cities. Location is a strategic resource because it helps to improve the business performance as stated in the RBV (Blackburn et al., 2013). P1's restaurant is close to the city center with a shopping mall, many business offices, a major university, and several small colleges. The restaurant is also next to two sky-train stations, and a hospital is five minutes away. P2's restaurant is approximately one kilometer away from P1's. P2's location is similar to P1's except it is close to another shopping mall and a heavy traffic bridge. P3's restaurant is close to an amusement park where many events happen throughout the year. Furthermore, plenty of parking spaces exist around the restaurants, which increase the convenience of the customers.

The Restaurant Premises. The restaurants in this study are well designed restaurants which help promote a clean and friendly atmosphere. In P1's and P2's restaurants, the tables are readily prepared with plates and wine glasses. The decorations reflect the culture of the food origins. P1's and P3's restaurant uses images and pictures of India and Vietnam respectively. P2's restaurant provides customers Mediterranean atmosphere with high ceiling and hardwood floor. According to the website, P2's restaurant offers the customers Traditional Athens Scenery of Greek Gods. Both the dine-in and take-out menus are in color on high-quality, and glossy papers. Thus, 3/3 (100%)

owners are able to utilize the resource strategically to remain successful (Blackburn et al., 2013).

The Websites, Social Media Pages and Restaurant Directories. Both P1's and P2's restaurants have websites and social media pages. The restaurant websites and Facebook pages include high-quality photos of the food and the premise. Moreover, the sites also contain food menus and contact information. P1's, P2's and P3's restaurants are on popular restaurant directories such as Zomato, and Yelp. The three restaurants receive good reviews, and high ratings from the customers. Most customers give positive feedbacks regarding food and service quality. As stated in the RBV, innovative and successful owners know how to use available technological resources to create competitive advantages (Perrigot & Pénard, 2013).

Applications to Professional Practice

The result of the study might prove valuable to current and future owners of ethnic restaurant businesses. Business owners can improve their business performance by applying knowledge from this study. The study findings include five distinctive themes: (a) hard work, (b) interest or passion, (c) family support, (d) location, and (e) foods and services quality. Moreover, the information can help small business leaders avoid potential barriers and know how to approach the barriers in an effective way. In the RBV, business owners should utilize tangible and intangible resources to create competitive advantages (Jacobsen, 2013). However, small businesses usually do not have access to many resources comparing to larger businesses (Shirokova et al., 2013). Thus, small businesses have a higher chance of failure (Hunter, 2011). The result of this study reveals

five key factors contributing to business success. Future and current small business owners could learn from the study results to improve their business performance. The small ethnic restaurant owners can improve their business survival rate by applying the success factors in the business. Although all restaurant owners in this study are immigrant, they can still become successful by applying these factors.

Implications for Social Change

The result of this study could help to improve the performance and survival rate of the small ethnic restaurant business. Small business is a critical component of the national economy (Chandler, 2012). Therefore, if the survival rate of the small business increases, the business owners can contribute significantly to the GDP, and national employment (IC, 2013a). Lack of knowledge of the appropriate strategies can cause high business failure. The results of the study may help to fill in the gap of knowledge of what strategies influence the business success. Small business owners can now understand and apply the new strategies to improve business performance. The study result could prove valuable to policy makers. Indeed, government policy makers can help to improve small business survival rate by providing support to small businesses such as human resources or management training. Improving small business survival rate could help society avoid wasting resource, and become more effective and efficient.

Recommendations for Action

From this study, the owners of ethnic restaurant businesses can take several actions to improve their performance and survival rate. The business owners need to understand five factors that influence their success: (a) hard work, (b) interest or passion,

(c) family support, (d) location, and (e) foods and services quality. The study result includes current and future business owners a checklist of the factors that can follow. First, small business owners should work hard and have a serious attitude regarding the businesses. Second, the business owners should have passion and interest in what they are doing because those factors can help owners overcome potential obstacles, and difficult situation. A strong passion and interest prevent owners from giving up, allow them to accept challenges and strive for success. Therefore, an important question to ask before starting an ethnic restaurant business is *Do I really have interest or passion in the type of business that I am going to establish?* The passion enables small business owners to overcome the hardship in first few years of operation when financial risks are with newly started businesses (Gomezelj & Kušce, 2013). Third, business owners should ensure they have someone such as family members or friends who are supportive and can provide help. Family support is especially important when the business first establish. Ahmad, 2012 stated new small business owners do not have adequate resources to hire external human resources. Family members usually provide cost effective labor support to the small business; thus, many small restaurant business owners hire their family members (Chen & Elston, 2013). Fourth, the future business owners should choose a good location to start up their business. Good location can improve the chance of having business success (Parsa et al., 2015). Fifth, exceptional food and service quality can make the customer happy; thus, improve the business performance (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015). My intention is to publish the case study in ProQuest and take advantage of opportunities

to share findings with owners and managers in the ethnic food industry, colleges and universities, and forums where business leaders discuss strategies for business survival.

Recommendations for Further Research

I conducted a qualitative multi-case study on the successful factors for small ethnic restaurant businesses. The study consists of three cases in the Greater Vancouver, British Columbia Canada. The small size is one of the limitations in this study. Moreover, the study was limited to one geographic location. Therefore, to generalize the findings, future researchers can expand to different geographic locations such as different provinces, or countries. This research was in the urban areas; other research can choose population in the suburb areas. Moreover, a future researcher can look at different segments of the food and service industry such as coffee shops, restaurant chains, or take-out restaurants. Even broader, future researchers can choose different types of small businesses in the other industries such as retail, manufacturing, or other services. Additionally, future researchers can use quantitative research to test the variables found from this study (five themes) on a larger set of data. Future quantitative researchers can develop a hypothesis to test the relationships between variables and the business performance such as financial performance. As a result, the scholar community can better generalize findings from this research.

Reflections

In this study, I explored the strategies that small ethnic restaurant owners employ to remain in business for more than 7 years. I had a great opportunity to learn and conduct research to solve the practical business problem. I also gained more transferable skills from interacting with the research participants.

The study results helped me to realize that getting participants to attend the research was not easy. More than half of the people I contacted denied participating in the research. Getting the participants to share their stories was also challenging. Thus, developing a good working relationship with the participants was critical. A huge part of the research was explaining to the participants their rights and making them comfortable. Therefore, the participants can happily share their successful stories. In addition, aware of researcher's potential biases is important. The interviewer should try not to influence the interviewees' responses. My interview technique ensured the participants response to the questions with their true thought. Before the research, I did not expect transcribing the interview would take a lot of time. However, my experience is that transcribing the interviews need a decent amount of time allocation.

The study result could help to expand knowledge in the field of small ethnic restaurant management. I empathize for the hardship the participants over came, and understand how the lack of resource can create a constraint on the small business performance. Moreover, I can see the essential contribution of the family to the success of small business owners. My learned lesson is no matter what people do; they need to

have passion. I am excited to learn how to conduct research that can help in my future academic and professional career.

Summary and Study Conclusions

Despite their significant contributions to the national economy, small business owners often experience high failure rate (IC, 2013a). The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the factors that contribute to the success or failure of small ethnic restaurant businesses. Ethnic restaurants are restaurants selling foods for ethnic minority groups (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015). To explore the successful factors of small ethnic restaurants, I conducted this research using a semistructured interview technique and examination of physical artifacts including the business websites, social media pages, premise, the location, and the online restaurant directories. I recorded the interviews, coded, and analyzed to identify common themes. The study result includes five key factors, which influence the business success (a) hard work, (b) interest or passion, (c) family support, (d) location, and (e) foods and services quality. From this knowledge, future owners of small ethnic restaurants can apply five strategies to enhance their business performance. The findings could create positive social contributions by helping to increase small business survival rates. Therefore, small business owners can help to improve the employment rate, and the national GDP (IC, 2013a). As a recommendation for future research, I would suggest future researchers to expand the study to different types of small restaurant business at large and at different locations.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

The following is the list of main interview questions:

Demographic Questions:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your ethnicity? Where was you born?
3. What is your native language?
4. What is your highest level of education?
5. How many years of working experience do you have?

Strategy Questions:

7. What factors contributed to your business success?
8. Which factor did you think is the most critical to your business' success?
9. What are the three internal and three external barriers that made your business unsuccessful? How did you react to the barriers to make your business successful? What were the results of your actions?
10. What are your strengths and weaknesses in managing your business?
11. What type of resources helped you to increase the chances for business success?
12. What kind of support did you receive from the internal and external stakeholders of the business (e.g., family or government)?
13. What advice do you have to other business owners in the ethnic restaurant business for success in the future?
14. What additional information do you have to help me understand other factors contributing to your business success?

Appendix B: Permission to Use Table 2

Subject: Re: Asking for permission to use a figure
Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 at 11:08:15 AM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Zahra Arasti
To: Nam Phuong Le

Dear Nam Phuong Le
It's a pleasure for me if this could help you.
Regards

Zahra Arasti
Associate professor
Faculty of entrepreneurship
University of Tehran
Tehean
Iran

Dear Dr. Arasti,
I am a doctoral student at Walden University , MN, USA. I am currently completing my Doctor of Business Administration degree. My research is focusing on the success and failure factors of small businesses in Canada. I would like to ask for your permission to use the content of Figure 1 in The article "Exploring the Effect of Individual Factors on Business Failure in Iranian New Established Small Businesses² in my doctoral study, literature review section. The article is also attached here.
Thank you so much for your consideration and I am looking forward to your reply,
Kindly Regards,

--

Nam Phuong Le, MBA, MScIB, DBA Candidate
Walden University, School of Management
Tel. 778.239.0062 - nam.le@waldenu.edu

--

Zahra Arasti

Appendix C: Permission to Use Table 3

Subject: FW: Asking for permission to use tables in a doctoral thesis
Date: Wednesday, April 1, 2015 at 2:40:13 AM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Chris Tutill
To: 'nam.le@waldenu.edu'

Dear Nam Phuong Le,

Thank you for your email.

Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Chris Tutill and I am the Rights Assistant here at Emerald.

With regards to your request, providing that the figures are fully referenced and give credit to the original publication, Emerald is happy for you to include them in your dissertation.

Please note that should you wish to republish the figures elsewhere (i.e. for commercial purposes/in a journal, etc.), you will need to clear permission once more.

I wish you the best of luck with your dissertation.

Kind Regards,

Chris Tutill

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From: Nam Phuong Le [<mailto:nam.le@waldenu.edu>]

Sent: 01 April 2015 05:36

To: Permissions

Subject: Asking for permission to use tables in a doctoral thesis

Dear Sir/Madame,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University , MN, USA. I am currently completing my Doctor of Business Administration degree. My research is focusing on the success and failure factors of small businesses in Canada. I would like to ask for permission to use Table 1 in the article "A success versus failure prediction model for small businesses in Singapore" in my doctoral study, literature review section. The article is also attached here.

Thank you so much for your consideration and I am looking forward to your reply,

Kindly Regards,

--

Nam Phuong Le, MBA, MScIB, DBA Candidate

Walden University, School of Management

Tel. 778.239.0062 – nam.le@waldenu.edu