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Success Strategies for Small Business Owners in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Marcellinus Madu

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Abstract

Success Strategies for Small Business Owners in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

by

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MBA, Rosemont College, 2003

BS, St. Joseph's University, 1998

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

February 2016

Abstract

African immigrant business owners create jobs and often stimulate economic growth in distressed inner-city areas, yet they continue to experience barriers obtaining financial support in the United States when trying to gain entrance into the broader economy. The objective of this multiple case study was to explore strategies African immigrant business owners used to succeed in business beyond 5 years. The conceptual framework of this study included resource-based theory, human capital theory, and disadvantage theory. Semistructured interviews were conducted with 3 African immigrant business owners in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania who had succeeded in business beyond 5 years. Thematic analysis from interviews, organizational documents, and Bureau of Labor Statistics data identified 8 emergent themes. Findings indicated that, for these 3 African immigrant business owners, education, managerial-related experience, motivation, and networking were key attributes related to small business success. Additionally, for this group, innovation, steady flow of resources, and adequate access to capital were predictive of successful businesses. This study may contribute to positive social change by providing guidance to African immigrant business owners about effective business strategies; this knowledge may help to improve the quality of life for African immigrants in the United States. Increasing the prosperity of the business community is incumbent upon the development and use of new knowledge.

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Dedication

I thank God for giving me the encouragement and power to overcome all conditions and enormous challenges of this worthwhile voyage. My wife, Roseline Chichi, and two of my sons Semion and Jonathan continuously supported and encouraged me through the challenges of postgraduate school and life. Without their love, endurance, sustenance, and indulgence, this dissertation would never have come to maturity. I am truly thankful for my family, and I dedicate this document to them. In addition, I dedicate this work to my late parents, Semion and Bessey Madu, who loved me unreservedly and whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I seek to achieve.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

African immigration to the United States increased 61% from 2001-2010 (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2014). Researchers have shown that recent immigrants to the United States gravitate toward entrepreneurship more than do their U.S.-born counterparts (Mijid & Bernasek, 2013). Immigrants often pursue business ownership and entrepreneurial activities as a way to make a living (Wang, 2013). Unfortunately, 50% of small businesses fail within 5 years (Sarasvathy, Menon, & Kuechle, 2013; Small Business Administration [SBA], 2014). The rate of small business failures supports the assertion that some people embark on small business initiatives out of necessity without adequate preparation (Mijid & Bernasek, 2013; Williams & Williams, 2014). Also, according to Sarasvathy et al. (2013), some people lack the knowledge and skill use to succeed in small business ventures beyond 5 years.

In this study, I explore the strategies that African immigrant small business owners use to succeed in business beyond 5 years in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Specifically, I focused on key factors that influenced African immigrant entrepreneurs' ability to stay in business. In generating more knowledge about small business owners' strategies for promoting business stability and sustainability, I seek to generate increased awareness and understanding of success factors among African immigrant small business owners in western Philadelphia. In this section of the study, I discuss and provide background on the business problem, purpose of this study, research question, theories framing the study, and significance of the study. I also provide an exhaustive review of current literature related to the business problem.

Background of the Problem

Out of necessity, African immigrants in the United States have turned to small business ownership to provide for their families (Rocha, Carneiro, & Varum, 2015). Thomas (2011) noted that 74% of Africans who immigrate to the United States have at least 3 years of college-level education (human capital). Furthermore, African immigrants tend to invest in additional human capital. Researchers determined that however, because the possession of college-level education does not guarantee employment for this group (Elo, Frankenberg, Gansey, & Thomas, 2015; Thomas, 2011; Wang & Lysenko, 2014), many immigrants pursue business ownership as a way to make a living (Hoelscher & Elango, 2012; Şaul & Pelican, 2014; Thomas, 2011). Education was also not a guarantee that the person pursuing business initiatives had the strategies needed to be successful (Wang & Lysenko, 2014). Moreover, Many African immigrant small business owners ventured into small enterprises without ample preparation and knowledge of small business management and because of their disenfranchisement from labor market.

Business owners face crucial decisions and numerous challenges if the owners are to succeed in business beyond 5 years; most businesses fail within 5 years of start-up (Vaiman, Scullion, & Collings, 2012). Using Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data collected between 1994-2010, statisticians from the Small Business Administration (SBA) estimated that 50% of new small businesses were profitable (BLS, 2014; SBA, 2014). However, this figure means that 50% of businesses had failed or closed (Sarasvathy et al., 2013). Hence, I strove to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of small business failures among this group of small business owners in

Philadelphia. Understanding the factors that contribute to business collapse may shed light to corrective measures that promote business success.

Problem Statement

Half of small businesses fail within five years (Sarasvathy et al., 2013; SBA, 2014). African immigrant business owners are among the minorities who owned 13.2% of the enterprises in the United States (Fairlie, 2012); yet, these business owners account for only 11.4% of gross earnings. The general business problem was some business owners embark on small business initiatives out of necessity without adequate preparation and strategies for business success. The specific business problem was some African immigrant small business owners lack the strategies necessary to succeed in small business beyond 5 years.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that African immigrant small business owners in the United States use to succeed in business beyond 5 years. African immigrants who own small businesses in western Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, comprised the target population. Semistructured interviews were conducted with three African immigrant small business owners who had ongoing business operations for more than 5 years. By developing information useful to small business owners interested in increasing the longevity of their enterprises, I hope to stimulate positive social change. With more information about successful business strategies, other African immigrant small business owners may be better able to contribute to the local economy and create additional jobs. City managers might gain a

deeper understanding of the factors that influence business decision-making among this select group of small business owners.

Nature of the Study

In pursuing my research, I strove to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of small business ownership among African immigrants in the United States. I used a qualitative research method because it is appropriate when a researcher's goal is to explore human experiences related to a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Osafo, Knizek, Akotia, & Hjelmeland, 2012; Patton, 2002). Using this method, a researcher also can gain further knowledge about the meanings that a person ascribes to an experience (Bernard, 2013; Coenen, Stamm, Stucki, & Cieza, 2012; Leko, 2014; Osafo et al., 2012; Patton, 2002). Quantitative researchers compartmentalize research questions and formulate hypotheses to test objective theories. Although a quantitative research method is useful for identifying the cause of the problem relative to an identifiable event, it is not suitable for exploring phenomena (Bernard, 2013), analyzing, or explaining the human experience (Bernard, 2013; Leko, 2014; Patton, 2002). I opted not to use a mixed method approach because it would mean combining quantitative and qualitative elements (Covell, Sidani, & Ritchie, 2012; Fielding, 2012; Palinkas et al., 2013).

For this research study, I used a multiple-case study design. In making this selection, I opted not to use a phenomenological design, even though it is useful for uncovering and comprehending the meaning of human life experiences (Englander, 2012; Letourneau, 2015; Moustakas, 1994). I did not select a phenomenological approach because there might be too few participants available to contribute to this study and fulfill

the investigatory requirements of this design. An ethnographic study is an inquiry of intact cultural groups in natural settings that a researcher completes over a prolonged period (Geertz, 2012; Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). I deemed grounded theory and narrative designs as inappropriate for this proposed study because these models are not adequate for addressing applied business research problems (Petty et al., 2012). The focus of the study made multiple case study an excellent framework for conducting applied business research and for exploring the strategies that African immigrant small business owners use to succeed in small business. By using a multiple case study design, a researcher is able to gain a deeper understanding of phenomena related to business, logistics, marketing, and organizational research (da Mota Pedrosa, Näslund, & Jasmand, 2012).

Research Question

The central research question in this study was the following: What strategies do African immigrant small business owners use to succeed in small business beyond 5 years?

Interview Questions

I posed eight semistructured interview questions to my participants in order to answer my research question. The interview questions were as follows:

1. What small business strategies helped you to succeed?
2. How did your education contribute to your business success?
3. What knowledge and skills do you think you need to grow?

4. What internal business resources give you a competitive advantage in western Philadelphia?
5. What help and support did you receive from SBA or community organizations?
6. What help and support did you receive from African cultural associations in western Philadelphia for your small business start-up capital?
7. How did your small business plan contribute to your business success?
8. Are there any comments that you would like to add to the discussion?

Conceptual Framework

To address the dynamics of the business environment, I used a conceptual framework encompassing multiple theories: human capital theory (Becker, 1993), resource-based theory (Barney, 1991), and labor market disadvantage theory (Light, 1979). Becker (1993) used human capital theory to focus on the intangible qualities of the business owner and employees; depending on the location of the business, the useful utility of human capital can vary. Barney (1991) focused on both tangible and intangible resource quality related to value, inimitability, rarity, and substitutability. Light (1979) examined the potential existence of discrimination and disadvantage as barriers to small business development, in particular, locations. These three theories created a conceptual lens for understanding the strategies used for small business success by African immigrants in western Philadelphia.

African immigrants tend to invest in education and training in quest for a better labor market outcome and to mobilize resources for the success of their families. Becker

(1993) developed human capital theory by embracing the psychological concept that people tend to decide matters of importance by expending human capital. Education, skills, knowledge, and training are human capital investments that might lead to economic rewards (Becker, 1993). Hence, education, skills, knowledge, and training are strategies that small business owners use to attain economic and business success (Becker, 1993; Wright, Coff, & Moliterno, 2014).

Audretsch, Link, and Pena-Legazkue (2013), Martin, McNally, and Kay (2013), and Fayolle and Gailly (2015) discussed the combination of entrepreneurship education training (EEP) and entrepreneurship-related human assets established by governments, universities, colleges, and the private sector. According to Audretsch et al., (2013), Martin et al., Sánchez (2013), and DeJaeghere and Baxter (2014), these institutions have positive influences on the development of students' interest in small business ownership and improving their (students') potential financial performance as small business owners. Davidsson and Gordon (2012) concurred that human capital aids small business owners in attaining both physical and financial resources. Ultimately, human capital assists small business owners in the gathering of new strategies for business success (Chen, 2013; Davidsson & Gordon, 2012). The degree of success among immigrant small business owners depends on how much resources they mobilize, and how steady those resources are readily available for use to sustain a business. Hence, a steady flow of resources becomes an important aspect that guarantees business growth.

I also drew on resource-based theory (RBT). Barney (1991) claimed that small business owners could earn supportable revenues if secure resources are present. These

resources require protection by a sequestering. Barney (2014) used RBT to test the relationship between internal resources and managers' capabilities to successfully start and grow enterprises. Steady flows of capital resources become an important component for small business owners to stay afloat, and to maintain business longevity. My rationale for using RBT in this exploration is twofold. First, when a person pursues small business start-up or growth, he or she should use internal resources efficaciously to develop sustainable strategies for circumventing barriers and achieving success (Barney, 2014). My second reason for using RBT in this study was to assess the resource strategies, characteristics, knowledge, and entrepreneurial skills of African immigrant small business owners.

In pursuing this research, I assume that African immigrants' upward economic mobility has suffered tremendously because of the non-proliferation of their foreign-earned credentials by the host countries, and the hurdles of institutionalized discrimination have adverse effects on their chance in the labor market. According to Light (1979), because of social oppression, immigrants are often compelled to choose between joblessness and self-employment. Immigrants pursue small-scale business activities to survive (Boyd, 2015). For immigrants to compete in regional and local economies successfully, they must have acceptable credentials (Hoelscher & Elango, 2012; Saul & Pelican, 2014; Thomas, 2011). However, discrimination continues to be problematic for immigrants and minorities, and such discrimination makes it more challenging for these groups to gain employment matching such credentials (Campbell, 2014; Connor, 2015; Kolivoski, Weaver, & Constance-Huggins, 2014; Porter & Bratter,

2015). I explored the business problem within the framework of these three theories to gain insight into the strategies used by African immigrants to the United States to succeed in small business beyond 5 years.

Operational Definitions

For additional clarity, the subsequent terms are definite to the comprehension of the study:

African immigrants: Individuals who emigrate from the African continent to the United States are African immigrants. They may be legal immigrants or naturalized citizens, legal asylees, refugees, or residents, or legal nonimmigrants (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Entrepreneurship: Individuals who execute economic activities, and who act independently to create new opportunities, introduce new products, or ideas to a market (Carlsson et al., 2013).

First generation immigrants: Individuals who are foreign-born and immigrate to the United States are first-generation immigrants; this definition excludes individuals born to American parents in Africa (Bersani, 2014).

Human capital: Human capital is the accumulation of the knowledge and skills pertinent to the execution of labor to create economic worth (Praag, van Witteloostuijn, & van der Sluis, 2013).

Necessity entrepreneur: The necessity entrepreneur is a person who pursues small business ownership to survive in a hostile employment environment (Williams & Williams, 2014).

Small business: Adams, Khoja Adams, Khoja, and Kauffman (2012) defined small business as an enterprise with 500 or fewer employees and annual sales less than \$20 million.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

There were four assumptions in this study. An assumption is a fact presumed to be true that can affect a researcher's subjective interpretation of the data (Applebaum, 2012; Kirkwood & Price, 2013). Kirkwood and Price (2013) maintained that an investigator's principles and assumptions might influence research. The first assumption was that a qualitative methodology is appropriate for exploring the research question in this study. The second assumption was that a multiple case study design would be an appropriate model for the study for collecting detailed information related to the business problem. Third, the level of participants' honesty determined the reliability of data collected and the validity of the study findings; the assumption was participants' responses constitute honest descriptions of their lived experiences. Finally, although English is a second language for this group, the assumption was all interviewees spoke English with equal eloquence and correctness to prevent unnecessary linguistic irregularities in the data collected. Scholars claimed whichever technique researchers use; researchers must be conscious of the underpinning assumptions and limitations of the method relative to the design (Kirkwood & Price, 2013).

Limitations

Henderson, Kimmelman, Fergusson, Grimshaw, and Hackam (2013) noted limitations are possible weaknesses of the study. A potential limitation of this study was acquiring data from African immigrant small business owners because these individuals keep their data private routinely, specifically financial information. In collecting data through multiple interviews, I endeavored to reduce participants' reluctance to share business information and enhance the validity of the data collected.

The geographic focus of the study was western Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Focusing on Philadelphia may limit the understanding of small business success among African immigrant small business owners, and the results may not be generalizable to different locations. The expectation was the data collected from participants mirrored other cities and counties in Pennsylvania. Localities may differ economically, and these differences may limit the transferability of this study's results. As Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013) noted, if discoveries remain morally distinctive, there will be a slight advantage to knowledge. Hence, removing transferable ideas and values permits researchers' discoveries to address broader audiences (Gioia et al., 2013). Moreover, participant bias can limit aptitude to remember events precisely. Participants may experience discomfort in disclosing information about their business transactions, and may not remember their experiences accurately.

Delimitations

Guni (2012) described delimitations as characteristics that limit the scope and boundaries of a study. This multiple case study required the participation of a minimum

of three African immigrant small business owners operating businesses in western Philadelphia. Only those individuals who had existing small businesses within the city limits participated in this study. This study excluded small businesses owned by non-African immigrants. Gender was not a prerequisite for participants' selection in this study. Gioia et al. (2013) warned developments in the knowledge that remain too powerfully entrenched in whatever we previously distinguish delimits whatever we can know. Delimitations also included the expectation that the time allowed by Walden University is adequate for carrying out the research, and African immigrant small business owners are the primary source of information for the study.

Significance of the Study

This study is of value to the business because the findings may be useful for formulating policies and developing strategies for avoiding small business failures among the African immigrant population. Furthermore, discoveries of this study may add toward the development of leadership capabilities among members of the business community. This study may serve as a baseline useful to leaders who might study the phenomenon of immigrants' small businesses. Understanding the strategies necessary for small business success among the group may empower African immigrants to make informed decisions to change their fiscal path. The transfer of knowledge between researchers and small business owners potentiates improvements in human capital quality and leadership capabilities (Becker, 1993). Furthermore, human capital is a valuable internal resource (Barney, 1991).

Contribution to Business Practice

The contribution of the study to business practice is threefold. First, writers do not explore this phenomenon sufficiently, and this study will add to the research continuum. Second, enlightening the business community of the pool of talented business owners could improve economic prosperity (Boyd, 2015). Having adequate knowledge of the circumstance of immigrant Africans, leaders of organizations who support small business owners can develop appropriate strategies to increase community and economic engagement.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this study may contribute to positive social change if its results lead to improving the quality of life for African immigrants. Increasing the prosperity of the community through the development of new knowledge would be an indication of positive social change (Qian, 2013). Additionally, defining the problems faced by African immigrant small business owners in western Philadelphia will raise the social awareness of the community (Dayanim, 2011; Katz et al., 2010). A greater understanding of the small business problem from this perspective is necessary if the intent of leaders and public service organization is to improve the business prospects of this group. Understanding and addressing the characteristics of small business success among African immigrants might result in poverty reduction, the achievement of a higher standard of living, and improved financial outcomes for the community (Dayanim, 2011; Liu, 2012; Wang & Lysenko, 2014). The leaders in organizations and community stakeholders could use the findings to formulate new policies and guidelines to increase

business longevity in the city. Researchers in small business could use the resulting findings to examine different behaviors and analyze how the actions contribute to the success or failure immigrants' small business endeavors.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

In this literature review, I explore the strategies associated with immigrant African small business owners' success beyond 5 years. A key emphasis of mine is uncovering the factors affecting the labor market outcomes of these business owners. I aim to provide an exhaustive review of current literature on this topic, to place my research problem within the framework of prior research, and explore of gaps in the literature. . In this review, I explore a variety of market, ethnicity, language, culture, and education topics. Specific topics include the concept of small business, small business knowledge and skill, small business ownership and self-employment, economic and labor integration of immigrants, human and social capital, disparities in capital access, immigrants and language deficiencies, African American and Black immigrant business community, small business motivation, and business location and neighborhood integration. The acculturation and assimilation of African immigrants into small business management is one of the review's key discussions. I also present different perspectives on the (three theories) that encompass my conceptual framework.

I searched a variety of multidisciplinary, management and business, human services, and social services databases, including ProQuest Central, Sage Premier, and Academic Search Complete/Premier. I also searched Google Scholar. I used the following keywords in my searches: *human capital theory*, *resource-based theory*,

disadvantage theory, small business and immigrations, small business strategies, small business knowledge and skills, entrepreneurship and immigration, business failures, underemployment and education, underemployment and immigration, unemployment and economics, poverty and immigration, theories of immigration, acculturation and immigration, assimilation and immigration, cultural learning, and ethnic identity of immigrants.

Peer-reviewed articles constitute 96% of the sources in this literature review; the remaining 4% of documents are from government sources or are seminal works. One limitation of the literature review stems from the lack of research devoted to African immigrants in the United States who are involved in small business ownership (Corra & Borch, 2014; Dayanim, 2011). With the lack of sufficient studies, the more research on this group would enlighten the business community of the pool of talented business owners could improve economic prosperity (Boyd, 2015). Additionally, although my conceptual frameworks relate to Africa, they do concern business-related topics (e.g., entrepreneurial skills and characteristics used to succeed in small business beyond 5 years) central to this study. Lastly, I found few studies about African immigrants relative to the Philadelphia small business or labor market (Abdullah et al., 2012; Block et al., 2015; Katz et al., 2010; Ragsdale, 2013; Talib et al., 2012; Yang & Aldrich, 2014). Previous researchers have concentrated on socioeconomic issues (Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Nunes, Gonçalves, & Serrasqueiro, 2013). When scholars under research some groups, it does not only discount their existence in the society but it also, cut and deny their economic contribution to the communities. Hence, more research is necessary on African

immigrant small business owners to shed light on their business style and financial contribution to the society.

Human Capital Theory

I used human capital theory for a small business research framework because theorists embrace the concept that entrepreneurs are decision makers regarding human capital (Becker, 1993). Education, training, and certifications are forms of human capital investment. Acquiring human capital might improve the economic status of individuals who have invested in education (Becker, 1993). Santarelli and Tran (2013) suggested that there is a positive relationship between the success of start-up firms and human capital. Researchers have shown that organizations make hiring decisions based on employees' human capital (McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011). McKee-Ryan and Harvey (2011) used the human capital theory to conduct underemployment research; outcomes for individual employees were favorable concerning meeting organizational requirements, the labor market, and matching skills with specific jobs. I also quest in this research, to understand the phenomenon of human capital investment made through education and the subsequent financial reward to the immigrant small business owners related to their counterparts.

Economists have used human capital theory to analyze various economic issues and to measure personal and general rates of return investments made at different levels of education (Becker, 1993; Fayolle & Gailly; 2015; Martin et al., 2013; Wright et al., 2014). Researchers using this theory agreed that understanding labor force underemployment is essential and can enhance business profits and outputs when

employers use information to bolster performance and productivity (Addy, Bonnal, & Lira, 2012; Wang & Lysenko, 2014). Becker (1993) claimed that individuals make educational and training decisions by weighing the benefits and costs. Many African immigrant small business owners' investments on human capital are intentioned to uplift them from disadvantage labor market to upward economic mobility; but, resulted in lower rates of employment, lower wages, and exclusion from upward economic mobility instead. Hence, many delved into the unknown of small business initiative without adequate preparation as a way out of disadvantage labor market.

Several researchers have suggested that a positive relationship exists between human capital and small business success (see Becker, 1993; Davidsson & Gordon, 2012; McHenry, 2015; Martin et al., 2013; Nason & Wiklund, 2015). Davidsson and Gordon (2012) argued that human capital increases small business owners' skills for taking advantage of and for determining business opportunities. Furthermore, Unger et al. claimed that human capital helps small business owners acquire useful resources like monetary and physical capital, new knowledge, and business skills. In their exploration of the economic effect of stratification, Western, Bloome, Sosnaud, and Tach (2012) found that people responded to economic uncertainty by expanding their human capital and resources to ease the tensions of economic failure. Hence, the venture formation procedure was an experiment with uncertainty outcomes (Spivack, McKelvie, & Haynie, 2014). Adequate knowledge and skill are fundamentals in business initiation or start-up. Those small business owners without enough strategies are likely to fail within 5 years of start-up.

In this study, I strove to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of individuals' investment in human capital and the anticipated economic returns among African immigrant small business owners. According to Becker (1993), economists like Smith, Marshall, and Friedman who were active in the 1950s failed to integrate refined analyses of the investment in education and training in their discussions of productivity (Becker, 1993). Twentieth-century economists initiated their work on the examination of the inferences of human capital investment for financial growth and related economic inquiries (Becker, 1993). Unger et al. (2011) claimed that researchers' interests lie in the relationship amongst human capital and success. Moreover, scholars accept the concept of human capital as a valuable tool for the analysis of different economic, social, and small business issues (Becker, 1993; Seghers, Manigart, & Vanacker, 2012; Unger et al., 2011). The research community has expressed wavering confidence in using human capital theory in empirical studies. Many scholars have determined that the theory is suitable for multidimensional, multidisciplinary, and conceptual studies (Becker, 1993; McHenry, 2015; Unger et al., 2011). Hence, the human capital theory would be appropriate for the study of African immigrant small business owners endeavor to survive in business beyond 5 years.

Resource-Based Theory

Individual business owners have different management style and strategies to circumvent barriers and acquire resources for success. Barney, a strategic management specialist, published the seminal work on RBT, which is the second part of my conceptual framework, in 1991. Barney (1991) claimed that small business firms could

earn supportable revenues if they have resources. However, securing those resources with some form of a sequestering device positioned the flow of resources as limited uses within the business (Barney, 1991; Day, 2014; O'Donnell, 2014). RBT gained popularity at a time when business scholars were exploring sources of continued possible advantage. Barney built RBT on the works of scholars such as Ricardo in 1817, Porter in 1980, and Nelson and Winter in 1982, who deliberated resource-based view of the firm (Barney, 2014). That is, these earlier scholars sought to determine the economic value of resources and forecast the potential of resources to support the success of a small business (Barney, 2014). The resource-based view of the firm was the forerunner of the RBT.

In my research, I engaged in learning ways African immigrant small business owners accumulate resources and strategies, and how sure those resources readily available for operation of their firms. Before the development of RBT, researchers used strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) to analyze the sustainable competitive advantage in a small business (Barney, 1991). The basis of the SWOT analysis model is the assumption that all firms have similar traits and that a small business owner can optimize internal strengths by responding to external opportunities (Barney, 1991). Using internal forces, firm managers can find ways to normalize external threats and compensate for flaws within the firm (Barney, 1991; Barney, 2014; Day, 2014; O'Donnell, 2014; Kozlenkova, Samaha, & Palmatier, 2014). SWOT and Resource-based theory are very similar; the internal and external forces (SWOT) intertwined with internal and external resources (RBT), and are good measuring tools to assess business success for this population.

During the past century, scholars have focused on the perception of organizational value and assets as key factors of firm success (Oswick, Fleming, & Hanlon, 2011; Tomczyk, Lee, & Winslow, 2013). The formation of RBT came from many fields of study including engineering, philosophy, economics, business administration, and psychology (Oswick et al., 2011). For instance, an engineer James Taylor led to the development of scientific management theory (Oswick et al., 2011). Lorenz, a mathematician and meteorologist, created difficulty and chaos theories (Oswick et al., 2011). Erected on a collaborative framework, RBT became famous, and researchers applied the theory to strategic management studies of large firms (Oswick et al., 2011).

Key characteristics of RBT concur with cost-effective evolutionary theory (Barney, 2014). In evolutionary economics, scholars focused on the situational effect of relevant changes in the business environment. They also categorized sets of behaviors that might result in long-term competitive advantages (Barney, 2014; López-Navarro, Callarisa-Fiol, & Moliner-Tena, 2013). Using models, economists determined which practices or tools led to possible success (Kozlenkova et al., 2014). Barney (2014) claimed, when built on the results of these types of simulations, small business owners could exploit effective procedures, and avoid the use of unsuccessful procedures. As with evolutionary economics, Barney used RBT to highlight the intricate relationships between multiple aspects of business management (Barney, 1991). Therefore, the knowledge of resources becomes vital to the success and sustainability of immigrant small businesses.

In this study, I tried to comprehend success strategies and plans of African immigrant small business owners to achieve business longevity. The RBT was a framework used to measure the internal abilities of a business manager while accounting for how situations affected a manager's capability to strive directly (Barney, 1991). The heterogeneity of a small business's core assets, together with the manager's use of individual resources, can build a competitive advantage for the firm. Barney focused RBT on the sole core physiognomies of small business (Barney, 2014). The norms of the theory were that the controlled tactical resources of the enterprise were heterogeneous to the resources of competitor businesses. A business's resources might be so exceptional that opponents might not instantaneously replicate them (Barney, 1991). Researchers used different business management models such as competitive dynamics and contestability theory to assess the small business roles within an environment where businesses controlled the same resources, and where one business environment varied from that of its competitors (Andersson & Evers, 2015; Day, 2014; Rice, Liao, Galvin, & Martin, 2015). The focus in RBT was solely on internal attributes of a small business such as business skills, steady cash flow, and the ability to secure the required capital (Day, 2014; O'Donnell, 2014). Barney (1991) assumed that strategic resources were heterogeneous to those held by competitive businesses, and strategic resources were not replicable. The ability to differentiate your business from the competitors is a good strategy significant for advancement in small business endeavor.

In this study, the aim is to increase awareness of the strategies African immigrant small business owners need to succeed in business beyond 5 years. Barney (1991)

determined business owners had to focus on two goals. First, the business owner had to apply resources to gain economic advantages. Second, the business owner had to optimize resources to attain and maintain a competitive advantage. The economic advantage occurred when a business owner executed strategies that competing firms could not replicate quickly. Barney (1991) and Lonial and Carter (2015) claimed small businesses could remain efficient, effective, and profitable to maintain the business's atmosphere in balance. Hence, the success of small business practice depends on the proprietor's efforts to coordinate and maintain the steady flow of resources for business success.

The strategies needed to succeed in business become critical to my research endeavors because future potential African immigrant business owner might benefit from the findings. Barney (2014) used RBT to test the relationship between internal resources and managers' capabilities to start and successfully grow businesses. Using RBT to support their argument, Abdelgawad, Zahra, Svejnova, and Sapienza (2013) tested entrepreneurial capabilities. Abdelgawad et al. found a connection between business capabilities and firm outcomes. Managers with business skills might sense, handpick, nurture, and harmonize business resources to change the competitive atmosphere for their businesses. However, Abdelgawad et al. and Barney (2014) recommended caution when applying RBT because of the uncertainty of gauging internal resources of businesses. The research community has expressed wavering confidence in using RBT in empirical studies (Barney, 2014; Day, 2014; Kozlenkova et al., 2014; Nyberg et al., 2014; O'Donnell, 2014). Many scholars view RBT as suitable for multidimensional,

multidisciplinary, and conceptual studies (Barney 2014; Day, 2014; Kozlenkova et al., 2014; Nyberg et al., 2014). Applying RBT to applied business research is challenging because of the multifaceted nature of business enterprises. Given these challenges, Barney recommended further research to establish prototypes for the best use of the theory (Barney, 2014). African immigrant small business owners may benefit from using resource-based theory if they can adhere to RBT concept, to promote business survival.

Disadvantage Theory

In pursuing my research, I endeavored to gain a deeper comprehension of the phenomenon of disadvantaged small business owners among African immigrants in Philadelphia. Light's (1979) disadvantage theory has relevance to researching business failure. According to Light, minorities and immigrants often must choose between joblessness and self-employment as small-scale entrepreneurs. Light (1979) suggested differences in small business owners' abilities were race-based, and that cultural factors (e.g., the legacy of slavery, social uniqueness, lack of business unity, and weak interaction) are responsible for creating the problems that individuals experience in business environments.

Light learned that as worldwide industrialism extended, so did marginally owned businesses; however, that was not the situation in the United States. Light (1979) urged sociologists to clarify why ethnic minorities in the United States had not been as successful in small business ownership and self-employment as their counterparts in Europe. The innovative work of Light on the disadvantage market theory of

entrepreneurship received commendations and critiques from researchers (e.g., Kidane & Harvey, 2010; Rocha et al., 2015).

In this research study, I tried to grasp the understanding of the phenomenon of social hurdles that confront African immigrant small business owners, and the effects of these barriers on their business endeavors. Scholars have countered Light's (1979) idea that the values of African Americans were accountable for the challenges facing this group of small business owners (Kidane & Harvey, 2010; Wang, 2013). Several researchers have suggested social forces create institutional hurdles that prohibit small business growth (Bates & Robb, 2013; Chaumba & Nackerud, 2013; Lofstrom & Bates, 2013). When examined the countrywide records of small business owners, scholars provided justification for the argument that culture was a key contributor to low stages of African American and minority business ownership (Bates & Tuck, 2014; Casey, 2012). Researchers used historical viewpoints to clarify how barriers limited African American and immigrants' small business start-ups (e.g., Bates & Tuck, 2014; Casey, 2012; Kidane & Harvey, 2010). In their inquiries, scholars determined that discriminatory hurdles obstructed African immigrants and minority small business owners by (a) limiting access to startup and working funds; (b) limiting entrance to education, skill growth, and training; (c) limiting and decreasing the size of businesses; and (d) increasing business failure (Bates & Tuck, 2014; Casey, 2012; Kidane & Harvey, 2010).

Boyd (2015) used the disadvantage theory to analyze the difficulties in the market and entrepreneurship involving survivalist strategies among Northern Black women in the Great Depression era. Takei and Sakamoto (2011) hypothesized the racial hierarchal

view using the disadvantage theory; they concluded the model subordinated all minorities to Whites using measures of intelligence and achievement. Moreover, within the category of social status, Blacks are at the bottom. Researchers have employed this model to validate, strengthen, and rationalize social stratification (Khaled & Heilbrunn, 2012; Takei & Sakamoto, 2011). Researchers use this theory in focused investigation of underemployment of African immigrant business graduates (Katz et al., 2010; Singer et al., 2008; Sporlein & van Tubergen, 2014), and the issues associated with the discounting of internationally obtained credentials (Akbari & Aydede, 2013; Binggeli, Dietz, & Krings, 2013; Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Sporlein & van Tubergen, 2014). Black business owners have lesser access to financial capital than do Whites (Lofstrom & Bates, 2013). The discriminatory and exclusionary practices inside the business world relegated and limited the size of ethnic minority small businesses, decelerated business growth rates, and restricted ethnic minority businesses to competitive, labor-intensive markets (Bates & Robb, 2013; Thomas, 2011).

Concept of Business

The nonexistence of a mutual definition of business makes the phenomenon convoluted in practice for people (McFarland & McConnell, 2013). The Smaller War Plants Corporation (SWPC), enacted in 1942 by Congress to help business owners attain government contracts, was the first national organization that used an exact definition of small business. The SWPC leaders saw small manufacturers or enterprises as those having fewer than 500 employees, and one with independent owners and operations (Hooper, 1972). The congressional definition of business did not materialize until the

Reconversion Act of 1944. The emphasis in congressional definition was on business size as measured by the number of employees (Hooper, 1972). Hooper (1972) claimed Congress created the SBA and instructed SBA administrators to develop a comprehensive definition of business accounted for the dissimilarities in business size across industries. This SBA definition of business, as outlined in the Congressional Act of 1953, was a business operated and owned by an independent entrepreneur, was not dominant in its operation field, and had fewer than 250 employees (Hooper, 1972; SBA, 2014). Although, researchers have followed the SBA's definition of business, Boyles (2011) referred to small business as an entity that contributes over 50% of the proprietor's revenue and has fewer than 20 staff members. Ninety percent of U.S. businesses have fewer than 20 employees (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

The term business refers to various units of different size, artistic ambition, and productivity (McFarland & McConnell, 2013). Business researchers attested, notwithstanding these dissimilarities, businesses that move through phases of growth mirror a greater level of homogeneity of management, technical, commercial sources, tasks, and needs (Lichtenstein, 1992; McFarland & McConnell, 2013). Furthermore, the philosophies and the meanings of business recommended by these scholars align comparatively with the three theories that constitute the conceptual framework of this study. The human capital approach stems from the belief individuals make decisions based on their education, training (investing in their human capital), and weighing of costs and benefits (Becker, 1993). Barney (1991) used the RBT to build a framework to assess the internal competencies of a firm while accounting for the business situation's

direct effect on a firm's ability to compete. The disadvantage theory arose from the concept that marginalization of minorities in the labor market forced individuals to pursue a living in trade (Light, 1979). An exploration of the strategies used to succeed in business and to ensure the transfer of knowledge and skill is an important phenomenon if viewed through the lenses of the theories mentioned above. In subsequent discussions, I provided a comprehensive exploration of business restraints related to this study.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

In this study, I extended the discussion of strategies used to succeed in business from African immigrant small business owners' perspectives. The established social, ethnic, and economic frameworks where business begins and grows have spatial possibilities and measures (Wang, 2013). Entrepreneurship research is new as an academic endeavor, and its roots are traceable to the Irish-born banker, Cantillon, a well-established economist (Carlsson et al., 2013). Cantillon's contribution to the field of entrepreneurship gave rise to the concept of entrepreneurship's monetary significance and the entrepreneur's role in commercial growth (Carlsson et al., 2013). Cantillon saw supply and demand inconsistencies as an opportunity to purchase inexpensively and to retail at greater rates (Carlsson et al., 2013). Cantillon referred to individuals who succumbed to such decisions as entrepreneurs (Carlsson et al., 2013). Entrepreneurs recognized their roles by way of buying inputs at convinced prices and retailing outputs at an indeterminate fee, hence, bringing the market method to solidity (Carlsson et al., 2013). The key feature of Cantillon's definition was solidity of market. However, the lack

of a standard definition of entrepreneurship complicated the phenomenon (McFarland & McConnell, 2013).

Schumpeter (1934), who expanded on the work of Cantillon, revealed that entrepreneurs were innovators who exploited market changes in different ways. Entrepreneurship is a way to nurture innovation and surge output effectiveness at the local level (Audretsch, Coad, & Segarra, 2014; Feldman, 2014; Halabi & Lussier, 2014; Marvel, 2012; Peri, 2013; Qian, 2013; Thai & Turkina). Schumpeter (1934) defined innovation as a key stratagem to achieve market probabilities. Both innovation and entrepreneurship encompass the creation of new knowledge and its commercialization (Alegre & Chiva, 2013; Qian, 2013; Sahut & Peris-Ortiz, 2014). Researchers showed that entrepreneurial orientation contributes to new opportunities, has the first mover advantage, and facilitates innovation (Carsrud & Cucculelli, 2014; Zhang, Duysters, & Cloudt, 2014). Entrepreneurship is a powerful influence on U.S. economic development as well as global development (Andersson & Evers, 2015; Griffiths, Gundry, & Kickul, 2013; Henry & Treanor, 2013; Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2015; Millán, Congregado, Román, Praag, & van Stel, 2014; Zhang et al., 2014). Entrepreneurs create opportunities and execute innovation in undefined and mysterious atmospheres (Hlady-Rispal, & Jouison-Laffitte, 2014; Sánchez, 2013).

DeJaeghere and Baxter (2014) and Acs and Sanders (2012) suggested that a strong connection between entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education existed. Entrepreneurship education plays a vital role in developing the skill set used to start-up a small business successfully (Sánchez, 2013). Education in entrepreneurship is central to

both knowledge creation and development of new concepts (Acs & Sanders, 2012; Qian & Acs, 2013). Entrepreneurship is the finding of market prospects and the adoption of the market related values while building a new business or firm (Qian, 2013). The key features of Qian's definition were market opportunities and appropriation.

Business and Business Knowledge

One phenomenon that drives success in small business is an owner human capital that education drove (Becker, 1993; Fisher, Maritz, & Lobo, 2014; Millán et al., 2014; Tang & Murphey, 2012). The act of learning and the acquisition of knowledge confined in this experience is an important process (Toft-Kehler, Wennberg, & Kim, 2014). Training is one of the trepidations involving in starting businesses (de Mel, McKenzie, & Woodruff, 2014; Lichtenstein, 1992; Pruett, 2012). Lichtenstein (1992) claimed the contemporary full-employment situation and slow growth of the 1990s had a significant implication for training in businesses. Business, commercial, or vocational education is an important method of training for business proprietors' use. Several researchers attested to Lichtenstein's argument (Raposo & Do Paço, 2011; Semrau, & Werner, 2012; Tang & Murphy, 2012). Tang and Murphey (2012) suggested past knowledge used in small business success included idiosyncratic information around a specific focus; knowledge accrued through work capability because previous information enriched the production of fresh merchandises and amenities. The launch of new products and services and the expansion into new geographical markets were precursors of small business growth (Naldi & Davidson, 2014; Naldi, Achtenhagen, & Davidsson, 2015), and prior

entrepreneurship knowledge obtained through training and experience enhanced outputs (Tang & Murphey, 2012).

Lofstrom and Bates (2013) claimed higher educational achievement was a progressive forecaster of entry into large and small business ventures. Lawless (2014) maintained that small business start-ups have an improved chance of survival and create jobs. Lofstrom and Bates, reviewing Fairlie's work on Black self-employment entry, compared obtaining a college degree to being a high school dropout; these researchers found no correlation between the two divergent paths. Rather, the relationship between self-employment entry and having a post-secondary education for Blacks was weak (Lofstrom & Bates, 2013). Researchers maintained previous knowledge assets advance business awareness at different stages of the business process (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015). Lofstrom and Bates's findings included considerations based on the history of expert undertakings and interfaces with both competitors and customers (Tang & Murphey, 2012). Raposo and Do Paco (2011) claimed the educational method swayed the knowledge base, the attainment of skills, the expertness, and the positions on which prospective entrepreneurs base their career choices. Raposo and Do Paco (2011) claimed an education decision was important to the prospect of individuals; hence, schools' instructors had an obligation to inform students and expose those students to a range of career options including business education.

Researchers who focused on sustainable business claimed the proprietor shaped the enterprise because human capital, knowledge, and skill endowed the proprietor with such abilities (Bates & Tuck, 2014; Becker, 1993). Knowledge spillover was a

component equal to knowledge creation in new business growth (Acs & Sanders, 2012; Qian & Acs, 2013). Researchers hypothesized an entrepreneur's knowledge and networks related to characteristics in the early venture growth (Davidsson & Gordon, 2012). Grant (1996) concluded knowledge was an asset for owners of new business start-up; Grant combined the RBT and the knowledge-based theory to develop that conclusion. Davidsson and Gordon (2012) claimed knowledge was a tactically essential source that could cement the formation of new project's competitive advantage. Researchers identified the two requirements for success in business start-up; requirements included were aspiration and the skill to prepare (Raposo & do Paco, 2011). Raposo and do Paco (2011) argued business and entrepreneurship education, despite stimulating start-up business, had high market capabilities. Similarly, Link and Welsh (2013) claimed individuals with additional schooling remained likely to pursue new prospects through self-employment.

Scholars identified customer orientation as the central element of marketing (Brockman, Jones, & Becherer, 2012; Bumgardner, Buehlmann, Schuler, & Crissey, 2011). Brockman et al. (2012) maintained customer positioning was the basis for advertising ideas and marketing orientation. Similarly, Bumgardner et al. (2011) concurred familiarity with customers increased a small business's sales during economic slumps.

Qian and Acs (2013) discussed the development of the knowledge production function (KPF) model; this model permits the examination of knowledge spillover from colleges to productions. Results from Qian and Acs's study indicated the generation of

new knowledge becomes significant once the new knowledge becomes widespread and acts as a motivator of commercial development. Drawing from a multiple case study, Lowik, van Rossum, Kraaijenbrink, and Groen (2012) and Scholten, Omta, Kemp, and Elfring (2015) showed a relationship between firms' owners and the use of relational capabilities to obtain new knowledge. Lowik et al. and Scholten et al. argued business owners benefit when they use strong ties as a source of new knowledge for innovation. Lowik et al. and Scholten et al. claimed business managers could benefit from strong ties via the application of bridging capabilities to avoid over-entrenched deception.

Lichtenstein (1992) ascertained business, commercial, or vocational training was an important structure for formal teaching. Lichtenstein argued traineeship programs, high school vocational education, and military training supported skill development of the least fit workers more effectively than did colleges and universities. Chell (2013) stated the acknowledgment by instructors communicating knowledge was essential, however deficient, yet knowledge complemented extensive skills for life, employability, and innovative ability. Becker (1993) claimed the money spent acquiring skills and knowledge was a worthy investment for starting ventures. According to Davidsson and Gordon (2012), academic capital was knowledge that could become income. Ideas, inventions, technologies, software, design, and processes were the components of academic capital. Similarly, Chao and Chandra (2012) and Hewitt-Dundas (2012) claimed academic knowledge was intangible and was a useful resource for generating small business income.

Business and Business Skills

Business, for the past three decades, has emerged as the dominant economic power around the globe (Carlsson et al., 2013; Gill & Biger, 2012; Halabi & Lussier, 2014; Kozan, Oksoy, & Ozsoy, 2012; Raposo & do Paco, 2011). McFarland and McConnell (2013) referred to a small business as a dissimilar group of units of varying proportions, with progressive ambition, businesses, and productivities. Notwithstanding these differences, small businesses go through stages of growth that echo levels of homogeneity of the organization, technical, economic, and other tasks and wants (Lichtenstein, 1992). Management and skill development are essential components of business growth. Additionally, the types of skills used vary with the phase of business development (Blackburn, Hart, & Wainwright, 2013; Mason & Brown, 2013; McFarland & McConnell, 2013).

During the initial stages, McFarland and McConnell claimed small business owners benefit from assistance in cultivating (a) a market stratagem, (b) a working strategy for distributing merchandises and amenities, and (c) a strategy for accumulating resources or capital. Brixy, Sternberg, and Stüber (2012) agreed the important issues for the positive utilization of small business undertakings were comprised of human capital and intellectual physiognomies specifically. Brixy et al. generated this concept from a hypothetical viewpoint and experiential evidence. Schumpeter (1934) argued that starting up a new small business was a multifaceted procedure that entailed accruing a variety of resources before transactions could occur.

Absence in skills of business and management is a precursor of failure in small business (Chell, 2013; Gill & Biger, 2012; Stuetzer, Obschonka, Davidsson, & Schmitt-Rodermund, 2013a). Chell (2013) described skill as a universal belief; this belief includes endowments, capabilities, capacities, expertness, and the talent to carry out tasks in a productive manner. Becker (1993) argued that skills resulted from experience and knowledge primarily. Researchers theorized small business owners who displayed a varied set of labor knowledge had advanced business skills pertinent for beginning and growing businesses (Stuetzer, Obschonka, & Schmitt-Rodermund, 2013b). Investigating a unique example of the nascent venture, Stuetzer et al. (2013a) revealed negative outcomes amongst measures of stable skills and business success. An impartial gauge of equilibrium skill had no association with success; hence, small business owners (professed generalists) remained less likely than others to get a nascent venture started (Stuetzer et al., 2013a).

Business and Economic Development

The observed role of business in economic development continued to spawn more interest amongst scholars. The suggestion among researchers around the world was business was a driver of economic growth and development (Adamonienė & Astromskienė, 2012; Bates, 2011; Bauernschuster, 2013; Eijdenberg, Paas, & Masurel, 2015; Halabi & Lussier, 2014; Hewitt-Dundas, 2012; Kozan et al., 2012; Lamb et al., 2011; Lichtenstein, 1992; McFarland & McConnell, 2013; Nyström, 2013; Preisendoerfer, Bitz, & Bezuidenhout, 2014; Urban & Naidoo, 2012). Small business owners contribute to the economy by increasing the country's gross domestic product and

by creating jobs (Gill & Biger, 2012; Preisendoerfer et al., 2014). Small business owners provide employment opportunities and contribute to the community (Boyd, 2015). Starting a new small business venture is a multifaceted procedure that necessitates accruing a variety of resources before exchanges or other undertakings start (Schumpeter, 1934). However, Schjoedt, Monsen, Pearson, Barnett, and Chrisman (2013) stressed the failure of new ventures was the absence of a satisfactory reserve. A satisfactory reserve was a combination of adequate financial, physical, or intangible assets, the lack of which placed the new small business action in a highly weakened situation.

Andries and Czarnitzki (2014) suggested new behaviors such as regeneration and reconsidering were good measures of the adaptation and change needed to protect the steadiness of trade. Qian (2013) claimed knowledge spillovers were chiefly significant in the framework of local growth because the spillover effect remained. Business growth linked directly to economic development success (Fodor, 2012). Fodor (2012) argued growth was not the reason for the success. According to Fodor, the active economic development program was one that only generated work. The argument that metropolitan growth resulted in job creation and financial wealth is not right; rather, the development of opportunity entices new arrivals to transfer into the area (Fodor, 2012).

The significance of small businesses in the economy is immeasurable (Rogers, 2012). Bauernschuster (2013) claimed small business managers assume the roles of creating a market economy, jobs, manufacturing, and the commercialization of innovations. Henry and Treanor (2013) proffered discussions on growth and economic development, suggesting business managers needed to cultivate uncluttered innovation

methods to allow collaboration between the business community and universities to exploit competences. Small businesses accounted for more than half of the nation's jobs, and these small business owners created 64% of jobs since 1993 (Rogers, 2012). The primary function of small business owners was the creation of new ventures (Schjoedt et al., 2013; Van Gelderen, Kautonen, & Fink, 2015); therefore, establishing new ventures was an acceptable means of generating jobs and employment opportunities (Adkins, Samaras, Gilfillan, & McWee, 2013; Bauernschuster, 2013; Henry & Treanor, 2013; Rogers, 2012).

The concern for financial growth was extensive; leaders in every municipal area, county, state, and region throughout the United States encouraged economic growth (Adkisson, 2011). Adkisson argued the effort toward achieving economic development strategy was thin because of the frail connection between jobs and revenue-generating mechanisms. The aim of leaders who promoted economic development was to generate income and employment for the communities and the region. The expectation was to increase job availability and revenue so monies would transfuse through communities to meet needs such as education, infrastructure development, and park maintenance (Adkisson, 2011). Moreover, with business growth and revenue production, quality of life improves (Adkisson, 2011). New small business start-ups insert vitality into the economy because every new business owner who is entering the market must fund new merchandise and services while widening consumers' choices (Schjoedt et al., 2013). Several researchers attested to the importance of new small business ventures in regional economic growth (Gill & Biger, 2012; Lim, Busenitz, & Chidambaram, 2013;

Schumpeter, 1934). Schumpeter (1934) emphasized the concept of creative destruction, suggesting business activities created new mixtures through innovative methods; innovation frequently resulted in new products or services that might be of benefit to society.

Assimilation

Traditional assimilation theorists foretold that immigrants' socioeconomic realization would surge with increased levels of assimilation and time spent in the United States (Bratsberg, Raaum, & Røed, 2014; Takei & Sakamoto, 2011; Tiagi, 2013). Within the confines of traditional assimilation, researchers have argued that first, second, and third generations of marginal groups would assimilate progressively, acquire higher education, possess well-matched skills, and be competitive in the labor market (Takei & Sakamoto, 2011). An opposing view came from Binggeli et al. (2013), who claimed that physical hurdles (race and skin color) determined the type of prospects accessible to immigrants. For instance, Blacks experienced more hiring discrimination than do non-Blacks. Black small business owners or entrepreneurs have less access to financial capital than have Whites in small business start-up (Lofstrom & Bates, 2013; Ogbolu & Singh, 2013). Similarly, researchers claimed immigrant and minority small business owners faced financial disadvantages when obtaining start-up capital (Belleflamme, Lambert, & Schwienbacher, 2014; Casey, 2012; Lofstrom & Bates, 2013; Mijid & Bernasek, 2013; Ogbolu & Singh, 2013).

Building networks among immigrant groups are challenging (Hoelscher & Elango, 2012); immigrants have the lowest success rate when using networks to locate

jobs. Omar (2011) and Wang (2012) claimed the difficulties in locating a job and the perception of disadvantage were motivators for immigrants' self-employment.

Researchers have agreed that immigrants and minorities venture into small business because of the inability to locate jobs and out of necessity (Mijid & Bernasek, 2013; Wang, 2012). Researchers argued policies based on qualitative restrictions within immigration policies formulated between the 1920s and the 1960s were problematic, discriminatory, and these policies did not fulfill the intended purposes of the legislators (Guryan & Charles, 2013). Notwithstanding, the lag in immigration during the 1920s hastened the assimilation of new arrivals (Bratsberg et al., 2014).

The question is why a significant number of highly educated immigrants drive taxis (Thomas, 2010). Omar (2011) ascertained the difficulties associated with finding jobs were the reason immigrants have these jobs. The segmented assimilation theory was useful to argue that fundamental forces affected the social agility of immigrants differently; immigrants' experienced dissimilar patterns of integration in host societies (Bell, Marquardt, & Berry, 2014). Despite the difficulties immigrants have finding jobs globally, those who venture into small business ownership tend to lack the necessary knowledge (Sarasvathy et al., 2013) and skills (Baptista, Lima, & Preto, 2013; Conrad, & Newberry, 2012; Stuetzer et al., 2013a) to succeed in business beyond 5 years. Park, Nawyn, and Benetsky (2015) claimed the post-1965 immigrants were ethnically and economically dissimilar to pre-1965 immigrants, which affected the intergenerational progress significantly. The argument was the bourgeois-dominated the economic framework, and the working class held jobs in an hourglass economy with diverged

economic opportunity (Bratsberg et al., 2014). Thomas (2010) and Bell et al. (2014) argued barriers such as discriminatory hiring practices limited work-related mobility of Blacks and non-White immigrants.

Acculturation

Acculturation plays a role in determining downward and upward economic mobility of immigrant populations. The acculturation model presupposes individuals become knowledgeable in the majority culture while they continue to retain and maintain their minority cultural identity (Valencia-Garcia, Simoni, Alegría, & Takeuchi, 2012; Villar, Concha, & Zamith, 2012). Several scholars noted immigrants' socioeconomic well-being was of significance (Danso & Lum, 2013; Stevens, Hussein, & Manthorpe, 2012). Scholars agreed on discrimination, and injustice were detrimental to the acculturation and upward economic mobility of the immigrant group (Binggeli et al., 2013; Guryan & Charles, 2013; Johnson, Meyers, & Williams, 2013; Stevens et al., 2012).

Lofstrom and Bates (2013) claimed ethnic dissimilarities in asset levels of Black business owners played a part in clarifying the ethnic gap in the entrance ratio. When compared to the percentage of White-owned business (82%), minorities and immigrants remain underrepresented among small business owners in the United States (Mijid & Bernasek, 2013). The Black and White self-employment gap resulted from Blacks' lesser education and assets, and discriminatory lending practices of the financial institutions (Bates & Robb, 2013; Mijid & Bemasek, 2013; Oyelere & Belton, 2013). Home-country

education may not translate to sufficient earnings given dissimilarities in credentialing and evaluation of their human wealth in the United States (Elo et al., 2015).

Understanding the effect of acculturation on work values among African immigrants in Philadelphia involves consideration of their potentials, businesses, and underemployment status. Stevens et al. (2012) claimed immigrants in industrialized nations inhabited disproportionate roles in a segmented labor market, creating a secondary labor market. A secondary labor market was synonymous with low wages and low status, which made recruiting enough workers from the host country difficult. Lofstrom and Bates (2013) claimed the entry process to small business ownership seemed more challenging for minorities because minorities must cope with higher entry barriers than must Whites. Small business owners' faced challenges because of cultural differences, and the lending practices of the banks impaired Blacks. Differences in access to financial capital were amenable to White business owners' abilities to develop enterprises (Lofstrom & Bates, 2013).

Acculturation refers to how immigrants adjust to a new culture by abandoning their language and cultural customs and adapting to the cultural traits of the host country (Chen, 2013; Valencia-Garcia et al., 2012; Villar et al., 2012). Researchers referred to acculturation as cultural or behavioral assimilation (Stevens et al., 2012). Small business ownership, hence, is both cultural and behavioral assimilation. Immigrants had to learn the business manners and practices of the host country to survive economically (Johnson et al., 2013). The assimilation process determined the difference between acculturation

models and assimilation models adaptation, in which individuals gave up their minority cultural identity and accepted the cultural identity of the majority (Elo et al., 2015).

African Immigrants and Ethnic Minority Business

The perceived role of minority small business in economic development has continued to spawn research amongst scholars (Bate & Robb, 2013; Fong, Chen, & Luk, 2012; Sonfield, 2014). A minority business is a business with 51% non-White ownership (Sonfield, 2014). Wang (2013) described an ethnic minority business as a multi-faceted endeavor in which cultural business owners operated through a diverse mixture of plans grounded in individual, family, and group physiognomies, societal wealth, communal influences, and arrogances, and biased knowledge. The minority-owned business was a major component of the United States' economy, and the success of minority business owners benefited the economy by creating jobs and inspiring economic growth in suffering inner-city areas (Dayanim, 2011; Liu, 2012; Liu, Painter, & Wang, 2014). Despite these prospects, minority business owners continue to meet difficulties when trying to gain entrance into the broader economy (Boyd, 2012; Boyd, 2015; Dayanim, 2011). Bates and Robb (2013) claimed the lack of key physiognomies such as skills, knowledge, understanding, and enough capital will continue to have a negative outcome for small business owners' endowments.

The popular notion that war, poverty, starvation, tribal warfare, and environmental degradation are the root causes of mass migration from Africa to the United States is a myth (Thomas, 2011). The increase in African population to the United States occurred because of immigration policies (Awokoya, 2012). The African

population increased from approximately 35,000 to over 1.4 million between 1960 and 2007 (Awokoya, 2012). African immigrants have high human and economic capital (Thomas, 2011). Despite their educational achievement, and despite adding American credentials to their repertoires and resumes, African immigrants continue to experience lower job status and earnings (Esses, Bennett-AbuAyyash, & Lapshina, 2014; Hamilton, 2014). Out of necessity, small business ownership becomes an alternative way to provide a worthy living (Rocha et al., 2015).

Casey (2012) suggested minority small business owners were the fastest growing sector of the economy. However, minority groups are at a disadvantage, and entrenched minorities remain branded by less prosperity than have Whites and by inferior education, job knowledge, and lack of bank connections. In Philadelphia, for example, examining the Minority Business Development Subcommittee Review, Dayanim (2011) found differences in the involvement levels of minority-owned small businesses in the overall economy. Dayanim argued, despite minorities comprising over 56% of Philadelphia's population, minorities owned 24.7% of all businesses, accounting for 2.2% of gross earnings.

Casey (2012) claimed there are gaps in the existing policies designed to connect those small business owners who have been historically disadvantaged and who lacked access to the official monetary capitals essential for business labors. Bates and Tuck (2014) argued economic opportunity loans had poor administrators and had an inadequate accomplishment rate. This limited accomplishment arose when lending actions missed the targeted population. Several researchers concurred despite the abolishment of the

economic opportunity loan program in 1984 (Bates & Tuck, 2014; Bates & Robb, 2013; Casey, 2012; Dayanim, 2011).

Despite the implementation of new policies designed to help business ownership, immigrants and minorities continued to have limited success in obtaining financial resources suitable to maintaining a sustainable business. Wang (2012) claimed the structure of a regional market was a consideration of researchers who explored individual and group physiognomies to understand ethnic and immigrant businesses. Wang asserted the success of ethnic and immigrant small business start-ups depended on the immigration gateway; immigration gateways meaningfully affect the socioeconomic, cultural, and organized setting for ethnic and immigrant small business ownership (Wang, 2012). Philadelphia is not an immigration gateway like New York and Los Angeles (Katz et al., 2010); however, Philadelphia's immigrant population is over 500,000, and over 20,000 of these immigrants are from African nations (Katz et al., 2010).

Small Business Ownership and Self-Employment

There has been consensus among scholars that underemployment and unemployment were precursors to immigrants' chase of small business ownership ventures (Block, Kohn, Miller, & Ullrich, 2015; Boyd, 2012; Boyd, 2015; Fairlie, 2013; Lofstrom & Bates, 2013; Low & Weiler, 2012; Wang & Lysenko, 2014). However, building on a review of the literature, researchers showed how embarking on new business ventures influenced job creation, economic development, and personal wealth, and was not simply a way of avoiding underemployment or unemployment (e.g., Alexy,

Block, Sandner, & Ter Wal, 2012; Seghers et al., 2012; Van der Waal, 2012). There was a positive effect on work growth when a new small business opened (Nason & Wiklund, 2015).

There has been objective and the subjective perspectives on underemployment in the literature (Scurry & Blenkinsopp, 2011). Scurry and Blenkinsopp (2011) defined graduate underemployment within the context of an objective perspective regarding the level of application of individual human capital within the accepted standard for their referent group. Underemployment was a weighted measure of persons in professions; measures included the level of income, educational need, or hours worked. Statisticians' measure of objective underemployment drew upon established customs to show the length of underemployment of an individual (Esses et al., 2014; George, Chaze, Fuller-Thomson, & Brennenstuhl, 2012). Researchers, who used a subjective perspective on underemployment, discovered and recognized individual explanations of employment situations while focusing on skills and abilities (George et al., 2012; Scurry & Blenkinsopp, 2011; Wang & Lysenko, 2014). Lawless (2014) claimed new small business formations accounted for the total net job creation in the economy.

Economic and Labor Integration of Immigrants

In this subsection of the literature review, I discuss findings on the socioeconomic and labor market integration of racial and ethnic minority immigrants. I focus this review on the integration and adjustment of immigrants and their economic performances. The aim is to identify research findings, essentially those related to business strategies (knowledge and skills) of immigrants' labor market access, and underemployment.

Unemployment and underemployment are precursors to immigrants' pursuit of small business ownership ventures (Katz et al., 2010; Low & Weiler, 2012; Rhee, Chi, & Yi, 2015; Scurry & Blenkinsopp, 2011).

There have been few studies on immigrants' progress in Philadelphia (Corra & Borch, 2014; Dayanim, 2011). Corra and Borch (2014), Light (1979), Stevens et al. (2012), and Binggeli et al. (2013) claimed the rate at which minority groups face labor discrimination in the United States needed further scholarly investigation. Corra and Borch (2014) argued the relationship of race in the United States has endured necessary changes, and the existence probabilities of individual Blacks relate to economic class rather than with encounters with Whites.

There was a consensus among scholars regarding the push and pull factors motivating the early immigrants during the 19th and 20th centuries to migrate to the New World (Murtin & Viarengo, 2010; Omar, 2011). Murtin and Viarengo (2010) argued the abundance of land in the new world was the pull factor; push factors included limited opportunity in the home country, coupled with deteriorating economic and political conditions. Omar (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of earlier studies and found push factors obstructed the immigrants from those employed in normal positions in the job market that made immigrants turn to self-employment. Rachel (2002) had an opposing view. According to this researcher, higher education and professional achievement opportunities were the driving force behind immigration decisions.

Scholars who explored the labor market disadvantaged theory found immigrants and minorities encountered social discrimination, low wages, and rejection by the labor

market. These people turned to self-employment as an outlet for financial aspirations (Abdullah et al., 2012; Block et al., 2015; Ragsdale, 2013; Talib et al., 2012; Yang & Aldrich, 2014). Self-employment was more attractive than low salaries and wages because immigrants and minorities perceived self-employment as having the potential for higher earnings, improved professional standing, independence, and flexible time schedules suitable for their family (Abdullah et al., 2012; Low & Weiler, 2012; Omar, 2011). Harell, Soroka, Iyengar, and Valentino (2012) examined the literature on immigrants' economic characteristics and found researchers used a theory involving neoclassical economic choice. Migration occurred when the earnings expected in the host country exceeded those in the sending country.

Labor market discrimination, employment and income disparities, occupational segregation, and racial discrimination prevailed among African Americans, African immigrants, West Indians, and people with dark skin (Boyd, 2012; Hall & Crowder, 2014; Light, 1979; Wang, 2012). This discrimination resulted in lower rates of employment, lower wages, and exclusion from upward economic mobility (Hyde, Pais, & Wallace, 2015). Omar (2011) contended there were increases in self-employment among immigrants; increases were unrelated to ethnicity in Western societies even though self-employment was a component of immigrant economic mobility. Chrysostome (2010) claimed labor market discrimination among foreign-born minorities was due to education and language deficiencies. Although Lofstrom and Bates (2013) found Black business owners faced racial barriers obtaining start-up loans, these researchers agreed human capital (education and work experiences) were important components of success.

African American and Black Immigrant Business Communities

Katz et al. (2010) asserted intense competition in hunting for housing, and jobs happened more regularly between African Americans and immigrants than amid immigrants U.S. Whites. Singer et al. (2008) claimed the relationship between African Americans and Black immigrants is tense. Social issues confronting Philadelphia and other cities in the United States included immigrants who achieved social mobility and gains in wealth. Concomitantly, African Americans experienced constant discrimination, inequality, and segregation (Campbell, 2014; Hyde et al., 2015). There was a consensus among scholars regarding patterns of inequality that became pivotal points of the sociological enterprise (Fukui & Menjivar, 2015; George, McGahan, & Prabhu, 2012; Hyde et al., 2015). Essential to this area of the investigation were the role shape indicators such as income, employment patterns, housing, and health. George et al. (2012) and Hyde et al. (2015) claimed that when researchers used indicators of inequality, they overlooked human experiences. Researchers failed to appraise individual experiences, feelings, social positions, and the subjective experiences and appraisals of a person's life.

Prejudice and bias marked the arrogance Whites directed at minorities and immigrants from different nations who had different cultures and languages (Akbari & Aydede, 2013; Kolivoski et al., 2014). Singer et al. (2008) claimed both African Americans and the new immigrants shared the same movement of Black people displaced from Africa, South American, and the Caribbean. There are dissimilarities between their knowledge. African Americans and Caribbean peoples had experienced slavery while

African and Haitian immigrants experienced civil war and refugee crises. Consequently, Philadelphia's Black immigrants are diverse in education, nationality, tribal affiliations, language, occupation, migration experiences, and status (Singer et al., 2008). Sorensen and Sharkey (2014) argued economic inequality was prevalent among native-born and immigrants alike, either because these people lacked sufficient work, had jobs that were not conducive to advancement, or earned low wages or salaries.

Immigrants frequently own stores in African American neighborhoods (Singer et al., 2008). People chose business ownership to avoid the disadvantaged labor market (Abdullah et al., 2012; Chrysostome, 2010; Bell et al. (2014). From an economic perspective in which job quality remains bifurcated based on education and skills, an important question exists regarding the chances for quality employment and economic mobility among immigrant small business owners (Sporlein & van Tubergen, 2014). These concerns are crucial because, when compared to their native-born counterparts, immigrants' economic well-being affects their employment circumstances (Sporlein & van Tubergen, 2014).

Human and Social Capital

Alexy et al. (2012) claimed researchers focused on the role of social capital in the business and the social capital of business owners. Researchers failed to recognize the important role venture capitalists played in the progression and success of the small business (Alexy et al., 2012). Alexy et al. claimed a strong social network of venture capital should not only clench prospects for start-ups, but also for the venture capitalists themselves by providing access to the latest information. Such information might include

knowledge of new ventures and market environment. Hoelscher and Elango 2012) suggested business owners should join associations as a component of the network process critical to the attaining of support and assets for sustainability and innovation. Colombo, Laursen, Magnusson, and Rossi-Lamastra (2012) asserted the financial difficulties business owners faced limited their ability to make research and development investments, match assets needed to commercialize innovation; these inabilities resulted in meager innovation output.

Schooling was as an investment in human capital (Becker, 1993). Economists used the human capital theory to analyze economic issues, to gauge personal and societal rates of return to individuals and groups for investments made at various stages of education (Becker, 1993; Santarelli & Tran, 2013). Praag et al. (2013) referred to human capital as the accumulation of skills and knowledge pertinent to the execution of labor to create economic worth. The workforce and population growth of the Philadelphia metropolitan area were due to increased migration (Katz et al., 2010). Katz et al. (2010) argued the differentiation of Philadelphia's population resulted from the simultaneous influx of labor migrants, refugees, and long-lasting immigrants. Katz et al. claimed this differentiation reflected differences between groups in education, occupation, and income.

Katz et al. (2010) noted immigrants moved to Philadelphia in pursuit of employment that matched their credentials; immigrants settled in regions that have jobs with high wages in medical, pharmaceutical, and information technology industries. Hu (2014) claimed the spatial systems of jobs and housing, coupled with human capital and

socioeconomic physiognomies, created uneven labor market results for the underprivileged. Hu explained how disadvantaged minorities remained constrained in the inner cities, with fewer residential choices than have others. Many organizational leaders outsourced to the suburbs; the disadvantaged residents of the inner cities lack transportation to the relocated suburban job centers (Hu, 2014).

The argument is the host nation's schooling, and linguistics can increase immigrants' financial performance (Kaida, 2013). The levels of education of African immigrant business owners sustain small business knowledge and skill, ability and success (Rogers, 2012). Takei and Sakamoto (2011) explained that having higher educational attainment does not prevent labor market discrimination. Hence, non-White immigrants must invest more in human capital to obtain similar socioeconomic recompense, as have Whites. Takei and Sakamoto established that some immigrants emanate within the range of socioeconomic sameness with Whites because of overreaching in educational accomplishments.

A portion of the 2013 immigrant population had diverse socioeconomic backgrounds (Morrison, 2012) that echoed a pattern of demographics and deep division among educated and wealthy individuals and individuals who had less education and wealth. Creese and Wiebe (2012); Nunes, Gonçalves, and Serrasqueiro (2013); and Kerr and Turner (2015) noted the upward mobility of immigrants depends on how much education and high-tech jobs skills they have, and claimed this adaptation tends to follow a new hourglass subdivision found in the United States' economy and society. Kerr and

Turner (2015) and Kerr, Kerr, and Lincoln (2015) claimed immigrant small business owners play essential roles in high-tech industries in the United States.

Small Business Motivation

Hoelscher and Elango (2012) and Thomas (2011) claimed the motivation and circumstance of individual immigrants were different, as were adaptation and experience. For female business owners, Adkins et al. (2013) claimed their motivation to venture into business was to have a work-life balance. Scholars established that self-employment entrance and business proprietorship by minorities was unfulfilled (Bates & Tuck, 2014; Ogbolu & Singh, 2013), and by interconnected marvels of little household prosperity and inadequate funds appropriating opportunities, or fiscal wealth restraints (Bates & Tuck, 2014). Motivation remained a share of the human essence including feelings, reasoning, opportunities, and principles (Block, Sandner, & Spiegel, 2015). The human essence shaped motivators pressed individuals above the rim of commercial conceptualization on to venture start-up and growth (Brixy et al., 2012).

Researchers described motivations as driving forces compelling business owners to combine assets, resources, and knowledge to initiate profit-producing enterprises (Brixy et al., 2012). This description echoed Schumpeter's (1934) interpretation of what the business was. Business motivation streamed from two ways, push and pull factors. Theorists claimed motivational factors were part of a business management decision matrix; a single set of circumstances pushed persons to act, and a dissimilar set of circumstances pulled persons to follow a set goal (Bates & Robb, 2014; Omar, 2011). Scholars who explored the labor market disadvantaged theory found immigrants and

minorities encountered social discrimination, low wages, and rejection by the labor market. These people turned to self-employment as an outlet for financial aspirations (Abdullah et al., 2012; Chrysostome, 2010; Yang & Aldrich, 2014). Self-employment seemed more attractive than salaries and wages because immigrants and minorities thought self-employment held the possibility of higher earnings, improved professional standing, independence, and flexible time schedules as suitable for their family (Abdullah et al., 2012; Omar, 2011).

Objectives, goals, and intents are a share of the motivation that leads to small business conduct (Brixy et al., 2012; Renko, 2013). Based on an experiential model, researchers incorporated variables covering three measures, individual physiognomies, microenvironments, and regional settings (Brixy et al., 2012). The outcome showed these three scales affect motivation levels to pursue business ownership (Brixy et al., 2012). Scholars methodically verified the motivations, commercial stratagems, and public capital of Black business owners (Bates & Robb, 2014). Liu (2012) claimed inherent motivators such as having independence, desiring prosperity, and attaining admiration were mental drivers for African Americans. Omar (2011) posited that push factors obstructed immigrants from normal employment in the job market and forced them (immigrants) into self-employment.

Business Location and Neighborhood Integration

Philadelphia has different neighborhoods; South Philadelphia was the quintessential portal for European immigrants who arrived during the 20th century (Singer et al., 2008). Katz et al. (2010) noted the combination markers of social and

demographic and characteristics of immigrants transfer to the neighborhoods in which they reside, intersecting the area with several unique residential configurations.

Scholarship concerning minority small business in a neighborhood framework is scarce.

A few notable researchers addressed this connection. Dayanim (2011) noted residential segregation might shift to the advantage of minority small business owners by creating a secure market of co-ethnic clientele. Dayanim (2011) asserted that a secure market or ethnic district could pose limitations on minority small businesses despite the ethnic constituency providing co-ethnic minority businesses with exceptional prospects.

A penetration into the broader economy is important for these small businesses to excel. According to Wang (2013), the community, peoples' beliefs, and the established measurements of framework where small business or entrepreneurship starts and cultivates continually ensure spatial possibilities and balances. Katz et al. discussed the distribution of immigrants within municipalities. Takei and Sakamoto (2011) claimed Whites gained socioeconomic advantages because of structural arrangements that provided better prospects regarding upper-status housing districts. Takei and Sakamoto (2011) claimed that non-Whites integrated into lesser positions in the racialized stratification structure.

Immigrants and Language Deficiencies

Several scholars have argued that newly arrived immigrants with limited English proficiency face linguistic challenges in obtaining employment (Chrysostome, 2010; Katz et al., 2010). Kaida (2013) argued the ability to read and write English is a skill necessary for immigrant integration. Without proficiency in the English language, immigrants have

difficulties in the United States in gaining access to the job market. Linguistic acculturation related to immigrants' success in the labor market (Elo et al., 2015). Researchers have used various theories to explain why immigrants pursue small business and why each group differs one from the other (Bates & Tuck, 2014). Wang (2013) argued that such human capital as English skill, training, and experience in business affected the growth and start-up potential of the immigrant small business owners. A report by the Migration Policy Institute (Singer et al., 2008) showed American English language training capacity was deficient. Kaida (2013) agreed immigrants could acquire skills in the language of the host country not only with language training providers but also merely with interactions with neighbors, friends, co-workers, and the media. Language skill is vital to immigrants' survivability and directly affects economic performance (Hamilton, 2014; Kaida, 2013; Wang, 2013).

Caplan (2012) argued that the assumption that those born in the United States and those born in other countries with the same education had the same skills was defective. Caplan also claimed the two groups were different from one another because the native-born spoke English well and the identically educated foreigners did not. The difference between physical skills and language skills became an important area to explore. As Caplan noted, the difference between physical skills and language skills was empirically important. When there was an increase in immigration, the native workers switched to language-based occupations that paid higher wages and avoided low-wage occupations requiring physical labor (Caplan, 2012).

Disparities in Capital Access

Researchers investigated small business owners' characteristics such as aversion to risk-taking or change and found growth occurred with different degrees of success (Block, Sandner, & Spiegel, 2015; Kozan et al., 2012). Bates and Robb (2013) and Lofstrom and Bates (2013) agreed financial capital constraints shaped self-employment entry. Bates and Robb (2013) quantified the lending practices of financial institutions, and found for start-up and existing small businesses, Black and immigrant entrepreneurs have less access to the capital needed to succeed in business. Despite having access to the same labor force and having opportunities to participate in small business ownership, immigrants and minorities remain economically disadvantaged (Bengtsson, & Hsu, 2015; Danso & Lum, 2013; Hyde et al., 2015).

Bates and Robb (2013) and Bates and Robb (2015) noted minorities are less likely to obtain loans, received smaller loans, feared rejection, and experienced higher denial rates than do non-minorities. Lofstrom and Bates (2013) claimed the view that financial obstacles hindered start-up operations of minority-owned small business were a myth. Nonetheless, where the funding needs were not small, restrictions existed, and small business owners with low net worth could not secure loans (Lofstrom & Bates, 2013). Bates and Robb (2013) and Blount, Smith, and Hill (2013) claimed the deficiency of accomplishment amid Black-owned enterprises related to higher rates of business failure, and lower sales and profitability; these elements connected directly to lower levels of start-up principal, education, commerce, human capital, and disadvantaged family business nurture.

Rogers (2012) examined the effect of race on business formation and survival, and noted minorities were more likely to start small businesses; however, this group was less likely to succeed. Rogers claimed a small business owner's educational attainment and the background was a major determining factor of his or her financial capital structure for business start-ups. Bates and Robb (2014) claimed access to equity capital was one obstacle that deprived inner-city business markets. The significance of small businesses to the nations' economy is immeasurable (Rogers, 2012). Small business owners account for more than half of U.S. job development (Rogers, 2012). These small business owners created 64% of jobs since 1993; 32% of these jobs emanated from newly established businesses (Rogers, 2012).

Transition and Summary

In Section 1, I introduced African immigrants in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who migrated in search of economic, educational, and social opportunities. The focus of this research is to explore African immigrants' small businesses success strategies. Exploring small business success strategies among this group of small business owners may shed light on the adequacy of skills to succeed in business. In this section are explanations of the Nature of the Study, the Research Question, and the Conceptual Framework. The operational definitions were an introduction to the key terms used in this proposal, while the Significance of the Study highlighted how this study fits the research continuum. The intent is to explore first-generation immigrants' experiences in the United States, drawing from research regarding immigrant issues, specifically, small business strategies used to succeed in business. The discussions included in the literature review were the small

business knowledge and skills to succeed in business, and the underemployment challenges immigrants face in Philadelphia, prompting their pursuit of small business opportunities. Researchers have agreed an economic outcome among recent immigrants relates to earnings patterns and education attainment (Corra & Borch, 2014; Hamilton, 2014; Wang & Lysenko, 2014).

In Section 2, I outline the plan for the project and end with a discussion on reliability and validity as related to this research. In Section 3, I include an introduction to the study, discuss the purpose of the study, the research question, a brief summary of the findings, and provide a detailed explanation of the outcomes of this study. Section 3 also includes the presentation of the study findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, and recommendations for further study, my reflections, and a conclusion.

Section 2: The Project

Using a multiple case study approach, I explored the strategies that African immigrant small business owners used to succeed in business beyond 5 years in western Philadelphia. In this section, I discuss the purpose of this study, explain my role in the research process, and introduce the research method and design. I also include the questions and protocol I used in interviewing my participants. I also discuss issues related to ethics and reliability and validity of data.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that African immigrant small business owners in the United States use to succeed in business beyond 5 years. African immigrants who own small businesses in western Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, comprised the target population. Semistructured interviews were conducted with three African immigrant small business owners who had ongoing business operations for more than 5 years. By developing information useful to small business owners interested in increasing the longevity of their enterprises, I hope to stimulate positive social change. With more information about successful business strategies, other African immigrant small business owners may be better able to contribute to the local economy and create additional jobs. City managers might gain a deeper understanding of the factors that influence business decision-making among this select group of small business owners.

Role of the Researcher

My interest in conducting this research stemmed from my education in international business and my experience being a first-generation immigrant and experiencing difficulty locating a job matching my human capital investments such as investments in educations (Becker, 1993). I also turned to small business ownership and experienced failure because of my inability to obtain start-up capital. My interest in this topic further developed from reading business articles on the barriers facing U.S. immigrant and minority small business owners in starting up and developing their businesses (Bates & Tuck, 2014; Casey, 2012; Lofstrom & Bates, 2013). Networking with small business owners and small business support groups in Philadelphia, I uncovered a variety of problems facing African immigrant small business owners. For example, I learned that many business owners lack adequate strategies necessary for success in small business ventures (Bates & Tuck, 2014). The other drawback that I learned about was the inability of immigrant African small business owners to obtain loans needed to survive in business (Casey, 2012; Lofstrom & Bates, 2013).

In conducting this investigation, I sought to increase understanding of the phenomenon of business success strategies as experienced by African immigrant small business owners. My role in this project included designing the study, selecting participants, and collecting, organizing, and analyzing data. From a social constructivist viewpoint, research is participatory and involves the exchange of ideas between the researcher and participants (Kahlke, 2014). Equally important, the researcher must design the study in a way that allows participants to define and relay their own understandings of

social phenomena (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). I assumed the role of co-instrument. The role of the co-instrument is to participate in the study and collect, analyze, and interpret data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). My role was to identify themes and meanings that might emerge from the dialog.

Bradbury-Jones and Broadhurst (2015) claimed that participatory research is a combined initiative of exploration and understanding, which uses the lens of the participant to view reality. As written in the Belmont Report (1979), researchers should respect participants and curtail risks for participants by using consent forms and impartially managed processes (Davidson & Page, 2012; DuBois et al., 2012). I adhered to and supported these guidelines for ethical conduct by making sure that my participants entered the research freely and by guaranteeing that the participants comprehended what I expected from them. Following Walden University's ethical guidelines (2012) was requisite for the maintaining of quality and safeguarding the significance of this study. Walden University's IRB approval number for this study is 08-12-15-0283181; it expires on August 11, 2016.

Contributors received an interview guide and a list of prospects (see Appendix A and Appendix B). Qualitative researchers perform the roles of the interviewer, witness, moderator, experimenter, and facilitator (Hlady-Rispal & Jouison-Laffitte, 2014; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). However, an intrinsic predisposition exists in each of these roles. For example, a researcher might unintentionally include bias in the method and design choice. Equally important, the interviewer's body language and presence might affect

participant responses (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). As suggested by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011), I used audio recording equipment during my interviews.

As suggested by Bell (2013), I used Dedoose to sort and code collected data. I followed the recommendations of Tufford and Newman (2012) and Chan, Fung, and Chien (2013) and used bracketing as a method of curtailing the undignified effects of presumptions or introduction of biases on the study's outcomes during data analysis and interpretation. The use of bracketing mitigated my assumptions about the phenomenon and allowed subjective engagement with the collected data (Chan et al., 2013). When conducting a qualitative research, a researcher must be neutral during data collection process.

The qualitative meeting is an in-depth instrument used to collect contributors' experiences with small business strategies. When conducting qualitative research, the researcher must be mindful of self, must not be overly modest, and must recognize self as an exclusive and imperfect instrument (Knight, 2012; Mukeredzi, 2012; Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012; Xu, & Storr, 2012). A researcher's connection with a study occurs during conceptualization processes, proposal phases, and through to the conclusion of the project (Knight, 2012; Mukeredzi, 2012). At any of these stages, a researcher might sway the study disproportionately (Mukeredzi, 2012). Consequently, cautious researchers will declare the nature of any association with the study and pinpoint the management plans for their role in the project (Knight, 2012; Mukeredzi, 2012). To undermine the introduction of bias into this study, I did not select participants who have an existing or association with me, or who have prior knowledge of my attempts to

develop a small business. Therefore, through this research, I will shed light to the variety of problems facing African immigrant small business owners' ability to stay in business beyond 5 years.

Participants

The focus of this study was the African immigrant community in western Philadelphia. Among this population were first-generation small business owners who have the lived experience of the phenomenon. Any African immigrant who had a small business older than 5 years, and who was currently operating within the physical boundaries of western Philadelphia was eligible to participate in this study. These potential participants were active members of the Philadelphia business community.

Business leaders publish directories for the city regularly. These directories contained contact information of local business owners. I used the directories to contact potential candidates by telephone or email to inquire about their interest in participating in the proposed study. Candidates were (a) an African immigrant small business owner who resided in the City of Philadelphia, (b) a first-generation immigrant, (c) one who possessed an active business license, (d) was operating a business currently, and (e) had no projected business closure date. Each participant's immigration status matched the criteria as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (2014). Furthermore, each participant had a positive history of engaging in small business to provide a worthy living for their families and had an active business older than 5 years. Moreover, there were no vulnerable groups targeted to be in the study. In a small business, as with any other occupation where

persons with disabilities might work, no discrimination occurred by omitting these individuals.

I purposively selected three African immigrant small business owners as participants for this study from the local business directories. According to Yin (2009), using three participants was adequate for developing a convincing outcome in a multiple case study. Purposive sampling is criterion-based and is a useful tool for choosing participants who have rich information to contribute to a study (Robinson, 2014). According to Andersson and Evers (2015), three participants are sufficient to achieve saturation in the data collected.

In qualitative research, employing numerous procedures for accessing research participants introduces rigor and a degree of randomization to the selection procedure (Bernard, 2013; Trainor & Leko, 2014; Whiteley, 2012). The selected population for this study was African immigrant small business owners in western Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. I contacted possible interviewees listed in the Philadelphia Business Service Center (BSC) via phone and email (Philadelphia Department of Commerce, 2015). The city of Philadelphia's BSC has a public website and administrators maintain a small business directory as part of a citywide platform to help stimulate minority-owned small businesses. This directory has the names, e-mails, business addresses, and phone numbers of possible participants. These public records were retrievable via Internet searches and small business owners' websites. I purposefully selected three African immigrant small business owners in western Philadelphia from this directory and contacted them via phone or email. The three business owners agreed to participate in the

study and signed consent forms sent via email. The expectation was that conducting interviews would take two weeks, and the allowance of 1 week for transcription and data analysis seemed adequate. The consent form contained my contact information to allow the participants a chance to share their questions or concerns.

Mukeredzi (2012) claimed qualitative inquiry requires the researcher to approach participants with openness. Overpowering fear and nervousness are often part of the researcher's inspiration to continue with the data gathering procedures. In qualitative multiple case study research, a researcher must ensure that each participant has the experience of the phenomenon (Ferrazzi & Krupa, 2015; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009).

McNamara et al. (2015) claimed a good working relationship between the participants and the researcher might improve by following eight principles or stages of motivational interviewing, which include choosing a setting that has a little distraction, explaining the reason for the interview, addressing confidentiality, and explaining the format of the interview. McNamara suggested a researcher should indicate how long the interview would take; the consent form, according to Laerkner, Egerod, and Hansen (2015) should include information about the participants' options.

The consent form is an agreement between the participant and the researcher (Lauckner, Paterson, & Krupa, 2012; Rupp et al., 2015). Researchers use consent forms to provide participants with the ability to make an educated and informed decision about contributing to the study (Lauckner et al., 2012). The consent form included a confidentiality agreement between the two parties; the researcher and the participant (see Appendix C). The integrity of the research, ethical standards, and the protection of the

participants' legal rights were my responsibilities. McNamara (2013) claimed trust building was a consideration that might lead to success during research endeavors. Building rapport between participant and researcher was multidimensional (Bell, 2013). The researcher's relationship with the participant developed during the initial contact and recruitment phases, and during the interview and follow-up contact (Bell, 2013; Kaplan, 2014). Each participant acted as a self-governing agent, and each participant received respectful treatment in agreement with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) principle. The NIH values implementation ensured no harm and guaranteed just treatment of study participants.

Data security measures are necessary to protect the participants' personal information and identities, their rights, and the reliability of the research. The data retention plan for this study aligned with the university's IRB guidelines as suggested by Aluwihare-Samaranayake (2012) and Lauckner et al. (2012). All data will remain in a safe at researcher's home where no one else will have access to the key combinations. These security measures are necessary to preserve and protect the integrity of the research and maintain the identity of the research participants. The use of pseudonyms during analysis and interpretation protected the individual identities of the participants; Bell (2013) suggested this technique. I coded the participants' identities using an alphanumeric system (for example, small business participant 1 was SB1). I stored the data in a safe, and will use KillDisk software to destroy the research data after 5 years. The storage includes the securing of research resources with 256-bit encryption and

preservation of the encrypted data for 5 years. Upon the conclusion of the required storage period, burning the storage device is the method chosen for data destruction.

Research Method and Design

The qualitative method was relevant to this study, and the design used was a multiple case study method. The qualitative method has numerous physiognomies that reinforce the study choice and research query. According to Hlady-Rispal and Jouison-Laffitte (2014), Lindenmeyer et al. (2014), and Snyder (2012) these comprised the usage of numerous sources of data and the capability of an investigator to make an explanation of the data, to use a theoretic lens, and to cultivate a multifaceted depiction of the problem.

Research Method

The qualitative method is ideal for the exploration of human experience (Yin, 2009). Scholars attested to the contributions of qualitative researchers to the body of knowledge in various disciplines (Denzin, 2013; Harrison, Yu, Dicker, & Doyle, 2012). Pugach, Mukhopadhyay, and Gomez-Najarro (2014) claimed a qualitative methodology is an appropriate approach for studying complex issues and were used for this study so that I can generate strong data on the experiences, perceptions, and beliefs of the participants to deepen understanding. Within qualitative research, different research designs use clustered textual data (Letourneau, 2015; Moustakas, 1994; Sangster-Gormley, 2013), and various theoretical models and data collection methods (Hayman, Wilkes, Jackson, & Halcomb, 2012; Jerbrant & Gustavsson, 2013; Staller, 2013). Researchers claimed qualitative research is appropriate for the exploration of the human

experience because the researcher can complete an investigation as constructed and understood by those who have firsthand experience with the problem (Denzin, 2013; Kahlke, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Yin, 2009).

The qualitative method was ideal for the exploration of African small business owners. Letourneau (2015), Marshall and Rossman (2014), and Scerri, Abela, and Vetere (2012) noted qualitative research is beneficial when the intent of the researcher is to capture the true meaning of an experience. A qualitative research method is an appropriate tool for exploring the subject in its natural setting (Geertz, 2012), and I conducted research in a way that is respectful to the interviewees. The goal was to facilitate the evolution and the emergence of the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). This research method suits real world and applied business inquiry because it allows full inclusion of the complexities of the participants' experiences (Bernard, 2013; Granot, Brashear, & Motta, 2012).

Quantitative research is one type of targeted research that is not suitable for this business problem. The quantitative research approach may be helpful in identifying the cause of a particular problem through the statistical testing of hypotheses (Patton, 2002; Wester, Borders, Boul, & Horton, 2013). However, quantitative analysis is not effective for analyzing or explaining the human experience (Letourneau, 2015). According to Bernard (2013), quantitative research methods compartmentalize the research question and need hypotheses formulations to test objective theories. Quantitative methodological features include (a) comparing results with predictions, (b) associating or relating variables, and (c) describing trends (Patton, 2002; Wester et al., 2013).

Quantitative methods also require large numbers of participants; therefore, these methods are not suitable when there are limited numbers of participants (Robinson, 2014). Robinson (2014) claimed qualitative exploration results in language or textual data, and data could be a mixture of words, phrases, or sentences, which form the discourse the researcher would analyze. Robinson (2014) argued these data might contain complex relations and interconnections that obfuscate the transformation of the discourse into numerical data. Furthermore, the quantitative research method permits analysis of condensed data, management of multiple variables, and usefulness in studies involving precise measurement (Patton, 2002; Wester et al., 2013).

Research Design

I selected a multiple case study design out of the two designs that were adequate for this study: multiple case study and phenomenology. Researchers defined phenomenological design as an approach useful for uncovering and comprehending the real meaning of human life experiences (Pugach et al., 2014; Letourneau, 2015; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). However, I did not select a phenomenological approach because there might be few participants available to contribute to this study, and these small business owners are unlikely to fulfill the investigatory requirements of this design.

The three qualitative research designs not appropriate for this study were ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative study designs. Ethnographic inquiry requires the researcher's immersion in the group setting so the researcher can comprehend the lives and culture of a social group (Letourneau, 2015; Reich, 2015). Ethnographic design requires the researcher to follow the participants for a prolonged period (Letourneau,

2015; Reich, 2015). Ethnographers use a priori theory, which is not suitable for this study (Petty et al., 2012). Grounded theory is useful when a researcher plans to formulate a new theory based on the analysis of collected data (Letourneau, 2015; Reich, 2015). Narrative design is a form of inquiry the researcher uses to study the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives (Petty et al., 2012).

Researchers use multiple case study to focus on a small group of participants for periods of time (Hayes & Wood, 2011). The focus of this study made multiple case study a worthy framework for conducting applied business research, and for exploring the perceptions of business owners (Amerson, 2011). According to Yin (2009), these conditions are the rationale for employing the case study design. Researchers who used case study design do not attempt to control the context (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). Rather, these researchers seek to report data from a real-life context in a truthful and unbiased manner (Amerson, 2011; Pérez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2012). Consequently, the multiple case study method was a suitable approach to answering *what* and *how* questions in the study (Yin, 2009). I explored the required strategies used for business success among African immigrant small business owners. According to Scerri et al. (2012), this design provided an opportunity to include the participants' emotions and opinions when reporting the results.

According to Hoon (2013), multiple case study was an adequate design to study the extant organizational phenomenon in a real-life setting with a detailed, inclusive exploration of few or single cases. The consensus among researchers was that the method to learn the event was to obtain data from the eyes or the voices of the people or persons

having the experience (Pugach et al., 2014; O'Brien, Bereket, Swinton, & Solomon, 2013; Patton, 2002). Researchers maintained that multiple case study design was useful once the researcher took into account the background situation of the phenomenon (Amerson, 2011; Hoon, 2013; Yin, 2009). The worth of taking a multiple case study viewpoint to produce scientific facts encouraged a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in disciplines like business, logistics, marketing, and organizational research (da Mota Pedrosa et al., 2012). Hence, a researcher seeking to comprehend how skills, knowledge, and strategy influence small business success need consider how the setting of the business environment affects the phenomenon under study.

Population and Sampling

Philadelphia's population is approximately 1.5 million, and 8% of Philadelphia's residents are African immigrants; it is Pennsylvania's largest city (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). There are no data available on the precise number of African immigrant-owned small businesses in Philadelphia. However, census statisticians included African immigrant-owned small businesses among the 22.5% of businesses owned by the city's Black population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Moreover, a subset of the Philadelphia population was African immigrant business owners; three small business owners participated in this study as suggested by (Andersson & Evers, 2015).

The research design was a multiple case study focused on African immigrant small business owners in western Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. Through purposive sampling, three successful African immigrant small business owners in Philadelphia received invitations to contribute to this study. Scholars used purposive sampling instead

of probability-based sampling in qualitative studies (Gibbins, Bhatia, Forbes, & Reid, 2014). I used this strategy to select participants based on specific criteria. All participants met the selection criteria. They were individuals who turned to business as an alternative to providing a well-intentioned living for their families out of necessity, and they were small business owners who have been in business for 5 to 20 years. The intent of sampling a population in qualitative research was to produce sources of rich and deep information (Robinson, 2014; Yin, 2009).

A minimum of three African immigrant small business owners participated in this multiple case study. The goal was to recognize meaningful strategies (skill and knowledge competencies) that might help explain how the three selected small business owners emerged to be competitive. Andersson and Evers (2015) and Yin (2009) recommended two to three as the lowest acceptable sample size in multiple case studies. Yin (2009) claimed a researcher should focus on two or three precise replications when the theory is forthright, and the matter at hand does not mandate an extreme degree of confidence. Mukeredzi (2012) claimed qualitative study involves the researcher approaching each participant with as much openness as possible. Overcoming fear and nervousness is often part of the researcher's inspiration to continue with the data gathering procedure. The proposed number of participants should be sufficient to assure thorough discovery (Fahie, 2014).

Kolb (2012) argued that when a sample is large, data become monotonous or redundant. The point of saturation occurs when the gathering of fresh data does not lead to additional findings on the issue of exploration (Kolb, 2012; Walker, 2012; Yin, 2009).

I utilized thematic data saturation as recommended by O'Reilly and Parker (2013). O'Reilly and Parker (2013) claimed sampling is important for researchers because it helps them to define the success of the venture. Researchers argued participants should not be involved in quantitative sampling, for the aim was not to calculate the view or the individuals; rather it should be to uncover a variety of attitudes and diverse depictions of ideas. Sampling in qualitative exploration concerns the abundance of evidence (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013; Yin, 2009).

The qualifying criteria for inclusion as study participants were (a) African immigrant small business owners who reside in western Philadelphia, (b) first-generation immigrants, (c) those who possess an active small business license, (d) people who operate small businesses currently, and (d) owners who have no projected business closure date. Each participant's immigration status matched the criteria as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (2014). Furthermore, participants turned to small business as an alternative to providing a worthy living for their families out of necessity. Each participant was a small business owner who had an existing business for 5 or more years.

Mukeredzi (2012) proposed that during data collection, a researcher should remain responsive, flexible, and empathetic to help interviewees overcome discomfort. I conducted all interviews in a setting that was convenient and comfortable for the participants; interviews occurred in a place of the participant's choosing, such as a coffee shop. According to Bell (2013), an appropriate environment for conducting interviews is a place in which the participants are not restricted or uncomfortable. The interview

questions consisted of eight open-ended questions to allow participants to share their experiences. I established a working relationship with the interviewees and was open to the participants. In qualitative research, being open and transparent to the participants during the interview promotes quality (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013; Paine, 2015). The number of participants needed for the proposed study was three African immigrant small business owners. After the interview and before final analysis, I used member checking by requesting the contributors to elucidate any answers that needed further explanation and coding. Member checking added clarity and facilitated the determining of meaning of responses to specific questions. In this study, member checking was useful as a form of triangulation by participant feedback. If data saturation was not verifiable, then I used member checking to ensure data saturation by continuously interviewing participants until no new themes or information was evident, as recommended by O'Reilly and Parker (2013).

Ethical Research

In qualitative research, conducting ethical research ensures human subject protection (Allen, 2015; Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; McAreavey & Das, 2013). There was a consensus among scholars regarding the conduct of research; the university's IRB ensures the study complies with the ethical standards regarding human participants (Allen, 2015; Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; Lauckner et al., 2012). Ethics is an integral part of the business research (Arend, 2013), and obtaining approval is a crucial step in the research process (Lauckner et al., 2012). The ethical considerations regarding the protection of human research participants and a certificate issued by the National

Institute of Health Office of Extramural Research demonstrate this competency (see Appendix D).

Executing ethical research requires the use of informed consent. The Walden IRB emphasizes the importance of following ethical guidelines and considerations when conducting research (Walden University, 2012). I did not select vulnerable individuals to participate in this study. The coercion of participants is not acceptable, and the participant contact information, including the invitation to participate in the research, will remain confidential (see Appendix B). All participants in the study were given fifteen minutes to review and sign a consent form containing their names, contact information, the researcher's phone number, and e-mail address before the interview commenced (see Appendix C). The form contained the study's descriptions, background information, the purpose of research, and the reason for selecting the participants. The participants had the option to ask questions for clarity at any time. Participants may contact a Walden University representative to discuss their rights and responsibilities privately. Both the participants and I signed the consent form acknowledging all terms prescribed, and the participants received copies to keep for their records.

Maintaining participant confidentiality was challenging in relation to the site where the researcher conducts the study because of the detailed interpretation required to illustrate and report the findings (Allen, 2015; Houghton et al., 2013). Aluwihare-Samaranayake (2012) emphasized that developing critical consciousness becomes essential to the researcher. Critical consciousness is the researcher's awareness of the interview surroundings and self (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). Another way to

protect participants is to provide them with the opportunity to choose a location conducive to having a good interview (Bell, 2013). The consent form contained the duration time of the interview. I informed the participants they have the right to participate in the study and they have the right to leave the interview any time they desire. Moreover, participants could voluntarily withdraw from participating, and there was no compensation to the participants for taking part in this study. Further, participants received a two-page summary of the results of the proposed study, thus adding integrity to the procedure by building rapport and trust with the interviewees. To ensure further protection of the individual identities of the participants, I employed pseudonyms in the analysis and the description of the research findings. Bell (2013) recommended allocating pseudonyms to participants following each interview.

Participants consented to inclusion in this study by reading and signing the consent form (see Appendix C). I started the process of obtaining a consent form from participants via e-mail. According to Aluwihare-Samaranayake (2012), ethics refers to doing good deeds and avoiding harm. Hence, ethics relates to the role of ethical values and strategies advancing the search for knowledge (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). McAreavey and Das (2013) cautioned researchers to reflect on ethical issues carefully when exploring minorities and immigrant groups. McAreavey and Das argued the minority and immigrant groups encounter similar problems of relegation, rejection, distinctiveness, and nationality. Protecting participants, as well as researchers, entails reducing harm, increasing the amount of good, reassuring hope, safeguarding research reliability, adhering to professional and organizational requirements, and surviving future

challenges (Allen, 2015). There were minimal psychological, legal, emotional, physical, or other risks as outlined on the consent form. The risks comprise the time required to partake in the interview and reluctance to respond to uncomfortable questions about small business success.

I did not publish the participants' names to ensure their confidentiality. I coded the participants' identities using an alphanumeric system (for example, small business owner 1 was SB1). The privacy of the participants is important, and security procedures were in place to protect all research documents, consent forms, and digital recordings for 5 years. The objective of this qualitative research did not supersede the privileges, fitness, well-being, or care of the research participants (Allen, 2015). Allen (2015) argued the main obstacles must not conflict with the research ethics application. The tasks involve designing the study with consideration given to academic instruction, best practices, legal implications, and ethics. The digital conversion of all paper documents occurred at the end of the study, and electronically stored materials have password protection. A locked safe, to which only I have access, will secure the study materials during the 5-year storage period. The maintenance of a research diary complied with ethical research standards; I will use KillDisk® software to delete the research data after 5 years.

Objectivity versus Subjectivity was another consideration. I assured personal biases, and opinions did not affect the research. The principles of beneficence and non-maleficence entail an obligation to provide benefits to the participants and to balance such benefits against risks (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). The researcher should protect the participants from harm, should prevent harm, and should remove existing

sources of harm via the use of pseudonyms (Mattson & Haas, 2014). I used pseudonyms during the examination and the description of the investigation outcomes to protect the identities of participants. The consent form included detailed descriptions of the risks of participating in the study and benefits involved. There are no incentives for participating in this study, and as such, the letter of invitation and consent form contained this information.

Data Collection Instruments

Yin (2009) maintained case study evidence originated from six sources: documents, interviews, archival records, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. The interview questions and the researcher are the instruments for a study (Denzin, 2013). I gathered data from the interviewees using face-to-face, semistructured interviews. The eight interview questions were open-ended, and a face-to-face semistructured interview process was useful for collecting in-depth replies from the contributors to address the research query (Aguirre & Bolton, 2014; Anyan, 2013; Glover, Jomeen, Urquhart, & Martin, 2014; Haraldsson, Christensson, Conlon, & Henricson, 2015; Jerbrant, 2013; Mattson & Haas, 2014; Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) suggested guided dialogue rather than organized queries; thus, the line of questioning in multiple case study interviews is likely to be fluid rather than unyielding.

Using these tools ensured interviews yielded data that echoes the participant's experience (Letourneau, 2015). Interviews were suitable for exploring the strategies of African immigrant small business owners in Philadelphia. I used data obtained from the BLS for each small business owner along with organizational documents on small

business success strategies to compare the interview data to increase understanding of the participants' answers. The BLS maintains information on small business success strategies. I located public records via searches of the Internet and small business owner websites. I also examined the reliability and validity of this study through the consistency of the participant's answers by using member checking methods and data triangulation of multiple data sources to authenticate themes, to curtail bias in the research, and convey reliability to the research (Amerson, 2011; Morse, 2015; Taylor, 2013). Each participant read and signed the consent form before the interview commence (see Appendix C). Appendix A contains a list of the interview questions. I initiated the interview once the participant signed the consent form.

The act of natural execution reinforces reliability in data collection in the qualitative study (Houghton et al., 2013). Reliability depends on the consistency of the interviewer asking the same questions, in the same orderly manner, of each participant (Houghton et al., 2013). Researchers noted it was the responsibility of the researcher to take protective measures to ratify areas of validity in their research (Barry, Chaney, Piazza-Gardner, & Chavarria, 2014; Kolb, 2012; Morse, 2015).

Kolb (2012) claimed the validity of the study should be a concern of the researcher. Validity in research relates to credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness of the research's results (Barry et al., 2014; Morse, 2015; Petty et al., 2012). Ensuring validity in qualitative research requires rigor in the execution of the research. In qualitative multiple case study research, interview questions represent a high-quality instrument. I used rigor in execution to create rich elements and used detailed

explanations from participants to provide proof of the representation of interpretations and inferences to safeguard validity in this qualitative study (Bernard, 2013). The results of the study must have credibility, transferability, dependability; they must include truthful reporting and apply to other groups and consistent (Houghton et al., 2013). The questions were in modest language. I constructed the questions carefully so that each was open-ended and did not surmise what the answer should be. The interview questions inferred no risks or threats to the participants (see Appendix A).

I organized data to elucidate statements and to ensure adequate measurement of concepts. A typical qualitative interview lasts about one hour (Mulcahy, 2012); however, Houghton et al. (2013) argued single-time interviews are not adequate to yield full and rich descriptions required for meaningful results. Houghton et al. (2013) and Mukeredzi (2012) suggested a sequence of three interviews with participants because of the likelihood of producing accounts of sufficient depth and breadth. In this study, I adopted a single interview approach and used member checking to validate data. Asking fewer, larger, in-depth questions may stimulate significant and rich information from the interviewees' responses (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2012; Houghton et al., 2013; Yin, 2009). Mukeredzi (2012) proposed a researcher should remain responsive, flexible, and empathetic to help interviewees overcome discomfort during data collection. Attending to the emotional comfort of the interviewee enriches the data collection (Collins & Cooper, 2014).

All requests for raw data must comply with the NIH standards for extramural research and ethics (Walden University, 2012). Upon request, I will provide the raw data

and vital statements from the participants, including the discussion and analysis of the study (Kolb, 2012) to Walden University representatives. The requests for raw data should not violate the participants' privacy (Bahn & Weatherill, 2013). Bahn and Weatherill (2013) claimed that institutional ethics application processes must protect participants.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection from the participants in this study included the use of semistructured face-to-face interviews in the location of their (the participants) choosing. The process of data collection requires the use of a digital recorder during semistructured face-to-face interviews (Bell, 2013; Glover et al., 2014; Paine, 2015; Yin, 2009). Bell (2013) defined interviewing as a process of gathering data from people by asking them questions and getting them to respond verbally. The reason for the interview is to attain a full account of the experience under study (Doody, Slevin, & Taggart, 2013; Houghton et al., 2013; Narag & Maxwell, 2014; Reich, 2015; Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) recommended three kinds of interviews for a multiple case study design: in-depth interviews, focused interviews, and formal surveys. In the United States, Canada, and Sweden, Braidford, Stone, and Tesfaye (2013) used in-depth interviews to analyze sustenance procedures successfully designed to encourage women to begin their businesses. Pérez et al. (2012) selected in-depth interview to study the part of corporate social responsibility (CRS) in the corporate identity of lending service providers. I did not use a pilot study. Yin (2009) warned the range of the inquiry for the pilot case could be much wider and less absorbed

than the definitive data collection plan. Hence, the inquiry can cover both practical and procedural problems.

Data Organization Technique

I backed-up all collected data on a password-protected device and stored the device in a harmless place to stop any loss from unexpected circumstances. In this study, the journal contains all notes written during the interviews, including various categories and initial interpretations derived from the participants' responses. The research journal is useful for tracking and cataloging participant encounters. Yin (2009) argued that maintaining a research journal was a useful approach for data organization. The entries in the journal include notations about participants who declined or withdrew from the study. If any participant withdrew from the study, none of that participant's data became part of the final analysis. Taylor (2013) found that charting and indexing were good approaches for managing and analyzing a large dataset. Maintenance of the journal will comply with ethical research standards.

In this study, I apportioned two weeks to conduct the interviews, and 1 week to record the participants' interviews and analyze the data. I completed the verbatim transcription of the interview recordings within 1 week of the interview. Mulcahy (2012) recommended transcribing the digital recording immediately following the interview.

There are three phases of the transcriptions: (a) number of interview questions and the data obtained from the BLS, (b) the participants' responses, and (c) the thematic coding (Bell, 2013). Marshall and Rossman (2014) suggested researchers categorize and label data for consistency. A locked safe, only with researcher access, will protect the

study materials during the 5-year storage period. The plan is to use KillDisk software to erase the research data after 5 years. In this study, I used a diary to record date, time, interview location, and notes on each participant's body language, tone, environment, and demeanor as suggested by (Hayman, Wilkes, & Jackson, 2012).

Data Analysis

Researchers use data triangulation to compare, contrast, and confirm information collected from multiple sources to verify the existence of a phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Case study researchers collect and analyze multiple sources of evidence to augment the value of information collected from a single source (Taylor, 2013; Yin, 2009). Therefore, in multiple case studies, it is important for the researcher to examine data connecting to individual components first, before making comparisons across cases (Taylor, 2013).

The technique for data analysis in this study began with an examination of interview data; a thematic analytical method was appropriate (Bell, 2013). Following the arrangement of the research data, it was essential to conduct in-depth analysis to identify relationships, evidence, common themes, and meaning (Fleming, Vandermause, & Shaw, 2014; Moustakas, 1994; Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) defined case study analysis as a way of truthfully building facts about life experiences. Moustakas (1994) recommended the use of a modified van Kaam technique for the data analysis to achieve rigor. Employing the van Kaam approach, the investigator can add to current information while raising new intricate questions about the phenomenon (Frivold, Dale, & Slettebø, 2015; Johansson, Hanson, Runeson, & Wåhlin, 2015).

Transcription of the audio recording of each interview in this study involved the use of a word processor and software for data analysis. The modified van Kaam approach (Moustakas, 1994) is a 7-step approach that allows the researcher to achieve a detailed knowledge of the participants' lived experiences. The primary step in the adapted van Kaam approach was to horizontalize the data by developing a preliminary listing of repeating words or phrases. The next step was to decrease and exclude immaterial data. The third and fourth steps were the groupings of the reoccurring and related themes, and identifying themes in the interview transcript of each participant. The fifth and sixth steps were deriving meaning from each participant's experience and citing the specific example from the interview transcripts to build structural description. The final step was to build a textural-structural description and clarification of the participants' experiences including the recurrent themes and components (Moustakas, 1994).

Using a set of semistructured interview questions, I measured the concepts within the frameworks of the human capital theory (Becker, 1993), the resource-based theory (Barney, 1991), and disadvantage theory (Light, 1997). These questions were useful for exploring the strategies of success among African immigrant small business owners. Appendix E depicts the concepts measured by the interview questions.

According to Bernard (2013), a researcher must consider differences in human experience so that a vigorous depiction can be accessible. First, I examined the interview transcripts and notes to interpret meanings related to the research question. Second, employing a van Kaam approach, I reviewed the transcripts to find phrases that revealed experiences, and in the final step, I read each transcript, sentence by sentence, to identify

revealing statements (Moustakas, 1994). The analysis involved exploration of the language of the participants, and I paid attention to the etymology of words and the use because the English language is secondary to this group. I focused the data analysis on three participants' responses to the eight interview questions.

I used software to manage data. Dedoose is software designed for qualitative researchers to code, categorize, and manage qualitative data (www.dedoose.com). Researchers used Dedoose software to identify themes common to the research participants employing thematic analysis (Goble, Austin, Larsen, Kreitzer, & Brintnell, 2012; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Yin (2009) suggested the process in case study research requires the researcher to cultivate logic of an occurrence and articulate the phenomenon through the explanatory script.

Goble et al. (2012) and Robinson (2014) claimed the process in qualitative research stresses the importance of introducing practices during data analysis, pinpointing recurring ideas in the data set, assigning names to them, and placing them about one another. Coding of data within the software application allows the researcher to consider tangible, visible, and audible factors (Goble et al., 2012; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Henceforth, the use of coding adds rigor to the study. The choice to use software added rigor to the quest to understand this phenomenon. The software facilitates interaction with data and interfaces with Microsoft Word documents, audio files, and portable document format files (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011).

Themes discovered throughout the analysis process formed the basis for grouping data into categories. The next step was to evaluate the data to exact interpretations of the

research discoveries to determine themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Themes developed during data evaluation should be consistent with the study's conceptual framework, the research questions, and the literature review of the research phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The conceptual framework employed in this study was a combination of human capital theory (Becker, 1993), the resource-based theory (Barney, 1991) and the disadvantage theory (Light, 1979). At the completion of this study, I distributed the research findings to non-profit and for-profit organizations, the City of Philadelphia, and institutions of higher learning through conference presentations, seminars, and web-nets.

I used the qualitative analytical software, Dedoose, to identify and code themes that emerge from the raw data to analyze the responses from the study participants. Moustakas (1994) recommended the modified van Kaam approach to ascribing meaning to the thematic expression revealed from the interviews. I audio-recorded the interviews and used open-ended questions while taking notes to ensure responses capture the essence of the participants' experiences (Bell, 2013; Yin, 2009). The primary data collection device was an Olympus VN-722PC voice recorder, and my iPhone 5 device served as a backup. After the interview, I offered participants the chance to verify the accuracy of the interview session and transcription.

Triangulation of the interview data with two other sources completed the analysis phase of this research. Researchers have used data triangulation to increase trustworthiness in research results (Aarikka-Stenroos & Sandberg, 2012); the two selected sources were data from the BLS and organizational documents. As themes

develop, I triangulated the data to derive what strategies African immigrant small business owners used to be successful. I compared, contrasted, and confirmed the concepts and ideas participants expressed in the interviews with external data from the identified sources as suggested by (Taylor, 2013; Yin, 2009). Denzin (2012) defined triangulation to comprise both qualitative and quantitative methods, and as multiple sources of data. I presented a comprehensive and multifactorial analysis of the research problem in Section 3.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity components comprised a description of how I supported reliability and validity of the study. Using multiple sources ensured the reliability of the study (Yin, 2009). Additionally, the use of member checking and data triangulation confirmed the validity of the study's results (Flick, Garms-Homolova, Herrmann, Kuck, & Rohnsch, 2012; Heys & Woods, 2011; Houghton et al., 2013; Taylor, 2013).

Reliability

In qualitative research, ensuring reliability requires working repeatedly to develop coding patterns. Reliability in qualitative research also requires dissecting the data into groupings and subgroups, and matching the data against the conceptual framework to add credibility reliability to the findings (Trainor & Graue, 2014). In this instance, when subsequent researchers collect and explore similar data using the same method, the conclusions will approximate the outcomes in the initial study (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Houghton et al., 2013). Qualitative reliability implies consistent execution of the

researcher's procedures (Houghton et al., 2013). Reliability depends on the interviewer asking the same questions, in the same orderly manner, of each participant. The use of multiple sources increases validity and reliability of data in case study research (Yin, 2009). I used the data obtained from the BLS of each African immigrant small business owner as an additional source of data.

The criteria used to ensure trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Elo et al., 2014; Houghton et al., 2013). The strategies for attaining trustworthiness included assessing adverse circumstances, utilizing peer interviews, applying lengthy assignation and tenacious observation, reviewing paths, and developing participant checks (Elo et al., 2014; Houghton et al., 2013). Researchers used data triangulation to increase trustworthiness in research results (Aarikka-Stenroos & Sandberg, 2012), and member checking to improve validity (Houghton et al., 2013; Snyder, 2012; Taylor, 2013). White, Oelke, and Friesen (2012) suggested researchers examine the inter- and intra-rater reliability of the coding arrangement as a measurement of dependability. Ensuring validity requires the researcher to show the study's results have credibility, transferability, and dependability (Houghton et al., 2013). Validity is a useful measurement technique (Houghton et al., 2013; White et al., 2012).

Validity

Researchers establish validity in a multiple case study by triangulating different sources of evidence (Amerson, 2011). The rationale for using triangulation in a study is to increase the validity of an analysis by supporting fact-finding with data from multiple sources (Flick et al., 2012). Denzin (2012) maintained triangulation is not an instrument

or approach to validation but rather, an alternative to validation. Moreover, Denzin argued that the combination of numerous procedural approaches, experiential resources, viewpoints, and witnesses in a study is a strategy that adds thoroughness, fertility, breadth, productivity, and profundity to every exploration. For this study, I employed methodological triangulation.

The use of member checking enhanced the validity of this study since member checking entailed having the participant verify their responses for accuracy (Harper & Cole, 2012). Harper and Cole (2012) defined member checking as the process in which the investigator authenticates the accuracy of the data collected. I used member checking by requesting confirmation of the interpreted data from interviewees as suggested by Harper and Cole (2012). Utilizing member checking can lessen the likelihood of giving false or ambiguous data (Harper & Cole, 2012). The other threat to the validity of this study is the researchers' presumptions (Tufford & Newman, 2012). The strategy was to use the van Kaam approach; van Kaam was an interpretative analysis approach (Petty et al., 2012). The use of Dedoose was crucial to the analysis process because of its malleability in coding, and the researcher can increase numbers of participants to add rigor (Goble et al., 2012).

Expressive and interpretative accuracies may threaten the validity and the generalizability of the study's results (Kolb, 2012). First, I have the obligation of telling, verifying, and documenting all information related to the phenomenon accurately. Second, comparing the results of this study with explanations and descriptions of the current literature contributed to accuracy (Kolb, 2012; Yin, 2009). The use of member

checking and triangulation during data collection and explanation processes controlled these threats and preserved the value of this research (Denzin, 2012; Howe, 2012; Yin, 2009).

Transition and Summary

In this section, I reinstated the study's purpose, identified the role of the researcher, and included a description of the research participants. There were discussions and elaborations of the rationale for selecting a qualitative methodology and multiple case study design over other methods and designs. This section included descriptions of the population, sampling technique, ethics, interview questions, data collection, data organization, data analysis, and reliability and validity. In Section 3, I triangulated three data points to present the study's findings and discussed how the research may relate to professional practice. Discussions of the research implications of social change, recommendations for further research, and reflections on the study's outcomes related to existing literature are in Section 3.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

In this section, I begin with an introduction to the study, discuss the purpose of the study, the research question, a brief summary of the findings, and provide a detailed explanation of the outcomes of this study. Section 3 also includes the presentation of the study findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, my recommendations for further study, my reflections, and a conclusion.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to discover the strategies that African immigrant small business owners used to succeed in business beyond 5 years. I completed interviews with three African immigrant small business owners based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Methodological triangulation of the data sources included the comparison of the organizational documents, the BLS data, and the transcribed interview data, as recommended by Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg (2012) and Denzin (2012). I refused to use the real names of the participants. Once I reached data saturation, the data were loaded into the qualitative analysis software to help in discovering key stratagems to answer the main research question. Based on the methodological triangulation of the interview data, organizational, and BLS data, eight themes emerged: (a) potential for success, (b) potential for failure, (c) education level small business owners, (d) business skills and knowledge, (e) access to internal resources, (f) access to start-up capital, (g) business planning, and (h) business owners' characteristics.

In analyzing interview data, I found that small business success strategies, like business skills and knowledge, are essential for African immigrant small business owners to increase their profits and sustain their businesses. Additionally, African immigrant small business owners can achieve additional success and improved sustainability by incorporating newer technologies into their business practices and embracing the use of intangible resources. African small business owners need to have a competent flow of resources and sufficient human capital to maintain business sustainability. This group of small business owners needs to select the appropriate communication methods and markets to sell their products or services.

Presentation of the Findings

This subsection contains the outline of the eight themes that arose from exploring the study's data. The overarching research question explored was: What strategies do African immigrant small business owners use to succeed in small business beyond 5 years? I reached data saturation when I stopped receiving additional information from my review of the interview data, organizational documents, and BLS data review became monotonous and no additional information became apparent, as discussed by (see O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). I identified eight essential themes related to how African immigrant small business owners strive to be successful in business. These themes include (a) potential for success, (b) potential for failure, (c) education level small business owners, (d) business skills and knowledge, (e) access to internal resources, (f) access to start-up capital, (g) business planning, and (h) business owners' characteristics.

Theme 1: Potential for Success

Exploring small business success strategies among this group of small business owners, I shed light on the adequacy of skills to succeed in business. Each person explained the strategies used to influence business stability and sustainability. Based on individual experience, knowledge, and skills, there was increased awareness and understanding of success factors among this group of African immigrant small business owners in western Philadelphia.

Table 1

Strategies Used by Sample Participants for Business Success

Participant Strategy	Number	Percentage
Pride of ownership	1	33%
Own boss	1	33%
Business location	3	100%
Hard work	2	67%
Business education/training	2	67%
Business planning	2	67%
Having faith/hope	1	33%
Business property purchase	1	33%
Endurance/patience	1	33%

Note. I rounded percentage values.

The potential for small business success finding was not new, as I did uncover several strategies when reviewing the available body of literature (Acs & Sanders, 2012;

Qian & Acs, 2013; Rogers, 2012). The small business owner shed light on the skills they needed to succeed in business. This theme of small business success amenable relates to two theories within the conceptual framework: Beckers' human capital theory and Barney's resource-based theory. Becker (1993) stated that people tend to decide matters of importance by investing in and expanding their human capital. Education, skills, knowledge, and training are human capital investments that might lead to economic rewards. These acquired assets are strategies useful for attaining economic and business success (Becker, 1993). Evidently, human capital helps small business owners in the assembling of new strategies for business success (Chen, 2013; Unger et al., 2011). The first interview question, I was able to acquire insight on the participants' strategies for maintaining viable businesses (see Table 1). Data collections consisted of eight semistructured interviews. Participant SB1 directly stated that pride of ownership was the strategy that helped him succeed. Then, SB1 elaborated, "this is something that belongs to me, and it gives me a very good feeling that I am my own boss." Supporting Bianchi (2012), researchers contend that small business owners may develop value from being their own boss. Moreover, researchers state that objectives, goals, and intentions account for small business owners' conduct and success (Brixy et al., 2012). SB1 said that small business owners needed to work hard to achieve success and accomplish their goals. Brixy et al. (2012) agreed the important issues for the positive utilization of small business undertakings were comprised of human capital and intellectual physiognomies specifically. SB1 stated, "I became successful because of hard work." Ideas, inventions,

technologies, software, design, and processes were the components of academic capital (Acs & Sanders, 2012; Davidsson & Gordon, 2012).

SB1, SB2, and SB3 agreed African immigrant small business owners need strategies and a steady flow of resources to be competitive in western Philadelphia. Each participant indicated the need for ideal business locations and steady cash flow to succeed. Their insights support the tenets of the resource-based theory. Barney (1991) asserted business owners had to focus on two goals. First, the business owner had to apply resources to gain economic advantages. Second, the business owner had to optimize resources to attain and maintain a competitive advantage. Moreover, the economic advantage occurred when a business owner executed strategies that competing firms could not replicate easily (Barney, 1991; Day, 2014; O'Donnell, 2014). Barney (2014) applied RBT to test the relationship between internal resources and managers' capabilities to start and grow enterprises successfully.

SB2 stated, "The strategies that propelled me to success were having patience, hope, and endurance." SB2 concurred with SB1 and SB3 that business location is vital to business success, and warned prospective African immigrant small business owners' to locate neighborhoods with a greater numbers of African immigrants and foreigners to have a steady customer base. Similarly, SB3 indicated that location made a modest difference for his business success since the property for the business belongs to him, and because he does not have to pay rent; SB3 considered ownership to be a strong business strategy. Notably, researchers addressed this connection; Dayanim (2011) and Wang (2012) noted residential separation might shift to the benefit of minority small business

owners by creating a secure market of co-ethnic clientele. However, Dayanim (2011) warned that a safe market or ethnic district could pose limitations on minority small businesses despite the ethnic constituency providing co-ethnic minority businesses with excellent prospects.

As part of his start-up plan, SB3 researched Philadelphia trade organizations, Donald Trump's business practices, property purchase, and location. This practice aligns with Tang and Murphey (2012) who claimed past knowledge used to achieve small business success included idiosyncratic information around a specific focus; knowledge accrued through work capability and previously acquired information enriched the production of updated merchandises and amenities; this concept supports SB1's and SB2's opinions that location was a key strategy for small business success.

Theme 2: Potential for Failure

Exploring small business failure among this group of small business owners shed light on the contributing inadequacies that existed. Each person explained the characteristics of business failure. Depending on individual's experience, knowledge, and skills, there was increased awareness and comprehension of failure factors.

Among immigrants, there is a greater tendency to pursue business ownership and entrepreneurial activities because entrepreneurship offers a way to make a living (Wang, 2013). Unfortunately, 50% of small businesses fail within 5 years (Sarasvathy et al., 2013; SBA, 2014). The rate of small business failures supports the assertion that some people embark on small business initiatives out of necessity without adequate preparation

(Chrysostome, 2010). According to Sarasvathy et al. (2013), some people lacked the knowledge and skill use to succeed in small business ventures.

The potential for failure theme was not a surprise, as I did uncover numerous failure possibilities when I reviewed the current body of literature. Participants' responses shed light on the inadequate skills that lead to business failure. This theme related to the conceptual framework (the disadvantage theory) for this study. Light's (1979) disadvantage theory has relevance to researching business failure. According to Light, members of affected groups (minorities and immigrants) often must choose between joblessness and self-employment as small-scale entrepreneurs. Light suggested variances in small business owners' capabilities were race-based, and that culture was responsible for creating the problems individuals experienced in business environments.

Scholars defied Light's (1979) notion that the standards of African Americans were responsible for the challenges facing this group of small business owners (Kidane & Harvey, 2010; Wang, 2013). In a similar study, researchers suggested social forces created institutional obstacles that prohibited small business growth (Bates & Robb, 2013; Chaumba & Nackerud, 2013; Lofstrom & Bates, 2013). Examining the national records of small business owners, scholars provided justification for the argument that culture was a key contributor to low levels of African American and minority business ownership (Bates & Tuck, 2014; Casey, 2012). Moreover, scholars used historical viewpoints to clarify how barriers limited African American and immigrants' small business start-ups (e.g., Bates & Tuck, 2014; Blount et al., 2013; Smith, & Hill, 2013; Casey, 2012).

In their inquiries, scholars determined that discriminatory hurdles obstructed African immigrants and minority small business owners by (a) limiting access to startup and working funds; (b) limiting entrance to education, skill growth, and training; (c) limiting and decreasing the size of businesses; and (d) increasing business failure (Bates & Tuck, 2014; Casey, 2012; Guryan & Charles, 2013; Kidane & Harvey, 2010; Ogbolu, & Singh, 2013). Furthermore, Boyd (2015) used the disadvantage theory to analyze the disadvantages in the market and entrepreneurship involving survivalist strategies among Northern Black women in the Great Depression era. Takei and Sakamoto (2011) hypothesized the racial hierarchal view using the disadvantage theory; they concluded the model subordinated all minorities to Whites using measures of intelligence and achievement. Moreover, within the category of social status, African-Americans were at the bottom.

Table 2

Factors Relating to Business Failure by Sample Participants

Participants Problems	Number of Participants	Percentage
Inadequate Preparation	1	33.33%
Discrimination by lending institutions	2	66.66%
Lack of financial support	3	100%
Lack of social support	3	100%

Bates and Robb (2013) and Lofstrom and Bates (2013) agreed that financial capital constraints shaped self-employment entry, a concept that aligned with the

experiences of SB3 (see Table 2). Participant SB3 noted that he was unable to obtain financial support from the bank. Additionally, the same business owner stated that a lender approached him and offered him a loan; but the qualification criterion of \$4,000.00 in daily sales was not achievable. SB2 concurred and stated that a financial institution rejected his quest for a business loan. According to Lofstrom and Bates, where the funding needs were substantial, restrictions existed, and small business owners with low net worth could not secure loans.

Two of the participants obtained small business loans; SB1 acquired funds from a credit union and SB2 from a community development center in western Philadelphia. Bates and Robb (2013) and Blount et al. (2013) claimed the low levels of accomplishment amid Black-owned enterprises correlated to higher rates of business failure, and lower sales and profitability. According to these researchers, these elements connected directly to lower levels of start-up principal, education, commerce, human capital, and disadvantaged family business nurture (Bates & Robb, 2013; Blount et al., 2013). All participants agreed that lack of sustainable financial resources were detrimental to their small business success and contributed to their potential for failure.

Theme 3: Education Level of Small Business Owners

For immigrants to compete in regional and local economies successfully, their credentials must elevate them to an acceptable level in society. Participants in this study agreed that their level of education helped and played an important role in their business endeavors and success. Additionally, education is an intangible asset because knowledge acquired through education promotes good business decision-making processes.

The theme of the education level of small business owner aligns with the literature and relates to the conceptual frameworks (human capital and the disadvantage theories). The second interview question was an inquiry regarding the contribution education made to business success (see Table 3). Supporting Baker's (1993) view that education, skills, knowledge, and training are the small business strategies used to attain economic and business success. SB1 indicated, "Education was the golden key that will take small business owner[s] anywhere in the world." SB3 insisted that having a master's degree in social work and policy in conjunction with knowledge in economic, commerce, international trade, local trade, banking, and finance helped his business endeavors. The statements from SB3 aligned with Rogers (2012) claim that a small business owner's educational attainment and background were determining factors of his or her financial capital structure for business start-ups. Rogers (2012) claimed academic knowledge was intangible and was a useful resource for generating small business income. SB2 maintained that education did not help his business endeavors. According to SB2, "My level of education was poor and that keep[s] pulling me down; nevertheless, having faith drives me to work harder and be successful." SB2's view concurred with Wang and Lysenko's (2014) claim that education was also not an assurance that the person pursuing business enterprises had the strategies required to be successful.

Light's (1979) disadvantage theory has significance for exploring business failure. Light asserted that members of affected groups (minorities and immigrants) often must select between unemployment and self-employment as small-scale businesspersons. Differences in small business owners' abilities were race-based, and culture created the

problems individuals experienced in business environments. After investigating the effect of race on business development and existence, Rogers (2012) noted minorities were more likely to start small businesses than non-minorities; however, this group was less likely to succeed. Rogers claimed a small business owner's educational attainment and background were determining factors of his or her financial capital structure.

Table 3

Educational Background of the Participants

Participants Education Level	Number of Participants	Percentage
Junior High School	1	33%
Master's Degree	2	67%

Casey (2012) suggested minority small business owners were the fastest growing sector of the economy. However, minority groups remained at a disadvantage, and ingrained minorities stay branded by less wealth than Whites do; Casey's view accounted for the influences of mediocre education, job knowledge, and lack of access to banking. In Philadelphia, for example, examining the Minority Business Development Subcommittee Review, Dayanim (2011) found variances in the participation levels of minority-owned small businesses in the overall economy. Dayanim argued, despite minorities being over 56% of Philadelphia's populace, this group accounted for only 24.7% of all businesses, and 2.2% of gross earnings. Although, the participants in this study were reluctant to mention discrimination, the biased and exclusionary practices of

the business environment demoted and restricted the scope of ethnic minority small businesses, slowed growth rates, and limited minorities to modest, labor-intensive marketplaces (Bates & Robb, 2013; Bates & Robb, 2014; Bates & Robb, 2015; Thomas, 2011).

Theme 4: Business Skills and Knowledge

Immigrant small business owners agreed that inferior education, less previous knowledge in business and minimal knowledge of how to obtain start-up capital hindered small business success. Furthermore, immigrant business owners who turned to small business without enough preparation resulted in failure. This group will benefit and become successful if they adhere to the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in business.

The findings of this study showed the well-educated immigrant's small business owners have the basic characteristics needed to be successful in business endeavors; this finding correlates with Becker's (1993) human capital theory, and aligned with the third interview question related to the knowledge and skills needed to grow a small business (see Table 4). Becker (1993) argued that skills result from experience and knowledge primarily. SB1 maintained that the knowledge and skill he needed to grow were communications. SB1 outlined three communications characteristics; (a) to be able to communicate with customers; (b) to be able to listen, and (c) to be able to reason with consumers even when they are wrong. The views of SB1 supported Conrad and Newberry's (2012) view that communication could be formal or informal; communication is the key to preparation, leading, establishing, and regulate the resources

of the business to attain objectives. Chell (2012) signified similar characteristics describing skill as a universal belief, which includes endowments, capabilities, capacities, expertness, and talents necessary to carry out tasks in a productive manner.

Table 4

Knowledge and Skills Used by Sample Participants for Business Success

Identified Knowledge & Skills	Number of Participants	Percentage
Communication	3	100%
Recognition of customers	3	100%
Honesty	3	100%
Trustworthiness	3	100%
Successful business model	1	33%

SB2 identified other characteristics such as the need to recognize the customers, be cheerful, be straightforward, and be honest and respectful as essential components of good business strategies. Bates and Robb (2013) and Bates and Robb (2015) claimed that lack of key characteristics such as skills, knowledge, understanding, and access to capital would continue to produce negative outcomes for small business owners' endowments. SB3 stated, "I tapped [into] other successful business owners for what they did to get to where they are, and justified to have used proven models that have succeeded in the past as a model for my business." Moreover, having a proven business plan, is a strategy that can help small business owners reach their goals.

Concurring with current literature, all participants agreed these business characteristics are good strategies. Small business owners who showed a diverse set of work knowledge had progressive skills pertinent for start-up and growth (Stuetzer et al., 2013b). Investigating a characteristic example of the nascent venture, Stuetzer et al. (2013a) revealed negative outcomes amongst measures of stable skills and business success. An unbiased measure of balanced skill had no association with success; hence, small business owners who claimed to be generalists remained less likely than others to get nascent ventures started (Stuetzer et al., 2013a).

Theme 5: Access to Internal Resources

African immigrant small business owners agree that internal resources such as skills, stable cash flow, and the capability to secure the required capital are good small business owners' characteristics. Small business owners should use the internal resources effectively to advance and be competitive. A steady flow of internal resources guarantees future successes.

There was supportive evidence of this theme in the body of literature as it relates to one of the theories of the conceptual frameworks of this study. In a published study on human capital resources that could be a basis of supportable rivalry, Nyberg, Moliterno, Hale, and Lepak (2014) concluded that small business owner's sole internal resource formation can be a source of modest maintainable benefits (see Table 5). Moreover, the resource-based theory is a significant framework for clarifying and forecasting the foundation of competitive advantages (Kozlenkova et al. 2014). The RBT was a framework used to measure the internal capabilities of a business manager while

accounting for how circumstances affected a manager's competence to strive directly (Barney, 1991).

Table 5

Internal Resources

Identified Internal Resources	Number of Participants	Percentage
Family savings	2	67%
Supply chains	3	100%
Western Union Agent	1	33%
Bank/credit union	2	67%

Barney (1991) claimed managers earned satisfactory revenue if protected resources were present and sequestered. Barney (2014) successfully used RBT to test the relationship between internal resources and managers' capabilities to start and grow small businesses. Hence, to achieve success during start-up or growth in small business, owners should use internal resources efficaciously to develop maintainable strategies to avoid barriers and attain success (Barney, 2014; Kozlenkova et al., 2014; Nyberg et al., 2014). Kozlenkova et al. (2014) suggested that a firm (small business) achieved a continued competitive advantage when it is generating additional economic worth than its rivals in the same industry and when other businesses are unable to replicate the profits of this plan or strategy.

The fourth interview question was an inquiry about the internal business resources that provided a competitive advantage in western Philadelphia. SB1 indicated the family

savings and loans from the credit union were major contributors to his business endeavors and success, supporting the assumption that the heterogeneity of small business's core assets, coupled with the manager's use of individual resources could build a competitive advantage for the firm. SB2 comments supported ideas from Kozlenkova et al. (2014) that small business owners or firms should create an economic value not easily replicated. According to SB2,

I applied and became a Western Union agent. Like when you arrived today to conduct this interview, there were four customers to wire monies via the Western Union. When customers arrived to send money to their relatives or friends, the customers tend to buy other items such as calling cards, food items and other things they may need. Hence, being a Western Union agent has been [a] moneymaking machine for me, and concisely, Western Union is another resource that puts me in the forefront of other businesses that does not have [the] Western Union.

Day (2014) concluded that supportable competitive benefit occurred when business resources have value, are uncommon, and are imitable.

The RBT focused on the core characteristics of business, and the norms of the theory were that the measured, strategic resources of the business were heterogeneous to the resources of competitor businesses. SB3 inferred that his major resources were the Philadelphia Cash and Carry outlet and the BJs Wholesale Club. Moreover, all participants agreed that a steady flow of internal resources such as loans and supplies were vital components of their success. Barney's (1991) claimed firms (small business

owners) earned supportable revenues if secured resources were present. According to Barney, a business's resources could be so outstanding that opponents could not promptly replicate them.

Theme 6: Access to Start-up Capital

African immigrant small business owners divided when it came to accessing a start-up capital. Two of the participants were successful obtaining loans while one of the participants used his family saving to commence his business. The small business owners agree that lack of financial support contributes to small business failures.

The body of literature largely supported this study's findings related to access to capital. Black and minority small business owners or entrepreneurs had less access to financial capital than have Whites (Lofstrom & Bates, 2013). Similarly, researchers claimed immigrant and minority small business owners met financial drawbacks when obtaining start-up capital (Casey, 2012; Chrysostome, 2010; Lofstrom & Bates, 2013; Mijid & Bernasek, 2013). Lofstrom et al. (2013) noted that small business owners faced challenges because of cultural differences, and the lending practices of the bank impaired Blacks. Responses to the fifth interview question used in this study related to the help and support business owners received from SBA and community organizations.

SB1 received no such help from SBA or community organizations because he is not aware of these establishments (see Table 6). SB1 said, "I used my wife savings, combined with [a] loan obtained from [the] credit union, to start and sustain the business and mine." SB2 was aware of the SBA, but received no assistance from this agency; however, he was successful to have secured a loan with the Philadelphia CDC. The

Philadelphia CDC is a community development organization established to help, grow, and sustain small business projects in the western part of the city. In addition to monies borrowed from his brother, who supported him financially in the past, SB2 used these acquired funds to sustain his operation. Lofstrom and Bates (2013) claimed the financial obstacles hindering start-up operations of minority-owned small business were myths. Nonetheless, where the funding needs were not small, restrictions existed, and small business owners with low net worth could not secure loans (Lofstrom & Bates, 2013).

Table 6

External Support to Sample Participants from Organizations

Participants Answers	Number	Percentage
SBA	0	0%
Community organization	1	33%

SB3 used his family's savings to purchase real estate for his business, in anticipation of saving costs and generating revenue as the business progressed. This property purchase is a good example of *dynamic capability* (Andersson & Evers, 2015; Day, 2014, p. 1; Rice, Liao, Galvin, & Martin, 2015). Energetic competencies were not the answer to resolving difficulties; rather, it was the business owners' intense and periodic use of entrenched talents and information. Hence, energetic competences became resources that enable small business suitability and shape profitability. All the participants in this study were unfamiliar with SBA activities.

Bates and Robb (2013) noted minorities are less likely to get loans, received smaller loans, were afraid of rejection and had a higher denial rates than non-minorities. Bates and Robb (2013) and Lofstrom and Bates (2013) agreed that fiscal capital restraints shaped self-employment entry. Bates and Robb (2013) measured the lending practices of monetary institutions, and found for start-up and current small businesses, Blacks and immigrants had less access to the capital required to succeed in business. Notwithstanding, having access to the same labor force and having chances to partake in small business ownership, immigrants and minorities remain economically deprived (Boyd, 2015; Danso & Lum, 2013). All participants agreed that start-up capital and sustainable resources were vital elements to their success and growth.

As reported in the literature, the resource-based theory also supports the access to start-up capital theme. The emphasis in RBT was exclusively on internal characteristics of a small business such as business skills, steady cash flow, and the capability to secure the required capital. Barney (1991) concluded that managers could earn supportable revenues if they have resources. However, securing those resources with a sequestering device positioned the flow of resources as ineffective.

The disadvantage theory relates to and supports the theme of access to start-up capital. Light (1979) suggested differences in small business owners' abilities were race-based, and that culture was responsible for creating the problems individuals experienced in business environments. Light searched for a sociological explanation of why ethnic minorities in the United States had not attained similar levels of business ownership and self-employment similar to their counterparts in Europe. The groundbreaking work of

Light on the disadvantage market theory of entrepreneurship received praises and criticisms from scholars (e.g., Chrysostome 2010; Kidane & Harvey, 2010).

Scholars challenged Light's (1979) notion that the standards of African Americans were responsible for the challenges facing this group (Kidane & Harvey, 2010; Wang, 2013). Relatively, several investigators proposed social forces create institutional obstacles that prohibited business growth (Bates & Robb, 2013; Chaumba & Nackerud, 2013; Lofstrom & Bates, 2013). Examining the countrywide archives of small business data, scholars provided validation for the argument that culture was the main contributor to low levels of African American and minority business ownership (Bates & Tuck, 2014; Casey, 2012). Researchers used historical viewpoints to clarify how barriers limited African American and immigrants' small business start-ups (e.g., Bates & Tuck, 2014; Casey, 2012; Kidane & Harvey, 2010). In their explorations, scholars determined that discriminatory hurdles thwarted African immigrants and minority small business owners by (a) limiting access to startup and working funds; (b) limiting entrance to education, skill growth, and training; (c) limiting and decreasing the size of businesses; and (d) increasing business failure (Bates & Tuck, 2014; Blount et al., 2013; Casey, 2012; Guryan & Charles, 2013; Kidane & Harvey, 2010).

Theme 7: Business Planning

Participants in this study agree African immigrants and minorities in Philadelphia start on small business initiatives without ample preparation and plans for business success and lack the expertise to be successful in small business. Small business ownership requires a detailed proposal for doing and achieving success through strategy

and ideas. Hence, planning becomes about the intention or decision about what one is going to do.

The body of literature supported the theme of business planning. Sarasvathy et al. (2013) and spokespersons from the SBA (2014) noted that 50% of small businesses fail within 5 years of start-up. This rate of small business failures supported the claim that some individuals embarked on small business initiatives without sufficient planning and lacked the necessary knowledge and skill to succeed (Sarasvathy et al., 2013). The resource-based theory or view supports and promotes the business-planning theme as an action plan. Wernerfelt (2014) suggested that actions engaged by the small business owner or firms must be contingent on present physiognomies, and must focus on a person's actions, the advantage (resources), and the avoidance of pitfalls.

The action is central for new small business venture start-up. Gielnik et al. (2014) noted that entrepreneurial or small business practice happens because immigrants pursue prospects. The pursuit of the prospect's plans required ongoing and mutually dependent actions by the small business owners or entrepreneurs to amass the needed resources and to grow feasible edifices or structures (Gielnik et al., 2014; Muñoz, & Dimov, 2015; Van Gelderen et al., 2015; Wernerfelt, 2014). Moreover, the core of the RBT is that rare, incomparable, and valued assets exist to be useful, and the job of a small business manager is to advance and completely exploit these assets (Barney, 2014; Day, 2014). Furthermore, the importance of an action plan in small business venture creation should not be overlooked; because explorations of why individuals are effective in beginning

new businesses showed that small business owners who transitioned from nascent to established business ownership demonstrated more action (Gielnik et al., 2014).

Two of the participants (SB1 and SB3) agreed that business planning benefited their small business start-up. SB1 indicated:

We tried as much as we can to make our clients know we are here for them. My wife and I developed a good rapport with the community. We have a good customer relationship. The customers are always right, and the customer relationship is very important to my wife and me. We make the customer feel satisfied even when the customers are wrong; we still need to work with them and resolve any conflict because we need these customers back to patronize our business. Good community relationship is vital to have a successful business endeavors, and that have worked for the business and us.

In these cases, there were workable positive business action plans for SB1 and SB3. They had a dynamic tactic in the direction of creating a new business, and they engaged in actions to create operational edifices and processes essential for success (Gielnik et al., 2014). Similarly, SB3 responded with the following:

... that was a calculated plan, which I sat in my living room and map out the road plan to success. What I did was to ask, how I am going to grow. At first, I decided to go wholesale but did not receive enough customer bases, as Africans particularly, Nigerians usual does not support their businesses. Therefore, I made three eighty-degree turn and quickly change to retail[s]. I have been successful in

retails since then because of the good relationship I built with the customers and the community.

In contrast, SB2 stated that he did not have a business plan and have no knowledge of business plans (see Table 7). SB2 said, “My being successful was merely hard work that paid off at the end,” supporting Lowik et al.’s (2012) and Carsrud and Cucculelli’s (2014) argument that small business owners benefitted when they used strong ties as a source of new knowledge for innovation. Lowik et al. claimed small business owners’ profited from strong relations through the application of bridging abilities to avoid over-entrenched dishonesty. Drawing from a multiple case study, Lowik et al. showed a relationship between firms’ owners and the use of relational capabilities to obtain new knowledge. All participants agreed that Africans, particularly Nigerians tended not support their native small businesses.

Investigating a characteristic example of the nascent small business venture, Stuetzer et al. (2013a) revealed negative outcomes amongst measures of stable skills and business success. An impartial gauge of equilibrium skill had no association with success; hence, small business owners who professed generalists remained less likely than others to start a nascent venture (Stuetzer et al., 2013a). Participant SB2 was a good example of Stuetzer et al.’s example; SB2 did not have a business plan, but he studied the location of the business first, to make sure the location was conducive to successful operation.

Table 7

Business Plan Used by Sample Participants for Business Success

Participants Answers	Number	Percentage of Total
Yes	2	67%
No	1	33%

The participants agreed that the small business plan adds value to start-up ventures. Participant SB1 indicated that community relations are vital to the small business initiative. SB1 stated, “Our business is in [a] Black neighborhood and we purposefully, selected the Black neighborhood for the business . . . We participate in the community activities such as help with cleaning community streets and roads.” Participants SB2 and SB3 concurred with SB1 and indicated that community outreach was vital to business success. Participant SB3 stated that having a good relationship with the customers and the community contributed to his success, and it would continue to provide a roadmap for future business endeavors.

Participant SB2 stated that to do well in business depends on product offerings and marketing. SB2 also indicated that when he was about to start his business, he first considered and studied the business location; this participants report of using this tactic supported Dayanim’s (2011) assertion that residential segregation might shift to the advantage of minority small business owners by creating a secure market of co-ethnic clientele. SB1 and SB3 concurred with SB2 and stated that location is a factor in small business success. However, Dayanim (2011) concluded that a secure market or ethnic

district could pose limitations on minority small businesses despite the constituency providing co-ethnic minority businesses with exceptional prospects.

Theme 8: Business Owners Characteristics

The participants placed astonishing value to business owners' characteristics. They address the characteristics use for business success strategies such truthfulness, honesty, and cheerfulness. The effects on small business sustained viable compensation and competitive advantage.

The body of literature primarily has limited support for this theme. First, there is an inadequate amount of exploration dedicated to African immigrants involved in small business ownership. Second, key frameworks relate to Africa but not in the area of small business skills and characteristics used to succeed in small business beyond 5 years. Third, insufficient studies about African immigrants in the Philadelphia small business or labor market are available, and previously, scholars concentrated on socioeconomic issues. Researchers investigated small business owners' characteristics such as aversion to risk-taking or change and found growth occurred with different degrees of success (Cucculelli, 2014; Gundry, Kickul, Iakovleva, & Carsrud, 2014; Kozan et al., 2012).

Bates and Robb (2013) claimed that lack of key characteristics such as skills, knowledge, understanding, and enough capital would continue to affect small business owners' endowments negatively. Xavier, Ahmad, Nor, and Yusof (2012) conducted a qualitative, exploratory case study to gain a deeper understanding of how women small business owners who changed from salaried employment to small business ownership. The researchers used a convenience sample to investigate the characteristics of these

business owners (Xavier et al., 2012). The principle finding indicated personal characteristics (being passionate, listening skills, communication skills, hardworking, perseverance, self-disciplined and self-managed) were necessary to have successful business endeavors.

The RBT also supports the small business owners' characteristics theme. The RBT focused on the core characteristics of the small business, and the norms of the theory were that the owner's measured, strategic resources were heterogeneous to the resources of competing businesses (Barney, 2014; O'Donnell, 2014). The prominence in RBT was on internal characteristics like business skills, stable cash flow, and the owner's capability to secure the required capital (Barney, 2014; Wernerfelt, 2014). Kozlenkova et al. (2014) concluded that RBT provided an essential framework for clarifying and forecasting the basis of small business's competitive benefit and performance. The participants agreed that business owners' characteristics add overall value to strategies for business success (see Table 8).

Participant SB1 indicated that the knowledge and skills he needed to grow his business-included communication, listen to consumers, reason with consumers, and the ability to make ethical and moral decisions. Participant SB1 also stated that he developed a rapport with the community and that customer relations were important to him and his wife. Participant SB2 indicated that the skills he used (cheerfulness and honesty) to succeed were to recognize his customers. This same participant claimed he was very skillful in attracting people near and far, and he has been successful because he took his customers seriously, and with respect and dignity. According to SB2, "they are my

friends and trustworthiness is another important factor that customers like to see in business owners, and many of my customers trust me because of being honest with them. During member checking processes, when I asked participants SB1 and SB2 if they wished to change, alter, or add any information to their responses, SB1 and SB2 said that they did not have anything more to add.

Table 8

Characteristics of Small Business Owners

Participants mentioned	Number	Percentage
Communication	3	100%
Trustworthiness	3	100%
Listen to consumer	1	33%
Good rapport with community	3	100%
Honesty	3	100%
Cheerful with customers	1	33%

Similarly, Participant SB3 concurred with SB1 and SB2 and noted that communication is vital to business success. SB3 indicated he used a proven model that succeeded in the past as a model for his business. SB3 also, like SB1 and SB2, stated that communicating with the community and having a good rapport helped his business succeed. SB3 during the member-checking meeting also had nothing else to add to or retract from the interview transcript. Additionally, the organizational documents and the public domain use of the materials from the Bureau of Labor Statistics corroborated this

theme. All of the participants agreed that small business owners' characteristics are important to small business success; strategic management, development practices, steady flow of cash and resources, and good market strategies are essential aspects of business success strategies. Hence, small business owners' primary goal is to cultivate an economic benefit and long-standing sustainability (Justo, DeTienne, & Sieger, 2015).

Applications to Professional Practice

The research findings revealed eight major themes, and these discoveries may provide the foundation for recommendations for strategic actions as well as further studies. Future small business owners and stakeholders may find the recommendations in this discussion informative as they attempt to develop and comprehend small business success strategies. The primary task confronting this group of small business owners was maintaining their education and acquiring adequate information. Business owners need adequate access to resources to achieve operational competence and to achieve prospects (Bates & Robb, 2014; Bates & Robb, 2015). The resource limitations threaten immigrant and minority small business owners who operate in the inner city; moreover, greater barriers exist in this metropolitan environment than in non-African immigrant and minority communities (Bates & Robb, 2014). With the existence of barriers, a higher number of small businesses may close, or owners relocate because resource limitations affect performance (Weterings, 2014). Leaders who possess adequate knowledge of the circumstance of African immigrant small business owners can support this group by developing strategies to increase community economic engagement.

Business owners make crucial decisions and face challenges when attempting to succeed in business beyond 5 years (Vaiman et al., 2012). This study will be of value to the community if the findings help legislators formulate policies and strategic development initiatives for avoiding small business failures among African immigrant population. Furthermore, publishing the findings of this study might promote the development of leadership capabilities among members of the business community. This study may stimulate further study of the phenomenon of immigrant-owned small businesses. Understanding the strategies essential for success could empower African immigrants to make informed decisions to change their economic path. The transfer of knowledge between researchers and small business owners potentiates improvements in human capital quality and leadership capabilities (Becker, 1993). According to Barney (1991), human capital is a valuable internal resource.

Chen (2013) and Unger et al. (2011) noted small business owner who implemented human capital development practices assembled new strategies for business success. Brixey et al. (2012) agreed human capital and business owners' intellectual characteristics resulted in increased utilization within enterprises and resulted in positive outcomes. Bates and Robb (2013) claimed the lack of key characteristics (skills, knowledge, understanding, or sufficient financial capital) potentiated negative outcomes for small business owners' endowments. Small business owners agreed these characteristics supported adequate strategy development; these acknowledgments supported theorists' assertions that small business owners possessed diverse work knowledge and had progressive business skills pertinent for beginning and growing

businesses (Stuetzer et al., 2013b; Zaridis & Mousiols, 2014). The results from this study could provide business leaders in the city of Philadelphia with the fundamental knowledge to assess if present policies maximize success strategies for this group of small business owners. If community leaders avoid or ignore African immigrant business owners, they (leaders) might inadvertently truncate small business success by not optimizing local policies toward banks and other lending institutions.

The privileged in organizations and community stakeholders could use the results and the conclusions drawn from this study to formulate new policies and guidelines to increase business longevity in the city. Leaders in organizations and community stakeholders may gain expert knowledge. This knowledge will enable them to review their internal policies toward small business owners, assemble critical resources through minority business networks, identify success strategies to improve small business activities, and possibly influence the financial institutions' lending practices to accommodate immigrant small business owners.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this study may contribute to positive social change if its findings lead to improving the quality of life for African immigrants. Increasing the prosperity of the community through the development of new knowledge would be an indication of positive social change (Qian, 2013; Unger et al., 2011). Additionally, defining the problems faced by African immigrant small business owners in western Philadelphia will raise the social awareness of the community (Dayanim, 2011; Katz et al., 2010). A greater understanding of the small business problem from this perspective is necessary if

the intent of leaders and public service organizations is to improve the business prospects of this group.

Understanding and addressing the characteristics of small business success among African immigrants might result in poverty reduction, the achievement of a higher standard of living, and improved financial outcomes for the community as suggested by (Bradley, McMullen, Artz, & Simiyu, 2012; Dayanim, 2011; Hall, Matos, Sheehan, & Silvestre, 2012; Liu, 2012; Wang & Lysenko, 2014). The leaders in organizations and community stakeholders could use the findings to formulate new policies and guidelines to increase business longevity in the city. Researchers in small business could use the resulting findings to examine different behaviors and analyze how the behaviors contribute to the success or failure of immigrants' small business endeavors.

This study may be of value to small business owners if its outcomes could help policy makers develop policies for avoiding small business failures among African immigrant population. Several researchers attested to the value and economic worth of immigrant and minority small businesses and the resulting contribution to employment in the communities (Adamonienė & Astromskienė, 2012; Bauernschuster, 2013; Gill & Biger, 2012; Goldman et al., 2014; Halabi & Lussier, 2014; Hewitt-Dundas, 2012; McFarland & McConnell, 2013; McHenry, 2015; Peri, 2012; Preston, 2014). However, some of the challenges faced by the participants in this study, as indicated by the themes that emerged, included a shortage of resources, financial constraints, and discriminatory lending practices of financial institutions. Moreover, limited attention paid to these obstacles resulted in small business failures (Bates & Robb, 2014; Bates & Robb, 2015).

This study may serve as a baseline useful to leaders who might study the phenomenon of immigrants' small businesses. Furthermore, the discoveries of this study may add to the development of leadership capabilities among members of the business community. Comprehending the strategies necessary for small business success among the group may empower African immigrants to make informed decisions to change their economic path. The transfer of knowledge between researchers and small business owners potentiates improvements in human capital quality and leadership capabilities (Becker, 1993).

Recommendations for Action

As the investigator, I am dedicated to informing small business leaders of this study's outcomes as they relate to organizational practices. The business leaders in Philadelphia have a vital role in aiding to evaluating and passing small business laws and policies that maximize output while addressing African immigrant small business financial support needed to succeed in business beyond 5 years start-up. I encourage small business leaders to be aware of the outcomes of this study and to enlighten themselves on the plans for executing and maintain small business financial needs.

As shown in the study's results, lack of steady flow of internal resources and financial support are parts of small business constraints that shape self-employment entry (Bates & Robb, 2013; Lofstrom & Bates, 2013). Black and immigrant entrepreneurs have less access to the capital needed to succeed in business (Bates & Robb, 2013); despite having access to the same labor force and having opportunities to participate in small business ownership, immigrants and minorities remain economically disadvantaged

(Bengtsson & Hsu, 2015; Boyd, 2015; Danso & Lum, 2013). Leaders in organizations and community stakeholders could use the findings to formulate new policies and guidelines to increase business longevity in the city, and to ensure financial institutions provides needed capital to support immigrant small business owners' endeavors.

Broadly, this study might be beneficial to key community stakeholders, including small business leaders and those organizations established to help small businesses grow. The plan is to share the results of this study with participants, business agencies, and organizations such as the City of Philadelphia, for-profit and non-profit agencies, and the City of Philadelphia Pennsylvania Chamber of Commerce. My aim is to publish the results of this study for the wider audience. I intend to make public the findings using effective and suitable means to non-profit and for-profit organizations, the City of Philadelphia, and institutions of higher learning through conference presentations, seminars, and web-nets.

Recommendations for Further Research

The focus of this study was to explore the strategies African immigrant small business owners use to succeed in business beyond 5 years in western Philadelphia. Specifically, I focused on key factors that influence these entrepreneurs' ability to stay in small business. A study of how a person uses strategies (based on their experience, knowledge, and skills) to influence business stability and sustainability may lead to increased awareness and understanding of success factors among African immigrant small business owners in western Philadelphia. I noted several study limitations and key

areas for further research around success strategies of African immigrant small business owners.

Henderson et al. (2013) noted limitations are possible weaknesses of the study. After the completion of data and analysis, additional limitations emerged. The limitations are (a) small sample size, (b) one hour maximum interview time limit, (c) time constraints to conduct the research, (d) limited researcher expertise, (e) acquiring data from African immigrant small business owners because these individuals keep their data private routinely, specifically financial information, and (f) participant bias can limit aptitude to remember events precisely. One possible limitation of this study was that it focused on Philadelphia region. Focusing on Philadelphia may limit the understanding of small business success among African immigrant small business owners, and the results may not be generalizable to different locations.

The expectation was the data collected from participants mirrored other cities and counties in Pennsylvania. Localities may differ economically, and these differences may limit the transferability of this study's results. As Gioia et al. (2013) noted, if discoveries remain morally distinctive, there would be a slight advantage to knowledge. Hence, removing transferable ideas and values permits researchers' discoveries to address broader audiences (Gioia et al., 2013). One recommendation for further research is the absent of support by African immigrant communities especially Nigerians, to African immigrant-owned small businesses. The sample size is also a limited, and this limitation is common of a qualitative study. Hence, another recommendation for further study is to comprise a large sample size. For instance, an outcome of the small sample size,

researchers may not be convinced to accept this study outcomes and conclusion as applicable to small business success strategy based on a limited number of small business owners (three) that participated in the study.

As discussed in the presentation of the results, one of the major themes that developed across the small business owners, organizational documents, and the BLS involves steady access to start-up capital. The study's outcomes indicate that financial capital constraints shaped self-employment entry for this group of immigrants; Blacks and immigrants have less access to the capital needed to succeed in business. Further research in the area of capital access of this group might be appropriate. Another recommendation for future study is the exploration of small business owners' characteristics because findings from future studies may increase methods to improve the longevity of business enterprises, contribute to the local economy, and create additional jobs.

Reflections

Business owners face crucial decisions and numerous challenges if these owners are to succeed in business beyond 5 years (Vaiman et al., 2012). Using BLS data collected between 1994 and 2010, statisticians from (SBA) estimated 50% of new small businesses were profitable (BLS, 2014; SBA, 2014). When asked, only 50% of business owners considered their businesses successful while the remaining 50% of business owners claimed their businesses failed or closed (Sarasvathy et al., 2013). It is then crucial that small business and community leaders are adequately educated to develop small business policies to best position immigrant small business owners to succeed.

Throughout this research proceeding, I had no predetermined knowledge regarding the study topic. I did my best to approach the research process with an impartial approach and exclusively trusted on the data to address the responses to the research question. The participants, to my greatest surprise, were forthcoming in sharing their personal lived experiences and insights of the strategies needed to success in business endeavors. Throughout the data collection process, I remained neutral and attentive to the role of the researcher, while doing the utmost to make the interviewees feel comfortable. I followed the recommendations of Tufford and Newman (2012) and used bracketing as a method of curtailing the undignified effects of presumptions or biases on the study's outcomes, during the data analysis to identify themes that emerged. Bracketing mitigated assumptions about the phenomenon and allowed subjective engagement with the collected data (Chan et al., 2013).

I found it motivating to hear the study's participants narrate their individual experiences. The research results derived from the data epitomized the core answers that led to a better comprehension of the research question. I was encouraged by the results of the study; and at the same time, learned new information from the study outcomes. The participants indicated that small business success strategies were exceedingly due for these study groups of participants; hence, this study created an overabundance of data. Also, it was a pleasure and satisfying to add new perceptions to the body of literature on this subject.

Summary and Conclusions

The minority-owned business was a major component of the United States' economy, and the success of these enterprises benefited the economy by creating jobs and inspiring economic growth in inner-city areas (Dayanim, 2011; Liu, 2012). Despite these prospects, minority business owners continue to meet difficulties when trying to gain entrance into the broader economy (Bengtsson & Hsu, 2015; Boyd, 2012; Dayanim, 2011). A greater understanding of the small business problem from this perspective is necessary if the intent of leaders and public service organizations were to improve the business prospects of this group. The main source of data collection was the semistructured interviews, including the assessment of organizational documents and data obtained from the BLS. I used methodological triangulation to aid in the definition and confirmation of derived themes across multiple data sources.

Furthermore, based on the in-depth review of the study's participants and the cross-examination of the multiple data sources, answers served as added sources of information about the strategies small business owners used to succeed. Moreover, this study's outcomes and inferences gave rise to recommendations for action and future research. The findings of this study may contribute to positive social change if leaders of organizations who support small business owners can cultivate adequate strategies to increase community and economic engagement. Eight major themes emerged after data analysis. Building on the resource-based theory, human capital theory, and the disadvantage theory (conceptual frameworks), the research outcomes revealed that African immigrant small business owners placed significant value on small business

characteristics that support success strategies. Understanding and addressing the characteristics of small business success among African immigrants might result in poverty reduction, the achievement of a higher standard of living, and improved financial outcomes for the community (Dayanim, 2011; Liu, 2012; Wang & Lysenko, 2014).

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What small business strategies helped you to succeed?
2. How did your education contribute to your business success?
3. What knowledge and skills do you think you need to grow?
4. What internal business resources give you a competitive advantage in western Philadelphia?
5. What help and support did you receive from SBA or community organizations?
6. What help and support did you receive from African cultural associations in western Philadelphia for your small business start-up capital?
7. How did your small business plan contribute to your business success?
8. Are there any comments that you would like to add to the discussion?

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation

Date: _____

Dear Small Business Owners,

My name is Marcellinus Madu, a student at Walden University. I am conducting a study on African small business owners to complete my degree. I need your help to identify the strategies used to succeed in business in Philadelphia.

I am requesting an interview. The interview will take about one hour. With your permission and consent, I will ask you questions and record your answers. Your personal information will remain confidential, and will not be published nor shared with any individuals or organizations. The plan is to share the results of this study with you, business agencies, and organizations such as the City of Philadelphia, for profit and non-profit agencies, and the City of Philadelphia Pennsylvania Chamber of Commerce.

There is no compensation for your participation in this study. However, your participation can make a difference in fostering business success and employment for African small business owners in Philadelphia Pennsylvania.

If you decide to participate in this study, contact me by phone at [redacted] or by e-mail at [redacted]

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Marcellinus Madu, MBA
DBA Candidate Walden University
[redacted]

Appendix C: Consent Form

I cordially invite you to take part in a research study of the small business ownership experiences of African immigrants' business owners. The researcher is inviting African immigrant small business owners residing in western Philadelphia Pennsylvania and you must be a first generation African immigrant to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part. I will conduct the study and my name is Marcellinus Madu, a doctor of business administration (DBA) student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this case study research is to determine what strategies African immigrant small business owners need to succeed in business beyond 5 years in western Philadelphia, and to describe the perception of small business ownership among African immigrants in western Philadelphia communities.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will answer eight questions related to your experience as an African immigrant small business owner. The interview will be recorded. This is a onetime interview that will last about one hour. However, the introduction for the consent form is estimated to take 15 minutes. I will also share my interpretations of your interview with you so you can provide feedback. This will take approximately 35minutes.

Here are sample questions:

1. Why did you become a business owner?
2. How did your education contribute to your small business success?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time. At any point, you wish to withdraw from participating in the study no data you provided will be used in the final analysis.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

Although participation in this study involves risk of the minor discomforts such as emotional discomfort of stress or becoming upset, being in this study would not pose a risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The research findings may contribute to potential benefits if incorporated into the role of nonprofit and for profit organizations designated to help immigrants with the strategies use to succeed in small business. Understanding the skills needed to succeed in business among African immigrants may result in poverty reduction, improvement in the quality

of life, the achievement of a higher standard of living, and better economic results for the community. The leadership organizations and other stakeholders could use the findings to formulate new policies and guidelines to improve small business ownership, lower underemployment, poverty, and raising the standard of living of African immigrants.

Payment

There are no incentives for participating in this study, and as such, a thank you letter will be sent to the participant via e-mail upon the conclusion of the interviews.

Privacy

Consider any information provided as confidential. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. In addition, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports; hence, I will employ the use of pseudonyms in the analysis and the description of the research findings. I will code the participants' identities using an alphanumeric system (for example, small business participant 1 will be SB1). I will keep all data in a safe box at home where no one else will have access to the key combinations. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years as required by the university. I will use KillDisk software to wipe out the research data after five years.

Contacts and Questions

Feel free to ask any questions now, or later. You may contact the researcher via phone at [redacted] and or at [redacted]. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this study with you. Her phone number is [redacted] and by e-mail at [redacted]. Walden University's approval number for this study is IRB 08-12-15-0283181, and it expires on August 11, 2016.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information and understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand I am agreeing to the terms described in the agreement.

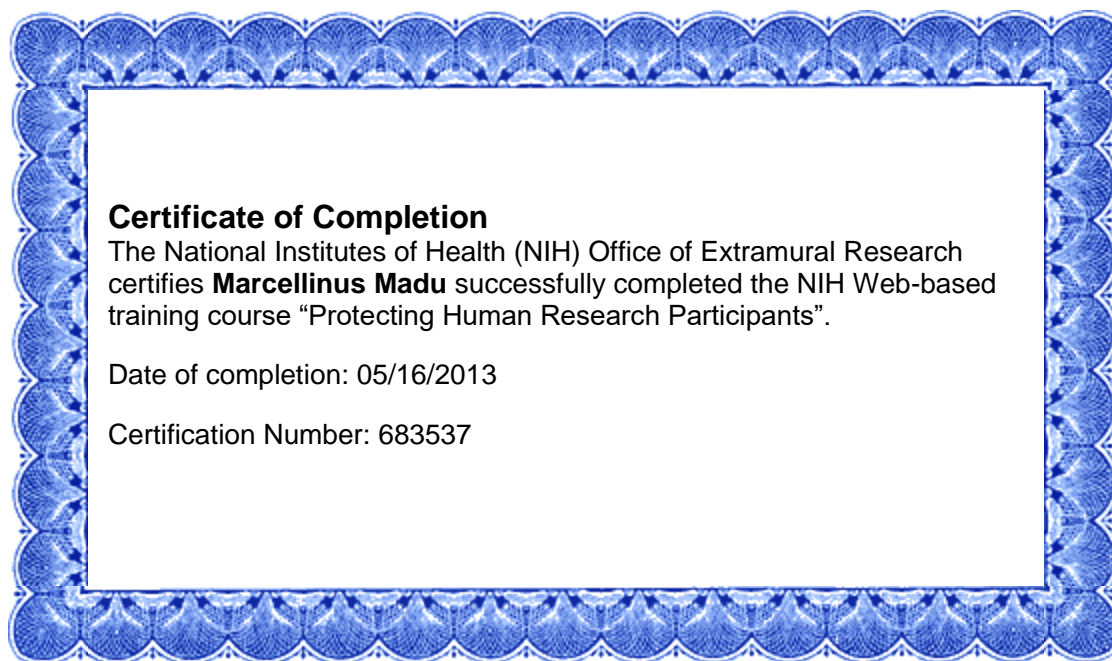
Printed Name of Participant _____

Date of Consent _____

Participant's Signature _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Appendix D: National Institute of Health Certificate



Appendix E: Concepts Measured by Interview Questions

Interview Question	Concept Measured
What small business strategies helped you to succeed?	Human capital
How did your education contribute to your small business success?	Human capital
What knowledge and skills do you think you need to grow your small business?	Human capital
What internal small business resources give you a competitive advantage in western Philadelphia?	Human capital
What help and support did you receive from SBA or community organizations?	Human capital
What help and support did you receive from African cultural associations in western Philadelphia for your small business start-up capital?	Resources and Human Capital
How did your small business plan contributed to your business success?	Human capital
Are there any comments that you would like to add to the discussion?	Resources, human capital, and barriers

Note. Each question relates to one or more of the theories used to frame this study: human capital theory (Baker, 1993), resource-based theory (Barney, 1991), and disadvantage theory (Light, 1979).