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Entrepreneurial Marketing in Online Home-Based Businesses: Narratives From Immigrant Entrepreneurs

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Abstract

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by

Craig D. Smith

MPhil, Walden University, 2018

MSMM, Kettering University, 2003

MSOM, General Motors Institute, 1993

BSME, Rochester Institute of Technology, 1980

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Management

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Abstract

Although the formation of an online home-based business may be a relatively simple and low-cost endeavor, entrepreneurial marketing researchers suggest that immigrant entrepreneurs must access appropriate resources to effectively market an online business for breakout from low-growth, ethnic enclave markets. The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study was to explore the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets. To address this gap, a narrative inquiry method was used to collect data from immigrant entrepreneurs. This study was framed by 2 key concepts focused on immigrant entrepreneurs in operating online businesses: Kloosterman's concept of postindustrial opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs and Anwar and Daniel's concept of entrepreneurial marketing in online home-based businesses. Data was gathered using 6 face-to-face unstructured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis and a critical events analysis approach. Five conceptual categories were revealed for answering the research question. The findings of the research showed that that online home-based business strategies can mitigate gender, racial, or social biases given strong family support and leveraging social capital, social networks, relationships, or ethnic community support. Results gleaned from this narrative study may help to promote social change by revealing to entrepreneurship educators and policymakers the challenges with which immigrants who own online home-based businesses must contend.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Although the formation of an online home-based business may be a relatively simple and low-cost endeavor for an immigrant entrepreneur, insights from entrepreneurial marketing research suggest that the immigrant entrepreneur must be able to access appropriate resources to effectively market an online business for breakout from traditional low-growth ethnic enclave markets (Anwar & Daniel, 2017; Lee & Black, 2017; Rusinovic, 2008). Prior research findings indicate that ethnic minorities in many developed countries are associated with high levels of entrepreneurship (Broughton, 2015; Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015), yet in extant studies the marketing activities of immigrant firms have been characterized as "haphazard" (Altinay, Saunders, & Wang, 2014). The effective use of contemporary marketing techniques requires access to resources that immigrant entrepreneurs often lack, such as a technological background and the ability to navigate social situations in the culture to which the entrepreneur has emigrated; furthermore, immigrant entrepreneurs' efforts may be hampered by barriers such as racism, discrimination, and unresponsive government policy. To promote social change for immigrant entrepreneurs through education and policy in today's competitive digital marketplace, this group needs a platform to voice their experiences and need for access to technology and social and financial capital (Ram, Jones, & Villares-Varela, 2016).

Whilst many studies have considered ethnic minority digital entrepreneurship, fewer have considered the important topic of marketing in such online businesses

(Altinay & Altinay, 2008; Basu, 2010; Daniel, Domenico, & Sharma, 2014), which, given the importance of marketing, is a significant omission for both practitioners and academics (Anwar & Daniel, 2017). The emergent domain of entrepreneurial marketing considers how small firms, with limited resources, can effectively undertake breakout marketing (Fiore, Niehm, Hurst, Son, & Sadachar, 2013). Studies show that entrepreneurial marketing for an online business start-up can be dynamic, flexible, immersive, low cost, and growth oriented (Miles et al., 2016; Morrish, Miles, & Deacon, 2010) and indicate that such marketing is vital if start-up online businesses are to become sustainable and grow (Morrish, 2011; O'Cass & Morrish, 2016). Without appropriate entrepreneurial marketing to help them identify nonethnic business opportunities and form relationships across diverse market segments, immigrant entrepreneurs pursuing online business start-up may find Kloosterman's (2010) observation of enhanced opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs to be only theoretical (Griffin-EL & Olabisi, 2018; Ram et al., 2016).

In this introductory chapter, information is provided on scholarly, management, and social change issues pertinent to entrepreneurial marketing in online home-based businesses owned by immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States. First, background information is presented, followed by the problem and the knowledge gap in the scholarly literature on the study topic. I then present the logical alignment among the study problem, purpose, and research question, and I introduce the conceptual framework of the

study. Finally, the significance, assumptions, and limitations of the study as well as definitions of key terms used throughout this dissertation are presented.

Background of the Study

Research on immigrant entrepreneurship has been growing (Broughton, 2015; Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015; Kerr & Kerr, 2016). For instance, Fairlie and Lofstrom (2015) confirmed that immigrants are more likely to demonstrate entrepreneurship in their adopted country as well as the in their home country. In their study, in both the home country and the host country, entrepreneurship emerged as a specific response to social problems such as unemployment and exclusion from the labor market due to factors such as gender and ethnicity. Addressing issues key to immigrant entrepreneurs' success also has the potential to address issues of concern for policymakers, and to facilitate the production of social capital (Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015).

Broughton's (2015) research showed that throughout the developed world, immigrants are much more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities, often as a response to specific social problems such as unemployment. In research conducted on immigrant self-employment in the United Kingdom, researchers found that self-employment emerged as a strategy through which immigrants sought to address high levels of unemployment in their ethnic enclaves (Volery, 2007; Zhou, 2004). Immigrants are not only more likely entrepreneurs than native-born peers; they are also social entrepreneurs whose business plans often address social problems of concern to policymakers (Broughton, 2015).

However, immigrant entrepreneurs face many barriers to starting, maintaining, and expanding businesses (Altinay & Altinay, 2008; Bates & Rob, 2014; Moon, Farmer, Miller, & Abreo, 2014). For instance, Ram et al. (2016) demonstrated that effective use of marketing techniques requires access to resources that immigrant entrepreneurs often lack. Potential obstacles include not only lack of technological background but also difficulty in navigating social situations, as well as racism, discrimination, and unresponsive government policy. Another key barrier that immigrant business owners face is lack of access to capital; immigrant entrepreneurs often distrust financial institutions, and researchers recommend improved communication practices to help address this communication barrier. More research is needed to adequately understand the current practices of immigrant entrepreneurs regarding online marketing (Ram et al., 2016).

Kloosterman (2010) suggested that immigrant entrepreneurs may be more easily able to enter high-growth, high-threshold, postindustrial sectors with the use of online businesses because such businesses offer growth and breakout opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs to transcend markets that are spatially restricted or usually restricted to coimmigrants. Vorley and Rodgers (2014) explored home-based businesses as an increasingly important form of entrepreneurial activity that is often overlooked within academic literature and official business reporting. Set against the background of the home, the researchers investigated owner-entrepreneurs' experiences forming their home-based businesses in the Sheffield City Region in the United Kingdom. In their

paper, the authors dissected factors related to the push/pull, opportunity/necessity-based situation to present how incidents experienced by home-based business owner-entrepreneurs affected the formation of their enterprises. They concluded with implications for public policy and recommendations for further research into home-based businesses as an increasingly relevant field of entrepreneurship.

Daniel, Anwar, and Domenico (2014) explored the role of space and place for entrepreneurs operating online home-based businesses. Such businesses are vital, as they have been identified as offering unique opportunities for experimentation and innovation. The benefits of such businesses extend to the individual micro level as well as the macroeconomic level. In their exploratory study, Daniel et al. interviewed 42 entrepreneurs operating online home-based businesses. They concluded that while such businesses could be location-independent, other factors constrained the location of these businesses, usually to the home. The authors suggested that a third "tethered" business alternative can exist where the business is largely based in one location but the entrepreneur can work away from the primary location for certain periods and then return to the original location.

Online businesses have also been identified as unique sources of innovation that promote diversity in the business ecosystem (Van Gelderen, Brand et al., 2008; Whalen & Akaka, 2016), yet little is known about the business practices, including those of entrepreneurial marketing, in online home-based businesses owned by immigrant entrepreneurs (Anwar & Daniel, 2015). Research is lacking regarding opportunities for

immigrant entrepreneurs to succeed and overcome common barriers. Much of the research on this topic has involved literature reviews (Aliaga-Isla & Rialp, 2013; De Massis, Kotlar, Wright, & Kellermanns, 2018; Fatoki, 2014); a qualitative study was needed to gather detailed responses that might enable an in-depth understanding of immigrant entrepreneurship in the United States. The aim of this study was to increase understanding of the characteristics of immigrant businesses and their owners, and to better understand barriers to their success. The use of online home-based businesses may be a rewarding avenue for immigrant entrepreneurs to take in today's business market (Anwar & Daniel, 2014; Barua, Konana, Whinston, & Yin, 2001; Edley, Hylmo, & Newsom, 2004; Kloosterman et al., 2010), and combined with the bolstering of resources may help immigrant entrepreneurs with business start-ups and their maintenance and expansion (e.g., Daniel et al., 2014).

Problem Statement

The general problem is that immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States usually manage their businesses in low-growth market sectors such as traditional ethnic enclaves, limiting their opportunities for diversification and sustainability in today's fast-growing digital marketplace (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b, 2017). In the United States, almost 25% of small enterprises are held by immigrants, and these on-ground, low-skilled, low-market-sector businesses are more likely to fail than those founded by natives (Blanding, 2016). Immigrant entrepreneurs tend to embed their businesses in ethnically similar neighborhoods (Halkias, Thurman, Caracatsanis, & Harkiolakis, 2016). Recent research

indicates that while controlling for differences in firm and owner traits related to small business survival prospects, targeting minority neighborhood household clients increases the likelihood that an immigrant firm will go out of business (Bates & Robb, 2014). Online businesses have also been identified as unique sources of innovation that promote diversity in the business ecosystem (Van Gelderen, Brand et al., 2008; Whalen & Akaka, 2016), yet little is known about business practices, including those of entrepreneurial marketing, in online home-based businesses owned by immigrant entrepreneurs (Anwar & Daniel, 2015).

Only one narrative study in the literature, conducted in the United Kingdom, has applied an entrepreneurial marketing lens to explore immigrant entrepreneurship in online home-based businesses, and it had a demographically skewed sample of only male respondents with Asian heritage (Anwar & Daniel, 2016b). That study's findings indicate that while immigrant online home-based businesses appear to offer opportunities for breakout, reliance on haphazard marketing lacking an innovative approach resulted in highly homogeneous approaches to marketing (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b). Kloosterman (2010) asserted that "qualitative research [is required] to grasp the social embeddedness, strategies, and careers of immigrant entrepreneurs" (p. 41) to gain in-depth insight into the immigrant entrepreneurship experience. The specific problem is that a deeper understanding is needed on the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally

restricted markets (Allen & Busse, 2016; Anwar & Daniel, 2017; Griffin-EL & Olabisi, 2018).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study was to explore the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets. To address this gap in a manner consistent with the qualitative paradigm, a narrative inquiry method was used to meet the purpose of the study and collect data through storytelling from immigrant entrepreneurs owning online home-based businesses in the United States. Using the narrative inquiry method through storytelling is a proven method of representing human experiences leading to a detailed understanding of participants' daily lived experiences (Clandinin, 2013; Webster & Mertova, 2007). To ensure trustworthiness of data, a narrative analysis of critical events was used along with the practice of openness and transparency in data collection as I sought to track the full description of events within the story as called upon by the narrative method (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Webster & Mertova, 2007). While trustworthiness of data for qualitative studies is typically accomplished through the process of triangulation, for narrative inquiry trustworthiness of data is addressed in the robust structure of the process. Webster and Mertova (2007) stated that triangulation is

not feasible or necessary in narrative case studies because it is "almost impossible to achieve" (p. 91).

Research Question

How do immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses narrate stories of entrepreneurial marketing experiences, and how do these experiences support breakout from traditionally restricted markets?

Conceptual Framework

This study was framed by two key concepts that focus on the marketing challenges facing immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online businesses: Kloosterman's (2010) concept of postindustrial opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs and Anwar and Daniel's (2016a) concept of entrepreneurial marketing in online home-based businesses. The purpose of this qualitative study using a narrative inquiry design was to explore the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets. The findings of this empirical investigation are aimed at advancing knowledge on the interface between immigrant entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial marketing and online home-based business, and contributing original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework.

Entrepreneurial marketing theory (Stokes, 2000) provides a theoretical understanding of how immigrant-owned firms can enter the market in postindustrial

sectors and strengthen their longevity through entrepreneurial marketing activities (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a). This study brings together scholarly literature from the entrepreneurial marketing area (Hills, Hultman, Kraus, & Schulte, 2009; Morris, Schindehutte, & LaForge, 2002) and literature in mixed embeddedness and resources and opportunity structure accessible to immigrant entrepreneurs (Adendorff & Halkias, 2014; Kloosterman, 2010; Kloosterman, Rusinovic, & Yeboah, 2016), and I drew on both of these bodies of literature to guide and interpret the exploration of marketing in immigrant-owned online home-based businesses (Anwar & Daniel, 2016b). This research strategy helped in developing original qualitative data to contribute to the study's conceptual framework and follow recommendations by previous scholars within the immigrant entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial marketing, and online home-based business literature.

Developing effective enterprises for online businesses aligns well with Kloosterman's (2010) concept of postindustrial opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurship. Such opportunities for domestic and international growth can be accomplished by transcending markets via the Internet that are usually restricted to immigrant entrepreneurs operating on-ground businesses (Daniel et al., 2014). In providing data to respond to the study's research question, I sought to extend earlier research on the migrant entrepreneurship realm that determines visionary opportunities for breakout (Kloosterman, 2010) and to fill a gap in the literature with empirical

evidence concerning online home-based immigrant enterprises operating in high-growth

sectors (Anwar & Daniel, 2017).

Entrepreneurial marketing involves effective marketing avenues and possibilities

for small enterprises, which often must deal with constrained resources (Bjerke &

Hultman, 2002; Fiore et al., 2013; Grünhagen & Mishra, 2008; Kurgun, Bagiran, Ozeren,

& Maral, 2011; Martin, 2009). Entrepreneurial marketing offers potential as a lens

through which to explore and study the marketing activities of ethnic-minority-owned

enterprises, providing also the potential to shine new light on these activities as emergent

and flexible rather than haphazard (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b). In this study, I

therefore adopted entrepreneurial marketing as a theoretical lens through which to (a)

explore the experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online

home-based businesses; (b) understand the implications of these experiences for

supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets; (c) address the study's research

question; and (d) extend knowledge within the study's conceptual framework.

Nature of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study was to explore the

entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States

operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for

supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets. A research method that was

quantitative in nature was not appropriate for addressing the purpose of this study, in that

this study did not call for operationalization, manipulation of experimental variables,

prediction, relationship, and testing (Harkiolakis, 2017). Qualitative methods are used to explore real-world issues (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Adopting a qualitative research method allows for the use of nonstandardized, flexible approaches to data generation that are relevant to a specific problem of study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

The specific problem is that a deeper understanding is needed on the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets (Allen & Busse, 2016; Anwar & Daniel, 2017; Griffin-EL & Olabisi, 2018). Such a problem requiring an in-depth exploration of individuals' experiences calls for a research method with a qualitative design. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to grasp the overall structure of a situation as well as the individual experiences and challenges that individuals within that structure face (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). Past research on the study topic has confirmed the significance of using a social constructivist approach in studying problems related to immigrant entrepreneurs and the adoption of online businesses (Kloosterman, 2010), and in this study I sought to give narrative voice to immigrants regarding their experiences of the problem.

The narrative inquiry approach originated through the seminal works of social constructivists such as Gergen (1973) and Burr (1998), who agreed that self-narrations satisfy individuals' need for stability, a sense of self-identity, and stability of relational patterns. Narrative inquiry gives the participant/storyteller the opportunity to make him-

or herself understood as a coherent identity (Brandle, Berger, Golla, & Kuckertz, 2018; Gergen, 1994). Narrative inquiry allows for presenting rich participant descriptions through storytelling aimed at a deeper understanding of human experiences as they are lived on a daily basis (Clandinin, 2013; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Unlike other forms of qualitative research such as ethnography, phenomenology, and case study methods, a narrative inquiry approach was an appropriate method for data collection to address the purpose of this study because it provides a support process for participants who present discomfort when disclosing critical events of life experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Meier & Stremmel, 2010). The narrative inquiry research process also created a space (Clandinin, 2006) that allowed immigrant entrepreneurs to narrate daily experiences with entrepreneurial marketing within their online home-based businesses while I collected valuable facts and story configurations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The participants of this narrative inquiry study were a purposeful sample of six immigrant entrepreneurs operating online home-based businesses. Narrative research methods typically focus on individuals' experiences, using an interview style to explore subjective experiences to gain insight beyond the individual (Miller, 2017). Instead of an absolute number, Schram (2006) suggested a range of five to 10 participants for a typical qualitative study, claiming that a larger sample size could hinder a more in-depth investigation. Semistructured interviews with open-ended questions were used for data collection and continued until data saturation was achieved (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Purposeful selection of study participants who were knowledgeable and had experience directly related to the research topic provided valuable in-depth research data, primarily through networking and snowball sampling (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). The sample population met the following inclusion criteria: Each participant needed to be (a) an adult running a successful business and (b) a first-generation immigrant founder of a small to medium-sized online business enterprise, 2 or more years after start-up within the United States, possessing well-developed attitudes and opinions regarding entrepreneurial marketing experiences of online home-based businesses and willing to provide in-depth information on the phenomena under study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). Narrative inquiry has been used in entrepreneurial research as a heuristic through which entrepreneurial action and narratives can be better understood (Larty & Hamilton, 2011).

The critical event narrative analysis approach was used in this study to address trustworthiness of data. Ricoeur (1980, as cited by Daiute, 2013) described narrating as three dimensional with a "present of past things," a "present of future things," and a "present of present things" that may be determined by time marking and verb tenses (p. 212). The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space created during a narrative analysis supports the researcher through marking time and verb identification to identify critical events. The critical events may promote crucial life decisions that could produce life-changing consequences for the participant (Webster & Mertova, 2007). While triangulation is primarily used in qualitative research for determining themes, Webster

and Mertova (2007) stated that triangulation is not feasible for critical event narrative

inquiry's story-based studies.

Definitions

Ethnic enclave markets: Within urban areas of culturally distinct immigrant

minority communities, most maintain ways of life largely separate from those of the host-

country communities that surround them. These can provide comfort and financial and

social support, often extending the assimilation process and unnecessarily maintaining

the divide between new and culturally different immigrant groups and the host country

(Anwar & Daniel, 2017; Lee & Black, 2017).

Entrepreneurial leadership: Entrepreneurial leadership behavior emerges from an

organizing group of people or person(s) with a common economic-growth goal in

sustainable business environments. Proactive entrepreneurial behaviors are characterized

by innovation, accepting responsibility, leveraging opportunities, and optimizing risk-

taking while orchestrating change to benefit stakeholders and society in general

(Broughton, 2015; Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015; McGrath & MacMillan, 2000).

Entrepreneurial marketing: Entrepreneurial marketing is less about a traditional

business strategy and more about innovating, being proactive regarding customer needs,

risk taking, and differentiating methods. Researchers identify successful entrepreneurs as

applying marketing in alternative strategies that focus primarily on innovation and

understanding the customer's needs; their success is primarily determined by how they

make strategic choices based on the market environment (Fiore et al., 2013; Morrish et al., 2010; Stokes, 2000).

Immigrant bias: Immigrants can become targets of racial, cultural, and national identification and face systemic political bias in their host countries, primarily because they come from backgrounds significantly different from that of the host country. These differences may involve race, culture, religion, language, customs, ideology, and other experiential behaviors leading to discrimination and derogation, including violence resulting in a social psychological bias against immigrants (Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, & Esses, 2010).

Immigrant business barriers: Many impediments to immigrant start-ups and their ability to transition to higher value markets are related to the host society's bias against immigrants, including financial restrictions, market access, targeted governmental policy, and cultural prejudice against immigrant entrepreneurs (Altinay & Altinay, 2008; Bates & Rob, 2014; Moon, Farmer, Miller, & Abreo, 2014).

Immigrant governmental policy: Host-country policies and business practices significantly impact the behaviors of immigrant entrepreneurs due to resulting constrained access to capital and resources, which has an impact on the ability of start-up businesses to move up into higher value markets (Kerr & Kerr, 2016).

Mixed embeddedness: Taking socioeconomic, institutional, and political actors into consideration within a theoretical analysis framework can help to formulate an understanding of how immigrant economies can synergistically develop premium results.

Kloosterman and Rath (1999) proposed an approach that comprises the complex interdependence of the factors that immigrants face when integrating their origin networks and the host society network and the host society. This model is often cited as a basis for current researchers exploring the phenomenon of migrant business performance.

Online home-based businesses: Small business enterprises operating from the entrepreneur's home and using fast-start technologies, specifically online Internet structures, are gaining acceptance (Anwar & Daniel, 2014). These strategies afford a small business or family business the opportunity to engage a broad market without the physical infrastructure of physical assets, storefront, rent, large start-up loans, customer parking, merchandise in inventory, tax benefits, and large numbers of staff. Online home-based businesses can also circumvent zoning ordinances, giving flexibility and unrestricted 24/7 access to the products or services offered. Online home-based business strategies can mitigate gender, racial, or social biases (de la Cruz, Verdu Jover, & Gomez Gras, 2018; Wynarczyk & Graham, 2013).

Assumptions

This study had three basic assumptions that directly related to the type and methods of data collection and analysis processes. The first assumption that I made was that collecting, recording, and sharing of narratives related to participants' life experiences deriving narrative meaning had been bestowed upon participants and that related individuals were open to reflective interpretation. Maintaining a high level of integrity, transparency, and respect among researcher, narrator, and audience requires

constant monitoring, in that there is no a priori reason to relate these narratives in the raw state as presentations of a participant's voice through in-depth, interactive interviews. The use of narrative inquiry as a method to capture life experiences and explore individual human knowledge involves researcher influence and bias due to the highly interactive process that takes place. One of the main considerations is the relationship between the researcher and participant as it relates to living their stories, relating their experience, and how the researcher chooses to analyze the stories of others. We as researchers need to remain as neutral as possible while effectively interpreting and teasing out the meaning conferred through scrutinizing the methods we apply as narrators in relating participants' lived experiences (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009).

The second assumption related to how the data were collected, protected, and treated to ensure that each participant's privacy and respect were and would be maintained. Data integrity, methods of data collection, recording media, data codification, data analysis protocol, and related procedures were well defined and adhered to (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). The raw data consisted of in-depth interviews conducted in person via Skype and audio recordings with video interaction (unrecorded) to ensure accuracy, in addition to field notes and shared interactions.

The third assumption was that by using a narrative inquiry design, I would be able to develop a complete understanding of the daily experiences of the participants through a collaborative, socially interactive process over time involving the participants and myself (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Meier & Stremmel, 2010). According to Clandinin

and Connelly (2000), there are three stated commonplaces of narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality, and place. These identify specific proportions of an inquiry and can be simultaneously employed as a conceptual framework. The purpose of applying this approach is to allow the researcher to adequately understand the complexity of the joint structure of the immigrant participants' daily interactions, perspectives, interpersonal relationships, feelings, and experiences with an online home-based business.

I had to assume that the study participants would participate on a voluntary basis, be open to the interview questions, and be accurate and honest in their responses. The participant consent form covered several topics, including compensation, confidentiality, data security, transparency, risks, benefits, time involvement, what the study was about, and how the material would be handled. For each step in the process, the participants had the option to stop, exit the study, or deny release of the materials at any point to ensure that trust and integrity were maintained.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations are conscious choices made by a researcher to set the boundaries of a study; they are explanations for what will and will not be covered to narrow and bound the scope of the study with clarity (Kirkwood & Price, 2013). Several aspects of the study required assumptions of honesty; responses were considered factual to the participant, and trust between the participant and researcher was of paramount importance to ensure that standard (Simon & Goes, 2013; Yilmaz, 2013).

This research used the qualitative narrative approach to gain a deeper understanding of the daily experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs by exploring the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets. The scope of the study encompassed six first-generation immigrants who identified as citizens or permanent residents of the United States. Immigrant entrepreneurs who were considered illegal, had limited experience, or ran large-scale organizations fell outside the scope of this study. The point of data saturation determined the final sample size. This study was grounded in Kloosterman's (2010) scholarly research on mixed embeddedness, opportunity, and resource access, and issues related to institutionalized racial and cultural bias of the host country.

The research sample consisted of six immigrant entrepreneurs initially recruited through purposeful sampling and criterion-based sampling with the following boundaries set by the sample's inclusion criteria, which indicated that each participant needed to be (a) an adult running a successful business and (b) a first-generation immigrant founder of a small to medium-sized online business enterprise, a minimum of 2 years after start-up within the United States, possessing well-developed attitudes and opinions regarding entrepreneurial marketing experiences of online home-based businesses and willing to provide in-depth information on the phenomena under study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

This criterion-based sampling gathered a heterogeneous group of participants to support maximum variation sampling (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016). Maximum variation sampling in qualitative research relies on researchers to select participants with diverse characteristics to ensure the presence of maximum variability within the primary data, which in a narrative inquiry study are the stories told as responses to the interview protocol (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Palinkas et al., 2015; Webster & Mertova, 2007). The age criteria suggested for this study were similar to those applied in similar studies. Young start-up entrepreneurs might not have possessed the relevant experience level or had time to develop effective strategies, and participants needed to have had sufficient time to develop their careers (Overbeke et al., 2013). The choice of initial sample size was deemed sufficient when no new information was forthcoming (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). These inclusion criteria aligned with sampling strategies used in similar studies (Anwar & Daniel, 2017; Essers & Tedmanson, 2014; Samaratunge, Barrett, & Rajapakse, 2015).

Limitations

Limitations are influences that the researcher cannot control, shortcomings in design, or study conditions or restrictions on the methodology that affect results and conclusions. The limitations of a study are characterized by factors included in the design or methodology that impact or lead to misinterpretation of the results of the research being conducted (Creswell, 2007; Simon & Goes, 2013; Yilmaz, 2013). The concept of transferability, per Lincoln and Guba (1985), has to do with the degree to which results

from a study can be retold and leveraged for another study or situation (Burkholder, Cox, & Crawford, 2016).

Transferability applies context from the findings and results for knowledge of comparison applicability and content bounding. Generalization of research findings is not the goal of qualitative research design; it is a method for gaining depth, meaning, and insight into a phenomenon or subject (Burkholder et al., 2016). The final decision or judgment as to the transferability of the findings in the study is up to the reader; the researcher needs to address transferability through clearly describing, defining, and documenting the study setting and boundaries (Burkholder et al., 2016; Prowse & Camfield, 2013). Dependability relates to the stability of the materials, data collection, and transcription accuracy, minimizing potential errors and relaying the participants' information in the study (Cresswell, 2007). It is critical to establish trustworthiness by relating the data in their original or unmodified state, avoiding narrative smoothing to entirely give voice to the participants.

To apply a narrative inquiry approach to address the subject of dependability, I needed to adhere to a strict level of transparency, consistency, and accuracy in data collection, analysis, retelling, and results of the research materials (Burkholder et al., 2016). Addressing research triangulation with narrative research is difficult, infeasible, and not necessary, as each participant's story is considered his or her individual singular truth (Webster & Mertova, 2007). For qualitative research with small sample sizes, specific environments, and individual experiences, it is not reasonable to assume that the

findings and conclusions are directly applicable to other studies and populations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Because the researcher is only responsible for collecting the narrative context of a qualitative study, ensuring transferability of a qualitative research study's inferences cannot be absolute (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

When reviewing limitations that they believe may influence results, researchers need to characterize those factors in the study with clarity. A fundamental limitation is related to the researcher's method and personal bias related to the situation and environment of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) posited that the relationship and retelling is a static relationship and only exists in the ethnographic present. Using overlapping methods can mitigate issues of credibility and dependability in qualitative studies.

Scholars conducting research need to be well versed in the limitations related to the selected study design, data collection, and analysis methodology to ensure valid and reliable results (Kirkwood & Price, 2014; Wiersma, 2000). In this study, specific factors that could pose limitations were considered. Six immigrant entrepreneurial business owners were purposefully selected; the sample size was not initially attained, and snowball sampling was then used to attain saturation. The small sample size was to allow for in-depth analysis of life experiences and stories from the participants' perceptions to tease out understanding of successful business practices, strategies, and challenges. I recognize that this small sample size may not represent the larger population of immigrant entrepreneurs running online home-based businesses in the United States.

Recognized limitations were mitigated by selecting participants representative of the larger demographic profile of the United States in general. The use of purposeful sampling in conjunction with snowball sampling to achieve the minimum number of appropriate participants is preferred by scholars to provide an information-rich body of in-depth material of central importance to a study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

The goal was to understand how to successfully launch a business, understanding the barriers, challenges, and structural bias affecting immigrants in the United States. The participants chosen might have had significantly different circumstances and have faced gender or racial bias as well as financial barriers in many different ways or due to demographics.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it contributes to the scholarly literature by filling the gap in research on the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets (Allen & Busse, 2016; Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b). Only one other narrative study in the literature conducted in the United Kingdom has applied an entrepreneurial marketing lens to explore immigrant entrepreneurship in online home-based businesses, and it had a sample of only male respondents with Asian heritage (Anwar & Daniel, 2016b).

The findings of this study prompted Anwar and Daniel (2016a, 2016b) to recommend that similar studies be conducted in other high-receiving immigrant nations, to empirically investigate the experiences of other demographic groups of immigrant entrepreneurs with online home-based businesses in using entrepreneurial marketing to create breakout opportunities. It is essential to follow through on such research recommendations, given that record migration levels are prompting many to question migrant and ethnic minority communities' contributions to the host economy (Catney, 2016). Research has focused on the volume of entrepreneurial activity in these communities as opposed to the quality of this activity (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b).

Although there is much research on the topic of ethnic/immigrant entrepreneurship, there is a dearth of studies focused mainly on marketing in such enterprises (Chaudhry & Crick, 2004; Jamal, 2005; Lagrosen & Lind, 2014). Considering the importance of marketing, this constitutes a rather weighty omission for academia, educators, researchers, and practitioners (Whalen & Akaka, 2016). In particular, and after an exhaustive literature search on immigrant-owned business strategies, I found that only Anwar and Daniel's (2016a) study had applied an entrepreneurial marketing lens to explore the experiences of a sample of Asian male entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom. Research to date has mostly explored sectors in which there are high proportions of immigrant entrepreneurs, giving weight to sectors that are traditionally characterized by low growth and thus limiting opportunities to delve into breakout. Even though online businesses are now commonplace, research regarding immigrant entrepreneurs largely

ignores the opportunities presented by such business activity. As such, this study

represents a shift from the mainstream to a unique research focus on immigrant-owned

online home-based businesses—businesses with the potential to offer ethnic-minority

entrepreneurs a new way to break out from the restricted markets that they have

traditionally or historically been drawn to (Broughton, 2015).

Significance to Practice

In the United States, almost 25% of small, on-ground, low-market-sector

enterprises held by immigrants will fail as compared to those founded by natives

(Blanding, 2016). Immigrant entrepreneurs tend to embed their businesses in ethnically

similar neighborhoods (Halkias et al., 2011), even though research indicates that even

when variations in traits related to enterprise and owner vis-à-vis potential for small

business survival are controlled for, there is still a weak outlook for ethnic

minority/immigrant enterprises (Bates & Robb, 2014). Kloosterman (2010) posited that

ethnic/immigrant entrepreneurs could realize opportunities to launch businesses in high-

threshold, high-growth, postindustrial sectors through the formation and operation of

online home-based businesses, which offer growth and breakout opportunities for

immigrant entrepreneurs to transcend restricted markets. The results of this study may

make a significant contribution to practice toward supporting the sustainability of

immigrant entrepreneurship.

The results of this study may be significant in empowering immigrant

entrepreneurs who might be dissuaded from initiating a small business by social and

financial resource barriers endangering business start-up and the sustainability of an immigrant firm. Dissemination of the study's results may inform novice immigrant entrepreneurs that many previous barriers faced by immigrant entrepreneurs can be managed through innovative thinking and the initiation of an online home-based business. Once overcoming previously embedded barriers to immigrant entrepreneurship through the development of an online home-based business, the study results providing information and experiences with entrepreneurial marketing may prove to be another active pathway for immigrant entrepreneurs to achieve a sustainable business venture.

Significance to Theory

The findings of this empirical investigation are aimed at advancing knowledge on entrepreneurial marketing in immigrant-owned online home-based businesses in the United States and contributing original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework. While entrepreneurship theories can be applied to improve knowledge on the multifaceted development of business ownership, marketing theories can elucidate how this process evolves in the world of entrepreneurship (Kozlinska, 2012). The context-rich interpretive approach used to meet the purpose of this study could offer distinctive contributions to the theory and extend understanding of the marketing/entrepreneurship interface (Whalen & Akaka, 2016) in online home-based businesses initiated by immigrant entrepreneurs (Daniel et al., 2014).

Recent research offers evidence that ethnic/immigrant entrepreneurs are overwhelmingly active and clustered in sectors with low profit margins (Broughton,

2015; Catney, 2016). Such studies provide an essential overview of this population's entrepreneurial activities, but they do not consider the population's great diversity among them, the kinds of enterprises that members set up, or even their ability to access diverse higher value markets. Some scholars have dealt with this heterogeneity through consideration of specific ethnic groups (e.g., Altinay & Altinay, 2008; Lassalle & McElwee, 2016). While other research has examined particular sectors, such studies focus mainly on business areas where ethnic minority entrepreneurs are more commonly active, such as catering, service, and retail (Altinay, 2010; Ishaq, Hussein, & Whittam, 2010; Jamal, 2005; Leung, 2003). Even though online operations offer many opportunities (Deschamps, Dart, & Links, 1998; Phillips, 2002; Sayers, 2009-2010; Sulaiman, Shariff, & Ahmad, 2009; Wynarczyk & Graham, 2013), research to date has not studied associated businesses. Although such online home-based businesses are the current trend, no research has examined them in the context of their potential for ethnic minority/immigrant entrepreneurs (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b).

Significance to Social Change

"The use of narrative as a medium in knowledge translation aligns with the transformative and social change agenda within cultural praxis, as well as the goal of grounding such change in people's experiences and identities" (McGannon & Smith, 2015, p. 81). Entrepreneurship education is a significant tool for global economic development and a powerful medium for innovative practices and social change (Rawat, Bouchon, & Nair, 2015). Entrepreneurship education is a unique form of education that

enables individuals to achieve their personal, family, and community benchmarks for a successful and sustainable lifestyle, and it allows the development of business skills and mental awareness (Catney & Sabater, 2015; Efe, 2014). Narratives on entrepreneurship education offer enhanced understanding of entrepreneurship as a living and evolving theory grounded in successful entrepreneurs' meanings, experiences, and wisdom passed on to other entrepreneurs through stories and practice (Rae & Carswell, 2000). Thus, entrepreneurial narratives can evolve into an ongoing social process in which people learn from their own experiences as well as those of others; this process influences the development of entrepreneurs' unique individualistic theories, application of these theories, and efforts to enable social change within their communities (Rae, 2010).

As a form of social capital and human capital, business networks within migrant communities offer training seminars to aspiring immigrant entrepreneurs where these aspiring business owners receive their entrepreneurship education (Donnellon, Ollila, & Middleton, 2014; Stephens, 2013). Other novice immigrants go beyond ethnic business network training hubs to register for college courses to study the workings of business ownership in America. There is scant integration of marketing in entrepreneurship education curricula (Kozlinska, 2012), and no insight as to why such an essential element of business operation is missing from programs meant to facilitate entrepreneurs and entrepreneur hopefuls in successfully launching and operating a business. Traditional marketing education does not address important critical links with entrepreneurship, centralizing its role in large and established businesses (Lam & Harker,

2015). Given that 25% of small or medium-sized enterprises in the United States are owned by immigrants (Blanding, 2016), it is imperative that novice immigrant entrepreneurs have access to marketing education programs with practical value and more relevant focus on marketing for small immigrant firms, which should be delivered in a way that holds real-world significance for these entrepreneurs (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b).

To advance positive social change for immigrant entrepreneurs through education, training, and policy, this category of people needs a platform to voice experiences (Ram et al., 2016). A qualitative, narrative approach used within the constructivist paradigm offers a platform to oppressed and marginalized social groups to share their experiences (Cooper & White, 2011). The conversations developed through participants' storytelling using the in-depth interview method can provide new perspectives and meanings from within a given social context and promote social change (Clandinin, 2007, 2013). Research indicates that the level of discrimination in the online environment is tantamount to that encountered in the offline world and that online interactions, albeit socially and visually rich, do not obscure or disregard racialized bodies (Daniels, 2009, 2012). Martinez Dy (2014) highlighted the practice of whitewashing, noting that immigrant entrepreneurs may hide their ethnic or racial identities in the online world to improve their business status. The important information gleaned from this narrative study by analyzing participants' storytelling and how they relay their stories can help to promote social change by revealing to entrepreneurship educators and policymakers the

socially constructed reality as well as what challenges immigrants who own online home-based businesses have to contend with.

Summary and Transition

In this chapter, I presented an overview of the challenges and barriers to immigrant entrepreneurship success in the United States, offering context for the purpose of this qualitative study using a narrative inquiry design to explore the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets. Using the life experiences and perceptions of immigrant entrepreneurs through storytelling and sharing of chronological memories and perceptions is an effective method for revealing emergent themes. Next, I presented the primary conceptual framework that was used to conduct this study, looking to the concept of mixed embeddedness of immigrant entrepreneurs within the United States using online business technology to create a digital persona and break out of traditional markets into higher value markets. The mixed embeddedness model explores the complex interdependence of the integration of factors that immigrant entrepreneurs face from the country of origin networks to the host country potentially mitigating institutionalized bias. I continued by describing and detailing the assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations of the study. I further outlined the significance of the study in relation to theory, practice, and positive social change.

In Chapter 2, I introduce the literature review on the conceptual framework for the challenges and barriers to immigrant entrepreneurs of small home-based online firms in the United States. I synthesize, combine, and draw conclusions from works of literature related to immigrant entrepreneurs creating a path to higher value markets through technology and online business ventures to identify how the literature addresses the research question. I present my review of the literature as an iterative process in which I identified fundamental concepts as well as gaps. I also identified the challenges and barriers limiting the breakout of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States from traditional market segments. Scholars recognize that immigrant businesses are an essential driver for the socioeconomic development of host countries, contributing to employment growth and reduction of poverty and leading to positive social change for the host countries.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The specific problem is that a deeper understanding is needed on the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets (Allen & Busse, 2016; Anwar & Daniel, 2017; Griffin-EL & Olabisi, 2018). In the United States, almost 25% of small enterprises are held by immigrants, and these on-ground, low-market-sector businesses are more likely to fail than those founded by natives (Blanding, 2016). Additionally, small business start-up rates in the United States have declined, which may be due to the barriers to immigration, and as the United States shifts policy to turning away immigrants it will reduce its entrepreneurial edge (Allen & Busse, 2016; Jang, 2016; Litan, 2015). Online businesses have also been identified as unique sources of innovation that promote diversity in the business ecosystem (Van Gelderen, Brand, et al., 2008; Whalen & Akaka, 2016), yet little is known about the business practices, including those of entrepreneurial marketing, in online home-based businesses owned by immigrant entrepreneurs (Allen & Busse, 2016; Anwar & Daniel, 2017).

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study was to explore the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses and reveal the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets. In Chapter 2, I state the literature search strategy in conjunction with the conceptual framework that bounded the

research. I synthesize the body of existing scholarly research and knowledge on the aspects of entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States.

Literature Search Strategy

A researcher endeavors to review and concisely present and synthesize existing empirical literature related to a research problem (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015; Pare, Trudel, Jaana, & Kitsiou, 2015). The field of research explored in this literature review relates to the theoretical background within the empirical articles directly related to the context of the research question. My goals in conducting the literature review were to synthesize and frame the material review using the research question as a guide, define the existing body of knowledge, establish the foundation for the study, and identify the gaps in existing literature to substantiate the research problem (Volpato, Betini, & El Dib, 2014). The researcher must demonstrate that the gap in the material substantiates the research problem proposed, justifies the proposed contribution to the existing body of knowledge, and frames a valid research methodology.

The objective of this literature review is to present a review of topics related to first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs and successful online home-based business strategies that relate to the research question. Many of the journal articles selected are scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles and expert author publications, typically reviewed by several other experts in the field to ensure quality. I executed focused searches of the following databases: Research Gate, ERIC, Lexis Web, Walden

University Library database, Emerald, Google Scholar, ProQuest Central, EBSCOhost, Science Direct, SAGE Premier, and PsycNET.

The keywords that I used in the searches included *entrepreneurial marketing*, *online home-based businesses*, *immigrant entrepreneurs*, *ethnic enclave markets*, *entrepreneurial activities*, *immigrant self-employment*, *entrepreneurial leadership*, *immigrant bias*, *immigrant business barriers*, *immigrant government policy*, *mixed embeddedness*, *challenges of immigrants in the US*, and *immigrant racism in the US*. For the conceptual framework, the key search words were *narrative inquiry*, *narrative and immigrant business*, *narrative and online home-based business*, and *narrative and immigrant entrepreneurial leadership*.

The peer-reviewed scholarly publications used in this study included journal articles from the following publications: *American International Journal of Social Science, Journal of Management Studies, Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, Strategic Management Journal, Journal of Enterprising Culture, Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research, International Journal of Business and Management, Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship, Journal of Small Business Management, Journal of Innovation Economics*, and *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. In an effort to ensure that the literature reviewed was relevant and current, I limited the bulk of the searches to works under 5 years old; in some cases, it was necessary to reference older materials due to scarcity of sources or because I wished to include seminal works.

In performing this literature review, I synthesized existing research related to the conceptual framework on strategies, barriers, and bias that immigrant entrepreneurs face when starting businesses in the United States. I also contrasted those studies with studies done outside the United States, detailing how immigrant business owners have developed successful leadership strategies in other host countries. Using these contrasts, I identified how specific trends in leadership behaviors can transcend traditional immigrant cultural market restriction to attain value shifts and breakout marketing behaviors in the United States.

Conceptual Framework

This study was framed by two primary concepts that focus on the marketing challenges facing immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online businesses: Kloosterman's (2010) concept of postindustrial opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs, and Anwar and Daniel's (2016a) concept of entrepreneurial marketing in online home-based businesses. The purpose of this qualitative study using a narrative inquiry design was to explore the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets. The findings of this empirical investigation are aimed at advancing knowledge on the interface between immigrant entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial marketing and online home-based businesses, as well as contributing original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework.

Entrepreneurial marketing theory (Stokes, 2000) provides a theoretical understanding of how immigrant-owned firms can enter the market in postindustrial sectors and strengthen their longevity through entrepreneurial marketing activities (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a). This study brings together scholarly literature from the entrepreneurial marketing area (Hills, Hultman, Kraus, & Schulte, 2009; Morris, Schindehutte, & LaForge, 2002) and literature in mixed embeddedness and resources and opportunity structure accessible to immigrant entrepreneurs (Adendorff & Halkias, 2014; Kloosterman, 2010; Kloosterman et al., 2016), and it draws on both of these bodies of literature to guide and interpret the exploration of marketing in immigrant-owned online home-based businesses (Anwar & Daniel, 2016b). This research strategy helped to develop original qualitative data to contribute to the study's conceptual framework and followed recommendations by previous scholars within the immigrant entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial marketing, and online home-based business literature.

Postindustrial Opportunities for Immigrant Entrepreneurs (Kloosterman, 2010)

Resource-based theory (RBT; Barney, 1991) hypothesizes that firms are shaped by the resources that are readily available to them or those that can be acquired. Scholars tend to suggest that immigrant enterprises have limited access to financial capital and resources (Bates & Robb, 2014). It follows that immigrant entrepreneurs need to access and apply a series of diverse resources, and in doing so they need to realign these factors to address the recognized marketing gaps (Altinay & Altinay, 2008; Das, Kwesiga, Sardeshmukh, & Juma, 2017). Resource consolidation enhances entrepreneurial

marketing effectiveness, and with its central theme of strengthening access to resources (Hills & Hultman, 2013) is an appropriate business tool for consideration by immigrant entrepreneurs. The breadth of existing research studies has shown that the connection between financial, human, intersocial, and cultural resources is critical to the efficient transaction of ethnic minority businesses (Dana & Morris, 2007; Kulchina, 2016; Stokes, 2000; Volery, 2007).

Research has indicated that culturally focused minority businesspeople demonstrate the highest drive toward entrepreneurial endeavors in Western societies (Rath, 2002). The potential for ethnic and migrant entrepreneurship to generate significant economic impacts is directly dependent on developing ethnic, financial, and human capital resources to boost minority immigrant business initiation and promote sustainability (Bhachu, 2017; Jones & Ram, 2007, 2014; Rath, 2002). The primary barriers of ethnic business effectiveness include cultural understanding, language barriers, financial opportunities, ethnic community networking, cultural empathy, perceived integrity, and access to effective government policy (Das et al., 2017). Existing barriers to these resources have limited the potential for an individual to have equitable access to develop knowledge transfer, open new product markets, and develop better strategies from more developed or privileged and established groups (Jones, Ram, Edwards, Kiselinchev, & Muchenje, 2012; Kloosterman et al., 1999).

Over the past two decades, research on immigrant entrepreneurship has correlated these individuals with markets that are typically lower growth and lower skilled, with

poor economies of scale and limited education, keeping these business owners in a highly

constrained economic environment. Typically, businesses in this market sector tend to

cater to culturally similar customer bases and to function in personal service industries,

retail, food service, manual labor, and entry-level job areas (Azmat & Zutshi, 2012;

Brzozowski, 2017; Dana & Morris, 2007; Ram & Smallbone, 2001). Kloosterman and

Rath (2010) posited that migrant entrepreneurs need to transition through traditional

growth business models to elevate the earning potential and shift into premium markets,

relative to the postindustrial stratum. Developing effective enterprises for online

businesses aligns well with Kloosterman's (2010) concept of postindustrial opportunities

for immigrant entrepreneurship, offering an opportunity for domestic and international

growth by transcending markets via the Internet, which is usually restricted or restricted

to other immigrant entrepreneurs operating an on-ground business (Daniel et al., 2014).

Research has suggested that online home-based businesses can bring a diverse group of

entrepreneurs and their firms into the marketing ecosystem and strengthen capacity for

innovation by immigrant-owned businesses (Daniel et al., 2014; Van Gelderen, Sayers, &

Keen, 2008; Vorley & Rodgers, 2014).

This study makes an empirical and theoretical contribution to the emerging

literature regarding online home-based business as a leading generator of income

resource for immigrant entrepreneurs (Anwar & Daniel, 2014). The findings of this study

may contribute to the existing research and provide observational confirmation of the

possible uses and benefits of online business models for immigrant entrepreneurs,

demonstrating how such models can allow them to reach high-margin markets, advance new products, attain elevated social positions, and break out of low-margin businesses. In providing data to respond to the study's research question, this study extends earlier research relative to migrant entrepreneurship concerning visionary opportunities for breakout (Kloosterman, 2010), by filling a gap in the literature on empirical evidence of online home-based immigrant enterprises operating in high-growth sectors (Anwar & Daniel, 2017).

Entrepreneurial Marketing in Online Businesses (Anwar & Daniel, 2016b)

The online home-based business was first defined as a concept by Anwar and Daniel (2015) through a systematic literature review whose purpose was to explore the nature of online home-based businesses, which comprise a significant proportion of all businesses in both developed and developing economies. Wynarczyk and Graham (2013) posited location as a success factor and focus for home-based businesses, defining a home-based business as "a business that uses the family residential property as a substitute for commercial premises for the conduct of business" (p. 453). In contrast, Mason, Carter, and Tagg (2011) factored in gainful employment as well as location in their definition: "any business entity engaged in selling products or services into the market operated by a self-employed person, with or without employees, that uses residential property as a base from which the operation is run" (p. 629).

Inside the space of online home-based businesses, there is a comparable issue of definitions, with considerations of various foci some very distinctive definitions have

emerged. Sulaiman et al. (2009) characterized a locally situated digital business as "a business in which primary business activities are carried out away from a conventionally defined office and conducted through a computer-mediated network and usually based on a virtual structure" (p. 31).

Anwar and Daniel (2015) noted how entrepreneurial business processes comprise fundamental functions such as buying, selling, marketing, sourcing goods, providing services, and delivering on customers' orders and expectations. The authors' definition demonstrates robustness such that it reflects an understanding of how the Internet could be used to expand the dimensions of business entities beyond the primary functions of business (i.e., buying, selling, and marketing). The definition posited by the authors reflects and shows how entrepreneurs can take advantage of other microbusinesses and online benefits to drive growth. These pertinent benefits are proven to be exceptionally applicable to online home-based businesses. Anwar and Daniel (2016b) did not restrict these business advantages to the locality or geographic locations because the Internet frees entrepreneurs from the local business environs or traditional home-based models.

Anwar and Daniel (2016a, 2016b) sought to bring together previous definitions retrieved from their systematic literature review (Anwar & Daniel, 2016b) and proposed the following definition of an online home-based business:

A business entity operated by a self-employed person working either at home or from home and who is using the internet to carry out a significant proportion of business activities that may include sourcing, selling, providing services and

communicating with stakeholders. The business may be operated full or part-time

and may utilize buildings surrounding the home such as studios and garages.

(Anwar & Daniel, 2016b, p. 421)

This definition conveys prior definitions of the state of the art in that it mirrors

that organizations use the Web for an extensive variety of business exercises. It

consolidates key parts of such organizations such as part-time online home-based

businesses (Clark & Douglas, 2011). While the financial aim of numerous new ventures

is to use the work of those within the firm, online home-based businesses are unique in

the business opportunities they offer the entrepreneur-owner. The online aspect of such

businesses enables them to be "constantly open" (Nansen, Arnold, Gibbs, & Davis, 2010;

Wynarczyk & Graham, 2013) and henceforth draw in and offer clients services, without

the owners needing to be available at all hours. The home-based component enables such

ventures to operate in parallel to other commitments of the owner, enabling the home-

based entrepreneur to practice economy of time during business hours (Faggio & Silva,

2014).

There is a small but emerging stream of research responding to scholars'

questions about entrepreneurial marketing in online home-based businesses that supports

further studies within this domain (Anwar & Daniel, 2016b). Entrepreneurial marketing

is mostly used to depict the advertising attempted by entrepreneurial ventures that are at

start-up or an early development stage (Carson & Gilmore, 2000; Morris et al., 2002;

Schmid, 2017). Entrepreneurial approaches to marketing are not used just by start-up

ventures; they can also be used by larger, more established firms that aim to find innovative approaches to their marketing plan (Morris & Paul, 1987; Jones & Rowley, 2011). As businesses develop and grow, they often use repetitive approaches to marketing while forgetting the need to refresh their strategy for attracting customers (Morrish et al., 2010). Entrepreneurial marketing has been described as "informal, dynamic, responsive to customer needs and often simple in its design and execution" (Fiore et al., 2013, p. 6). For online business marketing to become a broader discipline that extends beyond disconnected units of advertising and promotion, it must also focus on product development, pricing, and targeting distribution channels (Alford & Page, 2015; Kotler & Keller, 2006).

Entrepreneurial marketing thus offers potential as an insightful lens through which to explore and study the marketing activities of ethnic minority-owned enterprises, providing also the potential to shine new light on these activities as emergent and flexible rather than haphazard (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b). This study therefore adopts entrepreneurial marketing as a theoretical lens through which to: a) explore the experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses; b) understand the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets; c) address the study's research question; and d) extend knowledge within the study's conceptual framework.

Literature Review

Immigrant Entrepreneurship Research: A Research Agenda for Mixed Embeddedness

The theoretical basis for the concept of mixed embeddedness posited by Kloosterman and Rath (1999) builds on fundamental theories aligned with how entrepreneurial immigrants engage in a host country to achieve a higher level of success going beyond established models of ethnic resources. The primary goals of this conceptual understanding are to identify and correlate the primary factors and complex interdependence to attain a step function in accumulated wealth, living standard, and social status within the host society (Keohane & Nye, 2012). This goal was approached through the understanding of the applied business strategies that lead to higher access in transient host economies (Guttentag, 2015; Kloosterman & Rath, 1999). This conceptual approach clarified the various associations, immigrant network interactions, affiliations, and collaborations driving a positive change in how immigrant entrepreneurs interpret practices and strategies within their nations of origin to the host society (Kloosterman & Rath, 2003).

The mixed embeddedness model seeks to account for the tendency of immigrant entrepreneurs to concentrate in the informal economy and the lower end of the opportunity structure through the interaction of contextual elements: social, institutional situation, and economics within the socio-economic opportunity matrix (Kloosterman, 1999). Immigrants are among the most talented and resourceful entrepreneurs, yet they

lack the necessary resources for incorporation into the broader social framework

(Kloosterman, 2001). The concept of mixed embeddedness is very accessible and

heterogeneous; it is considered a multidimensional process where several social and

economic factors interact in unison (Kloosterman, 2010; Sepulveda, Syrett, & Lyon,

2011). The mixed embeddedness model explains the integration, or lack, therefore,

between the immigrants and their host country to account for the issues that they face in

succeeding with their businesses. Mixed embeddedness also characterizes the compelling

exchange between economic, ethnocentric, social strata, and institutional contexts

overlooked by earlier concepts (Kloosterman, Van Der Leun, & Rath, 1999).

Researchers recognize that available resources profoundly influence how

entrepreneurs design and run their businesses, leading to restricted markets and business

models. One of the most cited theories is the RBT (Barney, 1991) that hypothesizes how

firms typically align with the resources available or that can be readily secured. Scholars

and research findings suggest that immigrant enterprises are institutionally limited to;

capital, resources, and host country networks (Bates & Robb, 2014; Kloosterman, 2010).

In order for immigrant entrepreneurs to take full advantage of the diverse opportunities

available to host country businesses, they will need to realign their business model and

leverage resource factors to address recognized market gaps and take advantage of mixed

embeddedness as a strategy (Altinay & Altinay, 2008; Das, Kwesiga, Sardeshmukh, &

Juma, 2017).

By examining the intersection of micro (individual), meso (local/regional), and macro (national/international) economic factors, researchers can examine the interaction between the shifting terrain of the opportunity structures and the individual practices of migrant entrepreneurs (Kloosterman, 2010). The resulting mixed embeddedness framework allows for insight into how individual entrepreneurial choices of immigrant entrepreneurs could be seen as an attempt to respond to shifting economic patterns at both the local and international levels. Researchers recognize that immigrant entrepreneurs face a variety of challenges that stem primarily from a lack of incorporation into the dominant culture, and that their success is also often predicated on establishing expanded social networks within this culture (Altinay & Altinay, 2008; Kloosterman, 2010; Jones, Ram, Edwards, Kiselinchev, & Muchenje, 2014).

Researchers need to consistently apply the model of mixed embeddedness as a starting framework for how researchers conduct research aligned with sustainable immigrant strategies, the factors driving increased success, and improved quality of life in the host county (Kloosterman, 2010; Price & Chacko, 2009). Researchers apply the concept of mixed embeddedness to perceive how local and community environments influence the applied entrepreneurial strategies and predicted outcomes. Researchers have found that mixed embeddedness is inclusive of traditional embeddedness of immigrants through their social networks as well as the transcendent aspects of embeddedness of immigrant entrepreneurs in the host socio-economic institutions (Kloosterman & Rath, 2001).

The number of initiatives focused on ethnic minority businesses continues to increase, yet the effectiveness in driving a value shift in upward class and wealth mobility is unproven (Ram et al., 2016). The effects of extending local ethnic minority networks are essential for the current research in establishing the need for a precise analysis of the nuances of this problem in various cultural contexts, including financial backing supporting mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman, 2010).

Governmental influence can provide the needed capital, human resources, and access to lucrative business opportunity (Kloosterman, 2010; Lee & Black, 2017). Researchers have demonstrated how immigration itself can be seen not only as an entrepreneurial response to the interaction of multi-tiered structural factors at the local, national, and international levels (Barrett, Jones, & McEvoy, 2001; Kloosterman, 2010; Vandor & Franke, 2016), but also to the problems that the ethnic group faces both within and between these levels (Newbery, Lean, Moizer, & Haddoud, 2018). Using the mixed embeddedness model that situates the entrepreneur between local, national, and international cultures, researchers have concluded that the use of online resources could be beneficial for improving the cross-communication between these different levels and thereby increase the chances for success (Aldrich, Cater, Jones, & McEvoy, 1981; Laffranchini, Kim, & Posthuma, 2018).

It is plausible to see immigration itself as a kind of entrepreneurial response produced by individuals within a set of structural constraints, in keeping with historical immigrant entrepreneurship (Kloosterman, Van Der Leun, & Rath, 1999). Immigrant

entrepreneurs thus naturally extend their activities in the home country by tending to embed their businesses in ethnic enclaves in the host country; however, research shows that businesses that target these neighborhoods also tend to fail at higher rates than native-owned businesses (Bates & Robb, 2014). As in the home country, in the adopted country immigrant entrepreneurs need access to additional forms of capital, including social capital and intellectual capital such as that provided by information technology (IT) (Kloosterman & Rath, 2003; Lee & Black, 2017; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993).

Since the 1990s, research on immigrant entrepreneurship has correlated these individuals with markets that are typically lower growth, lower skilled, with weak economies of scale, and of limited education, keeping these business owners in a highly constrained economic environment (Ram & Jones, 2008). Kloosterman and Rath (2010) posited that migrant entrepreneurs need to transition through traditional growth business models to elevate the earning potential and shift into premium markets, relative to the postindustrial stratum, to shift from low-skilled positions such as taxi driver or domestic help to higher-value opportunities in order to transition wealth class. The movement or shift of a business from restricted, primarily ethnocentric, and customer-focused to a broader, primarily higher-value super diverse customer base requires a new set of strategies to transcend cultural and racial barriers (Allen & Busse, 2016).

While immigrants are more likely to be entrepreneurs, they are also more likely to concentrate their marketing on ethnically similar neighborhoods (Basu, 2011). Research indicates that the hiring of employees from outside their ethnic group also emerged as an

essential strategy for success, adding support for mixed embeddedness as a leverageable strategy. Conversely, a lack of diversity in employees can lead to a lack of growth potential (Jones, Ram, & Edwards, 2014). Online commerce presents an opportunity to allow immigrants to reduplicate these successful practices with much fewer resources in both the home country and the host country (Kloosterman, 2010; Ram et al., 2016). Addressing issues key to immigrant entrepreneur success also has the potential to address issues of concern for policymakers, and to facilitate the production of necessary kinds of social capital (Kloosterman, 2010). However, the downside is the tendency for culturally isolated businesses to settle into highly homogenous practices that limit the prospects for future growth or contact with a more substantial client base (Anwar & Daniel, 2016; Kloosterman, 2010).

Research studies have addressed how immigrant entrepreneurs are most comfortable applying culturally learned social behaviors when entering a host country's business environs; they tend to exhibit a more passionate drive and natural inclination to own a business. Scholars posit that this is due to their less privileged home country opportunities resulting in an elevated drive towards entrepreneurial undertakings in Western business (Alexandre-Leclair, 2014; Rath, 2002). The opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs equal to their host competitors rely significantly on their ability to leverage ethnic networks, secure innovative financial backing, and overcome institutionalized racism and attract human resource skill sets to promote, advance, and sustain new business start-ups in the host county (Kloosterman, 2010). The essential

boundaries of ethnic business viability incorporate social comprehension, language barriers, feasible financial capital, ethnic group acceptance, social compassion, transparency in business, and access to governmental policies (Aldrich, Cater, Jones, & McEvoy, 1981; Kloosterman et al., 1999).

Kloosterman (2010) posited that one highly successful approach identified through mixed embeddedness is for ethnic minority entrepreneurs to leverage technology that allows for transparency of business opportunity without the pejorative aspects of race, bigotry, geography, language, social stigmas, or logistical constraints. A significant technological shift in business models for immigrant entrepreneurs is to apply online business models that have low entry costs, reduce abject discrimination, and remove barriers of culture and language from potential opportunities (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b). Existing research on this subject has confirmed the existence of a problem with immigrant entrepreneurs, indicating that they face a higher risk of failure than their native-born peers (Bates & Robb, 2014; Kloosterman, 2010), and pointed toward online business as a possible way of addressing such challenges (Anwar & Daniel, 2016b, 2017; Kloosterman, 2010; Kloosterman & Rath, 2003).

Developing effective sustainable enterprises for immigrant entrepreneurs using strategies identified within Kloosterman's (2010) mixed embeddedness model can generate higher-value opportunities than traditional postindustrial low-level residual market opportunities historically chosen by immigrants. Scholars recognize that immigrants will typically scavenge low-opportunity markets that more progressive host

country business entities will abandon when transitioning to higher-value markets; this is known as vacancy chain opportunities (Jones, Ram, & Edwards, 2014; Kloosterman, 2010). Immigrant entrepreneurs need to break traditional on-ground business restrictions and shift into higher-value domestic and international markets through the use of technology and the Internet (Daniel et al., 2014).

Kloosterman (2010) theorized that online commerce can allow immigrant entrepreneurs to transcend markets that are spatially, racially, and culturally restricted. Racism is an aspect of immigrant marginalization that is a barrier for small-scale businesses that face institutionalized hostility, from lending companies, customers, and competitors (Daniels, 2012; Ishaq, Hussain, & Whittam, 2010; Jang, 2016). Immigrants face barriers to more than just business opportunities; they also face restrictions on healthcare and health insurance, with language and culture barriers being the most frequently reported (Jang, 2016).

Small Businesses in the United States

Since 2009, small businesses have contributed significantly to the U.S. economy; in fact, small businesses make up almost half of the gross domestic product (GDP) (Dahmen & Rodriguez, 2014). Dahmen and Rodriguez (2014) discussed the history and characters of small business owners, also known as entrepreneurs. They noted that about 30% of small business owners are women and about 13% are minorities. The authors conducted a case study with 14 small business owners; the businesses varied in type, including but not limited to medical supplies, auto, and construction companies.

Participants completed interviews that covered about 120 questions (Dahmen &

Rodriguez, 2014). Research has shown that entrepreneurs can also face challenges. For

instance, Dahmen and Rodriguez (2014) found that financial strain often resulted from

the loss of revenue due to the decline of the economy. Seven of the firms represented in

this study experienced financial strain. Often, business owners did not regularly review

financial statements. Previous research has shown that external factors beyond control

such as the economy, as well as factors within owners' control, could contribute to the

success or decline of their small business (Dahmen & Rodriguez, 2014; Davidaviciene &

Lolat, 2016).

Additionally, Drucker (2015) described the increase in unique enterprises such as

healthcare education-related companies. Another new area of entrepreneurship is the

public-private partnerships between private companies and governmental agencies to

assist with monitoring performance standards and providing funding. Technology

companies have also contributed significantly to the increase in entrepreneurship.

Drucker (2015) discussed that innovation is critical for entrepreneurs; it provides an

opportunity for business change and can be learned and put into practice. The author also

discussed some challenges regarding entrepreneurship. For instance, entrepreneurship has

been found to be risky, where the likelihood of business success can be slim. Risks can

result from lack of knowledge on business rules or economy and market structure.

Therefore, the researcher posited that innovation needs to be purposeful to reduce risk.

Also important is the need to acknowledge unexpected success and avoid the conventional way of thinking that random success will last forever (Drucker, 2015).

Research has highlighted the importance of small and medium-sized businesses for the economy. For instance, Memili, Fang, Chrisman, and De Massis (2015) created and tested a model of how the prevalence of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) owned by families impacted economic growth. Utilizing data from the United States between 2004 and 2010, the researchers found that economic growth was most significant when an economy included a balanced mix of family and non-family SMEs. Specifically, an inverted U-shaped relationship was found between the proportion of family SMEs and economic growth (Memili et al., 2015).

Additionally, Decker, Haltiwanger, Jarmin, and Miranda (2014) noted that the rate of business start-ups and the pace of employment within the United States economy decreased, especially after 2000. One of the main reasons for the decline in entrepreneurship was a lower rate of business start-ups and the related decreasing role of entrepreneurship in the economy. In fact, the rate of entrepreneurship had decreased by 30% in about 30 years. The researchers proposed that incentives for entrepreneurs to start new firms in the United States have diminished over time. Importantly, more resources and opportunities need to be provided to promote the start-up, maintenance, and expansion of small businesses (Decker et al., 2014). In this review I discuss the literature on immigrant entrepreneurship and how Internet-based home businesses and the RBT can be beneficial for immigrant business owners.

Immigrant-Owned Small Businesses

  Background. In the past, research findings indicated that immigrant-owned businesses were usually small in size and fit into narrow categories (Bates, Bradford, & Seamans, 2018). Before the 1970s, immigrant entrepreneurs tended to have less education, capital, and training; however, today, they are much more likely to have a college education, more access to financing, and more business opportunities (Bates et al., 2018). Prior research indicated that ethnic minorities in many developed countries are associated with high levels of entrepreneurship (Broughton, 2015; Desiderio, 2014; Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015). Immigrant entrepreneurs tend to embed their businesses in ethnically similar neighborhoods (Halkias et al., 2011).

  Kloosterman and Rath (2002) discussed that the prevalence of small businesses in postindustrial urban economies is increasing and that immigrant owners play a significant role in this increase. Immigrant owners are revamping the business marketplace in many ways, including by improving run-down shopping centers, providing new, exciting products from other countries, fostering socio-economic integration, and increasing social cohesion (Kloosterman & Rath, 2001). In addition, immigrants are more likely to become entrepreneurs than are native-born peers, but they are more likely to become social entrepreneurs as well, whose business plans often address social problems of concern to policymakers (Broughton, 2015). Research has shown that immigrant entrepreneurs can significantly contribute to local and even nation-wide economies (Garg & Phayane, 2014), but the experiences and challenges of immigrant business owners vary according

to many factors such as the ability to create relationships and networks (Griffin-EL & Olabisi, 2018). Furthermore, these relationships can help remove socially constructed hostilities towards and boundaries for immigrant entrepreneurs (Griffin-EL & Olabisi, 2018).

Chreim, Spence, Crick, and Liao (2018) conducted a literature review on ethnic minority female entrepreneurship. Three categories of resources were found to be critical to this population: human capital, social capital, and financial capital. Human capital included education, language proficiency, and citizenship status. Social capital included resources gained from social networks or relationships, such as from family or community support (Chreim et al., 2018). Notably, the financial capital of the population examined was found to be limited, stemming from family or personal savings; furthermore, this population was found to be less likely to obtain a business loan from the bank compared to native-born business owners.

The researchers discussed that three categories of outcomes were present for the population at hand: individual-, firm-, and societal-level outcomes. Individual-level outcomes of entrepreneurship included an increase in self-esteem, self-worth, and independence; this can be hindered without proper support from others and financial strain. Firm-level outcomes included business earnings and growth. Lastly, societal-level outcomes included a contribution to the labor market and economy (Chreim et al., 2018). The next two sections focus on characteristics and trends among immigrant business owners outside and within the US.

Immigrant business owners outside the United States. Many studies have

compared immigrant and non-immigrant entrepreneurs outside of the United States (e.g.,

Yazdanfar, Abbasian, & Brouder, 2015; Halkias et al., 2009; Halkias, Thurman,

Caracatsanis, & Harkiolakis, 2016; Mueller, 2014; Sim, 2015). A study by Mueller

(2014) examined immigrant entrepreneurs in Germany using data from a company called

Creditreform, the country's largest credit rating business. Results from this study showed

that immigrant entrepreneurs were significantly less likely to start a company in a

knowledge-intensive industry when compared to native-born entrepreneurs. Results also

indicated that native-born entrepreneurs tend to have a larger start-up size and are older

than immigrant entrepreneurs. Additionally, immigrant-owned companies were shown to

have a shorter lifespan compared to those of their native counterparts. These barriers

were attributed to the lack of education received by immigrant entrepreneurs compared to

native-born entrepreneurs. Therefore, Mueller (2014) suggested that educational

resources need to be improved for immigrants to have an increased likelihood of

succeeding as business owners. This study helped to highlight characteristics of

immigrant entrepreneurs' businesses in Germany as well as identify a resource that has

impacted the industries immigrant entrepreneurs become involved in.

Additionally, Halkias et al. (2009) examined African immigrant entrepreneurs in

Greece using a three-year longitudinal study. A total of 52 African immigrants

participated in this study; almost 65% were men, which was lower than expected. Most

participants were younger (below the age of 40), well educated (with over 50% having an

undergraduate degree and another 27% having a technical degree or certification), and married. Most participants were from Nigeria. Notably, 88% of the participants were the primary business owner. About 20% of the participants reported unfair treatment by the Greek government, and almost half noted that the government made it difficult for them to operate their business; furthermore, 20% were considering relocating their business to another country. The primary source of financing to start and run businesses came from personal savings or loans from family and friends. Types of businesses ranged greatly, including but not limited to private medical practice, general trading, and hospitality (Halkias et al., 2009).

Khosa and Kalitanyi (2015) conducted a mixed-methods study examining the reasons for entrepreneurship among African immigrants living in South Africa. A total of 93 immigrant entrepreneurs participated in the study. The researchers conducted semistructured interviews with 72 participants, and an additional 21 participants completed self-reported questionnaires. Results yielded four main reasons for immigrants to become entrepreneurs: political instability, economic reasons, the need to survive in the host country, and need to overcome job market discrimination.

Furthermore, results from the Khosa and Kalitanyi (2015) study suggested that the African immigrants were propelled towards entrepreneurship because of necessity rather than choice. However, the findings also indicated that immigrant entrepreneurs help to create jobs, rather than take them from other people, thereby helping the economy. Further research should be conducted to understand better what can help immigrant

entrepreneurs feel confident in their choice to start their businesses rather than feeling pushed to do so; for instance, research should focus on the resources or factors of entrepreneurship that pull or intrigue immigrants to start a business (Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2015).

In another study, Rusinovic (2008) examined immigrant entrepreneurship in the Netherlands. Through a literature review, the researcher found that immigrant entrepreneurs in the Netherlands tended to pick traditional, low-skilled, and labor-intensive businesses; for instance, hospitality and catering were common industries. The researcher also found that the integration of social networks and the economic markets are important for immigrant entrepreneurs in the Netherlands. Notably, Rusinovic (2008) found there has been an increase in second-generation immigrants who choose to become entrepreneurs; however, research regarding the outcomes of second-generation immigrant entrepreneurs is limited. The researcher proposed that the second-generation immigrant entrepreneurs may be more educated and have more resources and social ties when compared to first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs, which helps to prevent business failure. It was also suggested that second-generation immigrant entrepreneurs do not lose their sense of culture, but instead use it strategically; this, in turn, helps to provide them with greater opportunity and to gain a competitive advantage, which is part of the RBT (Rusinovic, 2008).

A study by Vinogradov and Jorgensen (2017) sought to examine how business opportunities differ between immigrant and non-immigrant entrepreneurs. In this study,

116 immigrant and 864 native-born Norwegian entrepreneurs completed surveys. All businesses were considered new. Results showed that immigrant entrepreneurs reported having more international opportunities compared to non-immigrants. Also, although human capital, in general, was shown to have a significant positive effect on international opportunity identification among non-immigrant entrepreneurs, the same was not true for immigrant entrepreneurs.

Interestingly, financial capital benefited international opportunity for non-immigrant entrepreneurs, but negatively impacted international opportunity for immigrant entrepreneurs (Vinogradov & Jorgensen, 2017). In summary, this study showed that resources are used differently by immigrant and non-immigrant entrepreneurs and can lead to different business outcomes such as international opportunities. Future research is needed on how immigrant entrepreneurs and non-immigrant entrepreneurs use other resources differently and the differential impacts of such resources on the entrepreneurs and their companies (Vinogradov & Jorgensen, 2017).

Other research examined Chinese-Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs' business performance (Chen, Tan, & Tu, 2015). A total of 308 participants were recruited from a business directory in Canada. Participants completed questionnaires regarding business performance (measured by employment size or number of employees); gender; network composition and mobilization of resources; membership of voluntary organizations, such as business, community, or professional associations; the degree of transnational

entrepreneurship; and Internet use. Results showed that men entrepreneurs had a significantly larger employment size compared to women entrepreneurs, and women's business growth was a slower process compared to men's business growth. Women entrepreneurs also engaged in fewer voluntary organizations than men (Chen et al., 2015).

Additionally, entrepreneurs with higher education had bigger employment sizes. Internet use or having a business website was also positively correlated with employment size. Notably, fewer women entrepreneurs had a business website compared to their counterparts, putting women at even more of a disadvantage. This study helped to highlight the different characteristics of men and women entrepreneurs and how the use of the Internet can be a great resource, although underused by women (Chen et al., 2015).

Like Chen et al. (2015), Ostrovsky, Picot, and Leung (2018) also examined entrepreneurship in Canada. Ostrovsky et al. (2018) explored whether immigrant and non-immigrant entrepreneurs finance their businesses differently and whether the immigrant-owned small and medium-sized business faces the most challenges in securing financing. The researchers found that the two groups did not significantly differ regarding financing strategies. Immigrant owners were less likely to seek business financing in the first place, yet were just as likely as non-immigrant owners to get approved for financing (Ostrovsky et al., 2018). Although research has suggested that capital and financing may not be the only resources that are critical for businesses today, further research is needed to explore resources used by immigrant entrepreneurs compared to non-immigrant

entrepreneurs. For instance, research by Robertson and Grant (2016) indicated that Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs' business decisions were significantly related to social psychological influences, social capital, cultural identity, national identity, and perceived discrimination.

A Canadian study by Neville, Orser, Riding, and Jung (2014) compared new firms of immigrant owners to those of non-immigrants in order to see if one outperformed the other. The firms in this study began operating between 2000 and 2004. The researchers utilized tax data for their analyses, which reflected over 34,000 Canadian firms. Then, interviews were conducted over the telephone with over 12,000 SMEs. Regardless of immigration status, women-owned firms performed worse than men-operated firms, and owners with 10 or more years of experience outperformed other firms (Neville et al., 2014). Notably, study results indicated that immigrant owners had greater access to resources such as international networks compared to non-immigrant owners. This access helped to provide immigrant owners with a competitive advantage. However, there are some barriers faced by immigrant owners, and not all immigrant owners have access to international networks. Neville et al. (2014) suggested that future research address differential performance between immigrant and non-immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States and Canada. Other research by Morgan, Sui, and Baum (2018) has also indicated that immigrant business owners are more likely to expand their businesses outside of their country, known as global orientation.

In another Canadian study, Green, Liu, Ostrovsky, and Picot (2016) conducted a literature review in order to examine immigrant entrepreneurs. Although rates of business start-ups for immigrants were low compared to non-immigrants initially, after immigrants had lived in Canada for 4 to 8 years, their business start-up rate became significantly greater than business owners who are native to Canada. Results also showed that over 30% of immigrants reported starting a business because they were unable to find another job that was sufficient (Green et al., 2016). The authors also compared immigrant and non-immigrant owners of incorporated firms. Results showed that more immigrants own private businesses compared to natives of Canada. Unincorporated self-employment rates were also higher among immigrants than non-immigrants. For these unincorporated self-employed immigrants, financial earnings for the primary job were found to be higher than the financial earnings for their self-employed job. The most common industries for immigrant entrepreneurs were found to be real estate, administrative, waste management, healthcare, social work, technical services, transportation, and construction (Green et al., 2016).

Wang and Warn (2018) examined the factors impacting entrepreneurial start-up businesses among Chinese immigrants, who had been granted residency under three different immigration policies in Australia. Results showed that the two immigrant groups differed in their resources and experienced different market conditions that, in turn, were related to different opportunity structures and subsequent choices of entrepreneurial activities. The mixed embeddedness model was identified as efficient for

assessing the factors that influence immigrant entrepreneurship start-up. This study added to previous research on entrepreneurship by analyzing the interaction of personal resources and economic conditions in the pursuit of business ventures. Notably, the work by Wang and Warn (2018) highlighted the need to look beyond either broad cultural factors or single factors in attempting to investigate the various pathways chosen by immigrant entrepreneurs. The importance of resources is further explored later in this review.

In addition, a study by Fatoki (2014) examined immigrant entrepreneurs in South Africa by conducting a literature review. Articles included in this literature review were between 1997 and 2014. Results showed that immigrant entrepreneurs in South Africa tended to be men and often started their business by employing family or other immigrants, and their businesses tended to be within a narrow spectrum of business categories; specifically, their businesses were more likely to be in the retail or service industry, supporting previous research such as that by Green et al. (2016). Networking and building relationships with others in their community was an important task for immigrant entrepreneurs. Fatoki (2014) noted that future research is needed to address the barriers faced by immigrant entrepreneurs. For instance, the researcher suggested that future research examine financial barriers and barriers related to motivation and ultimately the cause of business failure among immigrant entrepreneurs. This study helped to highlight the common characteristics of immigrant entrepreneurs in South

Africa; however, future research is needed on immigrant entrepreneurs in the United

States (Fatoki, 2014).

Further research by Nel and Abdullah (2015) examined immigrant

entrepreneurship in Malaysia. There was a total of 316 participants in this quantitative

study. Results indicated that immigrant entrepreneurs were actually well equipped and

prepared to become entrepreneurs prior to starting their businesses. Nel and Abdullah

(2015) also found that immigrant entrepreneurs' business activities could be used as a

source for business development, employment generation, and economic growth in

Malaysia. This study offered support for the benefits of immigrant-owned businesses in

their local area but also for the economy of the country.

Kushnirovich, Heilbrunn, and Davidovich (2017) examined the characteristics

and experiences of an immigrant in Israel compared to non-immigrants. Specifically, the

researchers investigated factors that impact the feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur.

Measures included demographics, risk-taking propensity, the perception of motives for

starting a business, and the feasibility of becoming entrepreneurs. There were 189

immigrants and 297 Israeli-born participants in the study. Results showed that

immigrants were less likely to take social, occupational, and financial risks compared to

their native-born counterparts. Immigrants also felt it was less feasible for them to

become entrepreneurs compared to Israeli-born participants (Kushnirovich et al., 2017).

In summary, there are many studies on immigrant entrepreneurial experiences outside of

the United States; in the next section I describe previous literature regarding immigrant entrepreneurs within the US.

Immigrant business owners in the United States. Research has also been conducted on immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States compared to in other countries (e.g., Kerr & Kerr, 2016; Pisani, Guzman, Richardson, Sepulveda, & Laulie, 2017; Sonfield, 2014; Zhou & Lee, 2015). For instance, Kerr and Kerr (2016) compared immigrant entrepreneurship to non-immigrant entrepreneurship in the United States using U.S. Census datasets on companies' performance from 1992 to 2008. Specifically, this study utilized the Longitudinal Employer-Employee Household Dynamics (LEHD) database that covers confidential data from 31 states. This study is unique in that it provided a longitudinal perspective of millions of data points. In parallel to other studies, results showed that immigrants made up almost 20% of the LEHD sample from 1995 to 2008, which aligned with Kerr and Kerr's (2016) hypotheses. However, immigrant-owned firms were less likely to survive compared to firms owned by non-immigrants.

Additionally, immigrant-owned firms were less likely to experience payroll growth. The results also showed that immigrant entrepreneurs who came to the United States before age 18 had stronger business growth patterns than those entrepreneurs who immigrated as adults. The researchers proposed that additional research is needed to investigate the contributions of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States (Kerr & Kerr, 2016).

Eckstein and Peri (2018) discussed that immigration to the United States has changed; prior to the 1960s, immigrants were mostly from Europe, but today they come mostly from Mexico, Central America, China, and India. The researchers proposed that immigrant entrepreneurs participate in distinct labor market niches or create their own niches and provide exciting new products. Common business areas for immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States include science, technology, and computer-related businesses. Eckstein and Peri (2018) suggested that factors such as education level can vary among immigrant groups, which can ultimately impact the success of their businesses. Furthermore, it is crucial that future research addresses how immigrant entrepreneurs can make the most of their businesses in the US.

Wang and Li (2007) examined Hispanic entrepreneurs living in the southern United States. The researchers utilized the 2000 Public Usable Microdata Samples (PUMS) data for this study. They found that ethnic diversity, history of immigration, and the economic structure created both opportunities and challenges for immigrant entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the researchers found that the process of economic incorporation of ethnic minorities and immigrants relies on the institutional capacity as well as social, cultural, and political resources of local communities.

Research by Razin (2017) considered different theories on immigrant entrepreneurship and case studies of immigrants in Israel, Canada, and California; however, this study is dated as it relied on national census data from the 1980s. First, the author noted that there are a few influential components that can drive immigrants to

become entrepreneurs: personal characteristics such as risk-taking and independence, human capital, personal resources, social ties, networks, and opportunity structure that can include factors such as geographic opportunities. Leadership characteristics and behaviors carried over from the home country combined with the bolstering of host-country resources may help immigrant entrepreneurs with business start-ups, maintenance, and expansion (Broughton, 2015).

Through a literature review and case studies, Razin (2017) found that Canadian and United States entrepreneurs are relatively similar but different from Israeli entrepreneurs. For example, Canada and the United States are generally more accepting of immigrant entrepreneurs. Additionally, Israeli entrepreneurs tend to lack economic motivation. One area that set Canada apart from Israel and the United States was its focus on multiculturalism, which can benefit immigrant entrepreneurs and lead to greater acceptance of diverse businesses (Razin, 2017).

Fairlie and Lofstrom (2015) investigated the issues commonly faced by immigrant entrepreneurs, who tend to have a different impact on the economy and different patterns of success compared to non-immigrant entrepreneurs. The researchers noted that immigrants make up approximately 25% of all new businesses in the United States, and the rate of business formation by immigrants is much greater than that of non-immigrants; specifically, 510 immigrants start a business in a given month, compared to 280 non-immigrants (Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015). Interestingly, salaries of employees of immigrant entrepreneurs did not significantly differ from salaries of employees of non-

immigrant entrepreneurs. The researchers found that immigrant business owners play a significant part in the U.S. economy because they comprise one quarter of transportation, accommodation, recreation, and entertainment businesses. Generally, immigrant entrepreneurs are most concentrated in California, New York, Texas, and Florida. In the United States, Mexico is the largest contributing country of immigrant entrepreneurs, followed by Korean, Indian, and Vietnamese immigrants. Like other researchers, Fairlie and Lofstrom (2015) found that human capital and financial capital are important to immigrant entrepreneurs' business success.

A study by Wang and Liu (2015) examined the characteristics of immigrant entrepreneurs within the United States. Data from the U.S. Survey of Business Owners 2007 was utilized to track transnational relationships and activities. Results indicated that immigrant-owned businesses were more likely than non-immigrant–owned businesses to engage in transnational economic activity. There was also a correlation of characteristics within the transnational firms, independent of the entrepreneurs' immigrant status. Other factors such as the variation in the performance and scale of the firms did not affect the study outcomes significantly.

Furthermore, compared to an immigrant-owned business that did engage in such activities, an immigrant-owned business that did not engage in transnational activities was more likely to have worse outcomes, smaller business size, fewer sales, and lower total payrolls (Wang & Liu, 2015). The outcomes of this study support the notion that networks and relationships can be critical for immigrant entrepreneurs; therefore,

business strategies and resources that foster these networks and relationships are likely beneficial for business owners. In the following sections I discuss the common barriers experienced by immigrant entrepreneurs and potential ways to overcome these barriers and strengthen their businesses, including the use of online home-based businesses and bolstering resources.

Challenges Faced by Immigrant Entrepreneurs

Immigrant entrepreneurs face many business challenges (e.g., Altinay & Altinay, 2008; Moon, Farmer, Miller, & Abreo, 2014). Previous studies have characterized the marketing activities of immigrant firms as haphazard (Altinay & Altinay, 2008; Altinay et al., 2014). Additionally, recent research indicates that while controlling for differences in firm and owner traits related to small business survival prospects, targeting minority neighborhood household clients increases the likelihood that an immigrant firm will go out of business (Bates & Robb, 2014). Previous research has shown that the primary barriers of ethnic business effectiveness include cultural understanding, language barriers, financial opportunities, ethnic community networking, cultural empathy, perceived integrity, and access to effective government policy (Das et al., 2017).

Additionally, Desiderio (2014) suggested that immigrant entrepreneurs are at a disadvantage and often fail to recognize their business's potential to contribute to the economy and be competitive. Immigrant entrepreneurs can face barriers when starting, maintaining, and expanding their businesses; this can be problematic, as research has shown international expansions could be important for entrepreneurs (Reuber, Knight,

Liesch, & Zhou, 2018). One barrier includes the challenges immigrants face when attempting to secure credit from financial institutions; this is typically because immigrants have short credit histories in their new country, and there are often difficulties accessing credit histories from outside countries (Desiderio, 2014).

Another major challenge identified by Desiderio (2014) is the unfamiliarity immigrants have regarding their new country's business market and environment; furthermore, this hinders their ability to understand and follow business regulations and procedures. Additionally, immigrants face barriers involving immigration policies themselves, particularly for immigrants who have not secured resident status. Some countries like Australia and Canada are more welcoming of immigrant business ownership; however, in other countries, immigrants find it difficult to obtain permits, remain in their new country due to temporary visas, and secure credit and loans (Desiderio, 2014).

Kloosterman et al. (1999) described immigrant entrepreneurs' economic opportunities and social capital in the Netherlands. There are many challenges that immigrant entrepreneurs face compared to non-immigrants. For instance, they are often unable to attain an acceptable job, which is often why they enter self-employment; however, they often lack resources compared to non-immigrants. Immigrant entrepreneurs tend to lack business skills and regulatory knowledge, which can hinder a business start-up and the process of obtaining credentials required for operation (Kloosterman et al., 1999). Immigrant entrepreneurs are also less likely to obtain

bookkeepers of financial advisors, which puts them more at risk for financial strain and making financial mistakes. Furthermore, immigrant entrepreneurs tend to lack critical resources, namely human and social capital, putting them at an even more significant disadvantage. This study helped to increase understanding about the common barriers that immigrant entrepreneurs in the Netherlands experience; further research is needed on this topic in other countries and additional research should seek to investigate how immigrant entrepreneurs can overcome these barriers (Kloosterman et al., 1999).

In conclusion, the contributions of immigrant entrepreneurs to the economy have increased over recent years (Dahmen & Rodriguez, 2014; Garg & Phayane, 2014), and innovation has become increasingly important for success (Drucker, 2015). Recent research shows that immigrant entrepreneurs are more likely than they were in the past to have higher education, more access to financing, and more business opportunities (Bates et al., 2018). Much of the previous research has been conducted outside of the United States, such as in Germany (Mueller, 2014), Greece (Halkias et al., 2009; Halkias et al., 2016), the Netherlands (Kloosterman et al., 1999; Rusinovic, 2008), Norway (Vinogradov & Jorgensen, 2017), Canada (Chen et al., 2015; Green et al., 2016; Neville et al., 2014; Ostrovsky et al., 2018), South Africa (Fatoki, 2014), and Israel (Kushnirovich et al., 2017). Other research involving immigrant entrepreneurship in the United States has been conducted (e.g., Kerr & Kerr, 2016; Pisani et al., 2017; Sonfield, 2014), but research is lacking regarding the opportunities presented to immigrant entrepreneurs by online home-based businesses.

Online home-based businesses may be promising for immigrant entrepreneurs (Anwar & David, 2014; Barua et al., 2001; Edley et al., 2004; Kloosterman, 2010). For instance, Mason et al. (2011) found that these businesses help to: create jobs for employers, create jobs for employees, increase satisfaction, and increase the social and economic activity of the home-based owners' neighborhoods. Other research has found that online business owners spend less time and resources on paperwork, sales, and accounting (Barua et al., 2001; Van Gelderen et al., 2008), are easier to start and maintain, and require little business space and fewer employees (Van Gelderen et al., 2008). Previous studies have described online home-based businesses as flexible, immersive, dynamic, low-cost, and goal-oriented (Morrish et al., 2010). Creating effective markets for online businesses aligns well with Kloosterman's (2010) concept of postindustrial opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurship because this offers the opportunity for domestic and international growth by transcending markets via the Internet that is usually restricted, or restricted to other immigrant entrepreneurs operating an on-ground business (Daniel et al., 2014).

Use of resources. Effectively utilizing resources may also help immigrant entrepreneurs, in addition to choosing online businesses. The RBT (Barney, 1991), also known as the resource-based view (RBV), hypothesizes that firms are shaped by the resources that are readily available to them or those that can be acquired. Barney (1991) suggested that resources are valuable to a business if they can help the business reduce costs or respond to changes or problems. Previous research has offered support for the

importance of resources among immigrant entrepreneurs. For instance, Wang and Li

(2007) found this to be true for Hispanic entrepreneurs living in the southern United

States. The researchers utilized the 2000 PUMS data for this study. They found that

ethnic diversity, history of immigration, and the economic structure created both

opportunities and challenges for immigrant entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the researchers

found that the process of economic incorporation of ethnic minorities and immigrants

depends on the institutional capacity as well as social, cultural, and political resources of

local communities (Wang & Li, 2007).

Research by Saxenian (2002) examined the characteristics and trends of

immigrant entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. They found that immigrant entrepreneurs and

investors made up one-third of the engineering workforce alone in the 1990s.

Additionally, during this time, immigrant entrepreneurs contributed billions to the

economy and were the source of over 58,000 jobs in Silicon Valley. The researcher also

found that the most successful immigrant business owners depended on ethnic resources

in order to integrate their business into the Silicon Valley technology industry.

Furthermore, there is support for the strong association between immigration, investment,

ethnic resources, and economic prosperity (Saxenian, 2002).

The rareness of resources is important as well; when resources or capabilities are

exploited narrowly, they can be used to create and maintain a competitive advantage

(Barney, 1991). Newbert (2008) empirically tested the Resource Based View (RBV) to

identify whether value and rareness of resources used by firms would impact the

competitive advantage and the business's performance. Results from the study showed that resource value and rareness were significantly positively related to competitive advantage. Furthermore, competitive advantage was shown to be significantly positively related with business performance (Newbert, 2008). This study was just one of many to come that highlighted the importance of resources for business outcomes, such as competitive advantage, and the subsequent impacts on business performance.

Barney, Ketchen, and Wright (2011) conducted an in-depth literature review of 11 articles examining the RBT, which has been previously known as an RBV. The RBT is a valuable theory for describing, predicting, and explaining business and organizational processes and relationships. Study results indicated that resources are impactful for organizations' or businesses' success. Business growth was shown to be hindered when resources were inadequate. Researchers support that businesses should focus on their resources instead of their products and that doing so can help maintain a competitive advantage (Barney et al., 2011). The authors also found that resources are one of the key components of businesses' decision-making, market positioning, organizational identity, and sustainability (Zubair & Brzozowski, 2018). Factors such as resources breadth or spread across a business and resource life cycle are important to the RBT. Previous research has integrated the RBT with diversification theories and competitive advantage, but further research is needed to integrate it with other theories. Often, researchers are challenged with measuring resources, because some resources are intangible. Further

research is needed on research assessment and the impacts of resources on businesses (Barney et al., 2011).

Kozlenkova and colleagues (2014) reviewed the RBV, which has become known as the RBT in the marketing industry. Prior to the RBT, it was assumed that only industry-level factors influenced and predicted a business's profit. Then, in the 1980s the RBT emerged and business owners started focusing on resources and their impacts on their company's profit. The RBT acts as a framework for explaining and predicting a business's performance, including the ability to maintain a competitive advantage (Kozlenkova et al., 2014).

Additionally, Omri, Frikha, and Bouraoui (2015) examined how three resources, namely human, social, and financial capital, contributed to entrepreneurial success, which was characterized by average monthly profit. This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data on Tunisian entrepreneurs. As expected, results showed that human, social, and financial capital had a significant indirect effect on firm success (Omri et al., 2015). Specifically, the researchers found that education level, managerial experience, start-up capital, innovation level, and experience in the business industry significantly predicted small firms' success. The results suggest that human, social, and financial capital impact entrepreneurial success because of their impact on innovation. These findings support the conclusions of previous studies that posited that innovation is a critical component of successful businesses. The researchers suggested that entrepreneurs need to consider human, social, and financial capital in order to

increase their innovation level and that developing networks with other organizations can help to do this. Ultimately, an increase in innovation will likely lead to an increase in their business's success (Omri et al., 2015).

Similarly, research by Gomez, Perera, Weisinger, Tobey, and Zinsmeister-Teeters (2015) examined how immigrant entrepreneurs' motivations are tied to resources such as social capital and ultimately business performance. Through a literature review, the researchers concluded that social capital is a critical component of immigrants' business creation and performance. Social capital was shown to help immigrant entrepreneurs obtain the supports necessary for starting a business and to overcome challenges they face from being in a new host country, which include difficulty entering the job market, language barriers, education, and credential-related issues and lack of financial resources (Gomez et al., 2015).

Sedera, Lokuge, Grover, Sarker, and Sarker (2016) also examined the RBT, specifically focusing on how it has been impacted by innovation and technology. Through a study and analysis of 189 organizations, the authors sought to increase the limited understanding of how a firm's technology process, enterprise systems, and digital platforms attain innovation. The researchers suggested that technology and digital platforms have helped to increase innovation and business success by being easy to maintain, being low-cost, being flexible, having higher processing capabilities, and being helpful for individuals with lower skill levels (Sedera et al., 2016).

Other research by Foss, Klein, Kor, and Mahoney (2008) examined Australian businesses and entrepreneurship from the RBV stance. Of particular importance to the researchers was subjectivism within the business. In other words, each entrepreneur holds different knowledge, preferences, perspectives, and expectations. Notably, Foss et al. (2008) suggested that subjectivism promotes autonomy and creativity, which aligns with previous research that shows the importance of creativity in entrepreneurship (e.g., Omri et al., 2015; Sedera et al., 2016). Through their literature review, Foss et al. (2008) found that subjectivism was an essential component of entrepreneurship, and that connecting subjectivism with the RBV helped to provide a more holistic approach to entrepreneurship. This research suggests that the RBV, or RBT, is a practical approach to examine immigrant entrepreneurship in the current study.

A study by Wach, Stephan, and Gorgievski (2016) investigated influential factors of entrepreneurial success. First, the researchers utilized a qualitative methodology to examine the various ways that success was defined and the resources that were crucial components of successful businesses. The researchers interviewed 185 German entrepreneurs. Results showed that there were five common components of entrepreneurs' definitions of success: firm performance, workplace relationships, personal fulfillment, community impact, and personal financial profit (Wach et al., 2016).

In the second part of the study by Wach et al. (2016), a questionnaire was used, namely the Subjective Entrepreneurial Success–Importance Scale (SES-IS); this survey helped to measure the five components of the definitions of success. A total of 184

entrepreneurs completed the surveys. Results from the second part of the study validated the SES-IS as an effective tool for measuring firm success, annual income, and entrepreneur satisfaction and their relationships with life and financial situation. In summary, the researchers found that entrepreneurs highly value five components of success; notably, money or financial gain was only part of one of these components, indicating that other resources are important to entrepreneurs (Wach et al., 2016).

Kellermanns, Walter, Crook, Kemmerer, and Narayanan (2016) conducted a literature review and interviews to examine the adaptation of the RBV for entrepreneurship. The RBV was generated in the field of strategic management to understand better how firms maintain a competitive advantage. However, the RBV has become more prevalent in the entrepreneurship arena. The researchers utilized a content analysis of 117 published articles to determine whether the use of resources differs among entrepreneurs of small businesses compared to large, established organizations. Results yielded similarities and differences between the two types of business owners. Interview participants consisted of entrepreneurs with an in-depth understanding of the resources needed to be involved in business ownership (Kellermanns et al., 2016).

Slightly less than half of the participants in the Kellermanns et al. (2016) study were women. Most businesses were in the service industry, with others being in retail, wholesale, manufacturing, and construction. About half the respondents' businesses were less than 5 years old, and the average entrepreneur had six employees. Results showed that the most common definitions of resources included human capital, creation, firm,

physical capital, and assets. Notably, these definitions of resources did not significantly differ based on the type of industry, stages of the business, or educational background of the entrepreneurs. This study helped to highlight fundamental conceptualizations of the resources needed in entrepreneurship, which can help adapt the RBV to entrepreneurs (Kellermanns et al., 2016).

More recently, Nason and Wiklund (2018) conducted a meta-analysis to assess the RBV and its ability to help increase understanding of business growth or size over time. A key aspect of the RBV is the relationship between valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources and a business's competitive advantage. The use of these resources will then foster superior business performance. The researchers noted the importance of business owners' use of versatile resources for completing more strategic actions and quickly shifting resources to better adapt to different business environments when necessary. Data from the meta-analysis reflected more than 38,000 business firms. Results indicated that, as expected, resources and firm growth were positively correlated.

Furthermore, resources were found to have an even stronger effect on growth among manufacturing firms and small firms. Also as expected, versatile resources more strongly impacted growth than non-versatile resources. This study helped to validate the use of the RBV for assessing business growth (Nason & Wiklund, 2018).

Furthermore, Morgan, Sui, and Baum (2018) applied the RBT, considering human and social capital, to immigrant-owned SMEs. The researchers examined a sample of almost 10,000 SMEs in Canada to compare cognitive resources to cognitive perspectives.

Cognitive resources include entrepreneurs' knowledge and experience, whereas cognitive perspectives refer to how entrepreneurs perceive themselves and others. Results showed that the presence of immigrant owners was positively correlated with export intensity; immigrant entrepreneurs bring resources to their industry that positively impact business expansion (Morgan et al., 2018).

However, the presence of immigrant owners also negatively moderated the relationship between export intensity and financial performance (Morgan et al., 2018). Furthermore, immigrant entrepreneurs likely become overly confident, negatively impacting business performance and financial growth. This study helped to show why and how immigrant-owned SMEs are more effective than other firms when it comes to identifying, evaluating, developing, and exploiting business opportunities in international markets as well as where immigrant owners of SMEs are challenged (Morgan et al., 2018).

Bird and Wennberg (2016) conducted a study on Asian immigrant entrepreneurs living in Sweden, focusing on the importance of family resources. As predicted, results showed that immigrant entrepreneurs with family members living nearby were less likely to become unemployed and less likely to find a different source of paid employment. The researchers also found that family financial capital decreased the likelihood that immigrant entrepreneurs would become unemployed or enter into another source of paid employment. This study offered support for the idea that social embeddedness, and

specifically family-related resources, can be very beneficial for immigrant entrepreneurs (Bird & Wennberg, 2016).

One criticism of the RBT is that it is not empirically testable; therefore, further research is needed that measures a company's resources to further investigate this theory (Kozlenkova et al., 2014). The researchers found that previous literature offers support for the use of RBT in marketing companies to adequately explain the differential effects of resources on company performance. Furthermore, results suggested that in marketing industries, the intangible resources predicted a company's performance better than the tangible resources. The researchers proposed that resources and the RBT may be more impactful if combined with related theories (Kozlenkova et al., 2014).

The RBT may be particularly useful when combined with online home-based businesses. For instance, in the study by Sedera et al. (2016), surveys were completed by CIOs or CTOs of 189 companies in 2014, which was a response rate of 55%. The researchers found that there are three important components when evaluating the impact of digital platforms: business requirements, infrastructure, and expansion capabilities. Notably, the researchers found that using a digital platform alone does not increase innovation; in fact, the use of an enterprise system platform was more crucial. In summary, these findings offered support for the hypothesis that technology can foster innovation and energize businesses. Future research is needed on how other types of technology, such as Internet-based home businesses, impact innovation and success among businesses (Brown, Earle, Kim, & Lee, 2019; Sedera et al., 2016).

In summary, the RBT (Barney, 1991) emerged and business owners started focusing on resources and their impacts on their company's profit (Kozlenkova et al., 2014). The RBT acts as a framework for explaining and predicting a business's performance, including the ability to maintain a competitive advantage (Kozlenkova et al., 2014), as well as business growth (Nason & Wiklund, 2018). The RBT may also help immigrant entrepreneurs describe, predict, and explain business and organizational processes and relationships (Barney et al., 2011). Resources are also essential to business growth, decision-making, market positioning, organizational identity, and sustainability (Barney et al., 2011). Some important resources for entrepreneurs include human, social, and financial capital (Omri et al., 2014; Wach et al., 2016), and technology and digital platforms (Sedera et al., 2016). Workplace relationships have also been shown to be significant (Wach et al., 2016). Additionally, resources have most commonly been defined as human capital, creation and innovation, the firm or business, physical capital, and assets (Kellermans et al., 2016).

Kloosterman (2010) proposed that immigrant entrepreneurs may be better equipped to enter high-growth, high-threshold, postindustrial sectors, which could be accomplished through the formation and operation of online businesses in other countries outside the United States. Other research has shown that online home-based businesses offer a variety of business areas, which, in turn, helps to improve economy, strategic management, and the business itself (Van Gelderen et al., 2008). Additionally, Mason

et al. (2011) found that most home-based businesses are full-time businesses that have helped create jobs for employers and employees.

Online home-based businesses may also offer a promising outlet for women entrepreneurs because the Internet has become an area less dominated by men (Edley et al., 2004). Barua et al. (2001) found that benefits of online businesses included a smaller sales force, less paperwork to be completed, more natural gain of online customers, more accessible customer service, and fewer mistakes regarding data and analysis. Fostering online businesses within the United States aligns well with Kloosterman's (2010) concept of postindustrial opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurship because this creates an opportunity for domestic and international growth (Daniel et al., 2014).

Entrepreneurial Marketing in Online Home-Based Businesses

Entrepreneurial marketing. While it is well-established that certain resources may be challenging for entrepreneurs to acquire, marketing strategies are controlled by the resources at hand (Hills & Hultman, 2013). Unlike administrative marketing where the exclusive focus is on customer needs, the goals of entrepreneurial marketing go beyond that narrow premise to include the needs of the entrepreneur (Fillis, 2010). In this light, Morrish et al. (2010) recommended that "the starting place for an entrepreneurial firm and therefore entrepreneurial marketing activity is and must be the entrepreneur" (p. 309). The concept of "entrepreneurial marketing" is less about a single marketing strategy and more about a marketing spirit that differentiates itself from traditional

marketing practices, including being innovative, proactive, risk-taking, and attentive to customer needs (Morrish et al., 2010). It eschews many of the fundamental principles of marketing because they are typically designed for large, well-established firms. Entrepreneurial marketing utilizes a toolkit of new and unorthodox marketing practices to help emerging firms gain a foothold in crowded markets. Entrepreneurial marketing has been described as informal, dynamic, responsive to customer needs, and often simple in its design and execution (Bjerke & Hultman, 2002; Fiore et al., 2013).

Entrepreneurial leadership initiates from an organizing group of people or person(s) with a common economic growth goal in sustainable business environments; these proactive entrepreneurial behaviors are characterized by innovation, accepting responsibility, leveraging opportunities, and optimizing risk-taking while orchestrating change to benefit the stakeholders and society in general (Broughton, 2015; Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015; McGrath & MacMillan, 2000). Researchers identify successful entrepreneurs as applying marketing in alternative strategies that focus mainly on innovation and understanding the customer's needs; their success is primarily determined by how they make strategic choices based on the market environment (Fiore et al., 2013; Morrish et al., 2010; Stokes, 2000). These strategies tend to reach new customers through a ground-up process of convergence instead of *a priori* segmentation, selection, and alignment strategies. The focus is more on interactive social networking to spread the word rather than conventional marketing methods, including continuous feedback to adjust the message, informal networks, unorthodox connections, and staying flexible to

the changing customer needs (Morris, Schindehutte, & LaForge, 2002). These methods

and strategies help to establish a foothold in broader markets and allow smaller emerging

enterprises to compete with large, competitive, and established markets with limited

resources.

Entrepreneurial marketing in online businesses. Small business enterprises

operating from the entrepreneur's home and utilizing fast-start technologies, specifically

online and digital structures, are gaining acceptance (Anwar & Daniel, 2014; Daniel

et al., 2014; Hale, 2016). A digital business is one that strives to enhance "the

competitiveness of an organization by deploying innovative digital technologies

throughout an organization and beyond, through links to partners and customers and

promotion through digital media (Chaffey, 2015, p. 16). Entrepreneurial marketing is

especially evident in small, start-up online enterprises with the relative start-up costs of

such businesses, where perhaps marketing undertaken online can be low-cost and

produce high-impact outcomes (Amit & Zott, 2001; Anwar & Daniel, 2015), while

permitting online businesses to experiment with various online marketing tools in areas

such as promotion and pricing.

By using an entrepreneurial marketing strategy, the online business owner can

have easy and quick access to customer feedback and even online customer chatting via

various social media platforms (Hale, 2016; Nobre & Silva, 2014; Schaupp & Bélanger,

2014). Additionally, online home-based business strategies can mitigate gender, racial, or

social biases (de la Cruz et al., 2018; Wynarczyk & Graham, 2013). The emergent

domain of entrepreneurial marketing considers how small firms, with limited resources, can effectively undertake marketing (Fiore et al., 2013). Studies show that entrepreneurial marketing for an online business start-up can be dynamic, flexible, immersive, low-cost, and growth-orientated (Morrish et al., 2010), and also vital if start-up online businesses are to become sustainable and grow (Morrish, 2011). These strategic elements when combined in use with online businesses creates a synergy that increases and enhances opportunities for higher-value markets and broader appeal, and allows for increased market penetration than with traditional approaches, leading to increased industry status (Anwar & Daniel, 2015).

The Interface of Immigrant Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Marketing, and Online Home-Based Business

Research to date shows high levels of entrepreneurship among ethnic minorities in many developed countries (Broughton, 2015). This association is especially strong in liberal economies, that of the UK, for example, spurring substantial growth in ethnic minority-owned start-up enterprises (Ram & Jones, 2008). There is evidence, however, linking the status of these entrepreneurs and their businesses' restricted resources (Jones, Ram, & Edwards, 2014; Ndofor & Priem, 2011). Online businesses can be more easily launched with limited resources as they do not have the same costs associated with brick and mortar stores (i.e., no rent or purchase payments for physical space) (Anwar & Daniel, 2015). Prior studies point to immigrant enterprises having haphazard marketing activities (Altinay & Altinay, 2008). Entrepreneurial marketing studies effective

marketing avenues and possibilities for small enterprises, which often must deal with constrained resources (Fiore et al., 2013). As such, the growing domain of entrepreneurial marketing holds important relevance and represents a good match for online business operations. The very nature of such businesses allows them to be more flexible and dynamic, and support more immediate contact between entrepreneur and customers, especially through social media engagement and other online interaction (Nobre & Silva, 2014; Schaupp & Bélanger, 2014). Research provides evidence for the low-cost, flexible, immersive, dynamic, and growth-orientated nature of entrepreneurial marketing (Becherer, Helms, & McDonald, 2012).

Without appropriate entrepreneurial marketing, Kloosterman's (2010) identification of enhanced opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs remains only conceptual in nature (Ram et al., 2016). Developing effective enterprises for online businesses aligns well with Kloosterman's (2010) concept of postindustrial opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurship, offering an opportunity for domestic and international growth by transcending markets via the Internet that is usually restricted, or restricted to other immigrant entrepreneurs operating an on-ground business (Daniel et al., 2014). Only one narrative study in the literature conducted in the United Kingdom has applied an entrepreneurial marketing lens to explore immigrant entrepreneurship in online home-based businesses and with a demographically skewed sample of only male respondents with Asian heritage (Anwar & Daniel, 2016b). The findings of this study indicate that while immigrant online home-based businesses appear to offer opportunities for a

breakout, the reliance on haphazard marketing lacking in an innovative approach resulted in highly homogeneous approaches to marketing. The authors of this study recommended that further similar studies be conducted in other high-receiving immigrant nations, and with a demographically broader ethnic immigrant sample, to empirically investigate the experiences of other groups of immigrant entrepreneurs with online home-based businesses in using entrepreneurial marketing to create breakout opportunities (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b).

Guided by Kloosterman's (2010) theory, Anwar and Daniel (2015) adopted qualitative key informant interview questions that were exploratory in nature. The researchers employed purposive, snowball, and web-based sampling methods. A total of 22 immigrant key informants included those who had recently moved to the United Kingdom as well as those who were from a migrant heritage but were born in the United Kingdom themselves. Most of the interviews were conducted in person; only four were conducted over the telephone. Respondents reported that the types of online businesses included retailing, web design, digital marketing, and Information Technology (IT) consulting. The interviews were coded and analyzed individually as well as aggregated for identification of overarching themes across all interviews. One key theme that emerged was the importance of human resources and personal skills for successful marketing; interestingly, the majority of respondents did not have formal marketing training or expertise (Anwar & Daniel, 2015).

Notably, in the study by Anwar and Daniel (2015), all respondents reported that they financed their online business through personal funds or funds from family or friends. Respondents also indicated that a key reason for starting an online business was because of the low cost. Social resources were also a critical part of marketing and business. Interestingly, respondents also indicated that ethnic resources, or the skills and resources that come from their country of origin or their heritage, were crucial for marketing their online business. In sum, immigrant entrepreneurs of online businesses draw from select buckets of resources that are available to them to help them successfully market and grow their business (Anwar & Daniel, 2015).

In a follow-up study, Anwar and Daniel (2016a) drew from their 22 key informant interviews to examine entrepreneurial marketing tactics and how they are utilized for businesses owned by ethnic minorities. The first major theme that emerged involved the planned use of resources; furthermore, entrepreneurial marketing for these respondents was not chaotic but strategic, flexible, and organized. As noted in relation to Anwar and Daniel's (2015) previous study, online businesses offer financial savings; in Anwar and Daniel's (2016a) study, respondents indicated that the low cost helped them to branch out and use innovative entrepreneurial marketing techniques. The researchers found that most of the respondents gained entrepreneurial skills from formal education and were from countries that valued education systems. Interestingly, although all the respondents operated online businesses, about half did not have any formal IT skills; respondents

indicated that they did not feel it was essential to have IT skills for their business or that those skills could be outsourced from a separate business (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a).

Additionally, respondents reported that they were continuously marketing and promoting their businesses; one even wrote a book to do so. Typically, marketing and promotion strategies were low-cost or free, and respondents noted that they relied heavily on social media. Another key marketing strategy was having customers promote their business through word of mouth and connecting with their customers using their native language. As such, this study helped to highlight resources and strategies that are available to immigrant entrepreneurs and can help them to successfully market their businesses (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a).

In summary, this section has helped to outline the increasing amount of entrepreneurship among ethnic minorities (Broughton, 2015). Online businesses are optimal for these entrepreneurs because they can be of lower cost and started with limited resources (Anwar & David, 2015; Van Gelderen et al., 2008). Entrepreneurial marketing is critical for small businesses (Bjerke & Hultman, 2002), despite the finding that immigrant entrepreneurs often lack formal marketing experience (Anwar & Daniel, 2015) or formal IT training (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a). Furthermore, developing effective enterprises for online businesses through entrepreneurial marketing aligns well with Kloosterman's (2010) concept of postindustrial opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurship. Additionally, research has shown that immigrant entrepreneurs with online businesses draw from select buckets of resources that are available to them to help

them successfully market and grow their business (Anwar & Daniel, 2015). In the next section, other studies are described that have examined entrepreneurial marketing in online home-based businesses.

Opportunities for Immigrant Entrepreneurs to Support Breakout from Traditional Markets with Online Businesses

Kloosterman (2010) has theorized that the opportunity for immigrant entrepreneurs to enter high-growth, high-threshold, postindustrial sectors may be accomplished through the formation and operation of online businesses; this would offer growth and breakout opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs to transcend markets that are spatially restricted, or restricted to co-immigrants. In addition, Kloosterman et al. (1999) described the increase in immigrant entrepreneurs in the Netherlands, which has, in turn, helped to improve the economy. Immigrant entrepreneurs have helped to revitalize cities and introduce new industries and business strategies. The authors suggested that opportunity structure is critical to business success for immigrant entrepreneurs. This opportunity structure involves a mix of technology, demand for the product or service, production-related factors, and the institutional framework (Kloosterman et al., 1999).

Although the number of immigrant entrepreneurs in the Netherlands has increased, most seem to be concentrated in its four largest cities, making immigrant entrepreneurship skewed spatially and geographically (Kloosterman et al., 1999). Additionally, immigrant business owners tend to choose industries that are at the lower end of the market. The researchers suggested that embeddedness is a particularly

important factor in the success of immigrant-owned businesses. Furthermore, mixed embeddedness refers to the integrated role of social, economic, and institutional contexts that contribute to the success of a business, and the opportunity structure is a part of mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman et al., 1999).

Kloosterman and Rath (2001) further investigated the role of mixed embeddedness and opportunity structure on immigrant entrepreneurship. Opportunity structure is comprised of market conditions and access to ownership. Markets refer to the "concrete economic locus where entrepreneurs, combining different resources in a specific way (adding value), have to sell their products to clients" (Kloosterman & Rath, 2001, p. 4). Then, markets have to be accessible in order for businesses to start. The researchers proposed a three-level strategy for examining the opportunity structure and its components. They noted that this strategy is based on national, urban or regional, and neighborhood levels, and consists of the following:

- First, national regulations, laws, and policies are critical for determining what products and services are marketable.

- Second, different economic rates of urban or regional areas or cities can impact businesses and lead to "spatial clusterings" (2001, p. 8) of businesses and economic activity.

- Third, different markets and growth potential of individual neighborhoods can impact the concentration of immigrants and their businesses.

Van Gelderen et al. (2008) examined how home-based Internet businesses operate by using a case study methodology. Cases involved in this study were from New Zealand. Businesses ranged from selling products or services, either globally or nationally. Results showed that this type of business has the following components of the acronym SMILE: Speed, Multiple incomes, Inexpensive, Lean, and Smart.

1. First, home-based Internet businesses have speed of transactions, invoicing, sales and accounting, with a reduced need for lengthy paperwork.

2. Second, most entrepreneurs with home-based Internet businesses felt it necessary to have more than one job to support their business.

3. Third, home-based Internet businesses have a relatively low cost of start-up and maintenance, which makes them appealing.

4. Fourth, home-based Internet businesses are lean in the sense that they are small and virtual; they require little business space and fewer employees.

5. Fifth, owners of home-based Internet businesses reported working smarter was important; this refers to working less hard over time with increased financial profit (Van Gelderen et al., 2008).

This variety that is fostered by home-based Internet businesses further helps to improve the economy, strategic management, and the business itself. The researchers suggested that more training and resources be provided so that businesses are more aware of the importance and benefits of such businesses (Van Gelderen et al., 2008). Mason, Carter, and Tagg (2011) described the increase in home-based businesses and their

impacts in England. The researchers found that most home-based businesses are full-time businesses that have helped create jobs for employers and employees. Most home-based businesses are in the computer and service industries.

Notably, rural and southern areas of England are where most home-based businesses are located. The researchers noted many positive impacts of home-based businesses aside from job creation (Mason et al., 2011). For instance, owners of home-based businesses are more satisfied and have a higher quality of life than other business owners. There was also no significant difference between home-based business owners' and other small business owners' financial standing. Additionally, although home-based business owners likely lack access to the resources of a parent company, this, in turn, prompts home-based business owners to utilize external resources. Ultimately, this helps to increase the social and economic activity of the home-based business owners' neighborhoods (Mason et al., 2011).

Another study compared entrepreneurs in the UK, Australia, and the United States. Anwar and Daniel (2014) conducted a literature review exploring the increase of online home-based businesses. Among the three countries, home businesses made up more than half of businesses in the business sector, with online home businesses being the fastest growing type of business. Anwar and Daniel (2014) defined online home-based businesses as "self-employed individuals operating a business in their home and using the internet to undertake a significant proportion of their business activities" (p. 4). The authors reviewed over 130 publications during their literature review process. Their

results showed that entrepreneurs with online businesses differed greatly from other entrepreneurs; for instance, these entrepreneurs were younger, more likely to be single or divorced, and less likely to have children than entrepreneurs with non-online home-based businesses. Research regarding men versus women ownership is mixed, with a seemingly balanced number of men and women online home-based business owners. The authors also discussed how the literature had shown the opportunities online home-based businesses provide for immigrants; computer ownership was shown to be more strongly correlated with entrepreneurship for immigrants than individuals native to the United States (Anwar & Daniel, 2014).

A key challenge to immigrant entrepreneurs is the opportunity to break out of ethnic and niche markets (Lassalle & Scott, 2017). Barriers to breakout among ethnic entrepreneurs include marketing and cultural specificity (Arrighetti, Bolzani, & Lasagni, 2014), resources (Adendorff & Halkias, 2014), networks (Wang & Altinay, 2012), levels of enclave dependence (Sepulveda, Syrett, & Lyon, 2011), and social capital (Halkias, 2015). Rival interpretations in the literature on the enclave economy accentuates the finite scope of the market focus, which is known to have a pejorative impact on success and can lead to deficiency, conflict, or the acceptance of weak approaches (Aldrich & Waldinger, 1990; Edwards, Ram, Jones, & Doldor, 2016; Zhou, 2004). However, ethnic entrepreneurs are shown to be prosperous if they can broaden and develop alternative markets as a key component of their breakout strategies (Broughton, 2015).

The entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets remain unknown (Allen & Busse, 2016; Anwar & Daniel, 2016a). Kloosterman (2010) asserted that "qualitative research [is required] to grasp the social embeddedness, strategies, and careers of immigrant entrepreneurs" (p. 41) to gain a deeper understanding of the immigrant entrepreneurship experience. Lastly, related literature has been heavily reliant on literature reviews (e.g., Fatoki, 2014; Kellermans et al., 2014); qualitative and quantitative methods are needed to understand the experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs better. Qualitative methods allow for the collection of detail-rich data to describe the perspectives, experiences, challenges, and benefits of immigrant business owners.

This study was framed by two key concepts that focus on the marketing challenges facing immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses: Kloosterman's (2010) concept of postindustrial opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs, and Anwar and Daniel's (2016a) concept of entrepreneurial marketing in online home-based businesses. For this qualitative study I utilized a narrative inquiry design to investigate the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets. Applying entrepreneurial marketing theory can provide a theoretical

understanding of how immigrant-owned firms can enter the market in postindustrial

sectors and strengthen their longevity through entrepreneurial marketing activities

(Anwar & Daniel, 2016a).

Summary and Conclusions

Previous research has indicated that the theoretical basis for the concept of mixed

embeddedness builds on fundamental theories that are aligned with how entrepreneurial

immigrants engage in a host country to achieve a higher level of success, going beyond

established models of ethnic resources (Kloosterman & Rath, 1999). Kloosterman (2010)

later suggested that it is beneficial for ethnic minority entrepreneurs to take advantage

and utilize technology in a way that allows for transparency of business opportunity

without the pejorative aspects of race, bigotry, geography, language, social stigmas, or

logistical constraints. Although much research has been conducted regarding small

businesses in the United States (Dahmen & Rodriguez, 2014; Decker et al., 2014; Memili

et al., 2015), and immigrant-owned businesses outside the United States (Halkias et al.,

2009; Halkias et al., 2016; Mueller, 2014; Sim, 2015; Yazdanfar, Abbasian, & Brouder,

2015), less research has examined immigrant-owned small businesses within the United

States (Kerr & Kerr, 2016).

Scholars recognized this knowledge gap and the opportunity for continued study

since the number of immigrant entrepreneurs in economies such as that of the United

States has been increasing in recent years (Kloosterman & Rath, 2002) and the trends and

patterns associated with immigration to the United States have also changed over time

(Eckstein & Peri, 2018). Another concern pertains to the many challenges faced by immigrant entrepreneurs. Immigrant entrepreneurs experience barriers when starting, maintaining, and expanding their businesses (Reuber, Knight, Liesch, & Zhou, 2018). Additionally, there are financial strains on immigrant entrepreneurs who tend to have short and insufficient credit histories in their new country, as there are often difficulties in accessing credit histories from outside countries (Desiderio, 2014).

Effectively utilizing resources, as suggested by the RBT (Barney, 1991), also known as the RBV, can be a critical part of immigrant business owners' success; the RBT hypothesizes that firms are shaped by the resources that are easily available to them or those that can be acquired. Resources are also essential to business growth, decision-making, market positioning, organizational identity, and sustainability (Barney et al., 2011). These resources may include entrepreneurial marketing and home-based online business platforms. Entrepreneurial marketing is particularly important for small, start-up online enterprises with the relative start-up costs of such businesses, because of low cost and ability to produce high-impact outcomes (Amit & Zott, 2001; Anwar & Daniel, 2015).

This qualitative study can help to fill the gap in the literature regarding immigrant entrepreneurship in the US, specifically focusing on the impacts that the RBT and use of online home-based businesses can have on the success of immigrant-owned businesses. The results from this study can help build a better understanding of how immigrants can best utilize resources and efficiently create, build, sustain, and grow their businesses. In

the following chapter I describe the research methods used in this study, which include

the narrative inquiry method, in order to gain a better understanding of immigrant

entrepreneurs' experiences with an online home-based business.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study was to explore the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets. To address this gap, and consistent with the qualitative paradigm, a narrative inquiry method was used to meet the purpose of the study and collect data through storytelling from immigrant entrepreneurs owning online home-based businesses in the United States. Using the narrative inquiry method through storytelling is a proven method of representing human experiences, leading to a detailed understanding of participants' daily lived experiences (Clandinin, 2013; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

In this chapter, I provide detailed information on the research method and rationale for using the narrative inquiry approach to meet the purpose of the study and provide data to answer the research question. I also present the rationale for the participant selection strategy, data collection strategies and data analysis, the role of the researcher, evaluation methods for ensuring the trustworthiness of data, ethical considerations, and a chapter summary.

Research Design and Rationale

A researchable question requires the researcher to formulate the question in a manner that will reveal important new information on the topic in question (Aslam & Emmanuel, 2010; Browne & Keeley, 2012). The topic needs to be researchable, relevant,

and applicable to existing research to address a recognized gap in the knowledge base. The question needs to be specific, precise, and clearly address the phenomenon being studied. In line with the purpose of this study, the research question was as follows: How do immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses narrate stories of entrepreneurial marketing experiences, and how do these experiences support breakout from traditionally restricted markets?

Ethnic-immigrant minorities who initiate businesses in their host countries are associated with high levels of entrepreneurship relative to native-born entrepreneurs (Broughton, 2015; Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015). Immigrant small businesses continue to be a driving force of the U.S. economy, contributing up to 50% of the GDP (Dahmen & Rodriguez, 2014). Immigrant entrepreneurs who operate online home-based businesses in the United States represent a very dynamic sector of immigrant businesses supporting economic growth and innovation in the country, yet they face discrimination, unfavorable government policy, biased regulation, social stigma, and barriers to financial resources (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a). Immigrant entrepreneurs typically work within their own ethnic enclaves; it has been shown that creating a flexible online business strategy and digital identity can help them to break out into more established and diverse higher value markets (Altinay et al., 2014; Ram et al., 2016).

Positive social change affecting ethnic-immigrant minorities leading businesses in the United States may occur when government agencies, policymakers, and interested stakeholders recognize and address the barriers facing immigrant business owners

(Altinay & Altinay, 2008; Basu, 2010; Daniel et al., 2014). Social change may also be achieved when the contributions of immigrant business owners are perceived as equal to those of the host country business owners, improving the GDP and host country economy (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a; Ram et al., 2016). Recent studies in the United Kingdom and other developed countries have shown that contemporary marketing strategies necessitate that immigrants gain unobstructed access to resources within the host country in order to be effective business owners (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a).

Qualitative methods are applied to explore real-world issues (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Applying a qualitative research method allows for the use of nonstandardized, adjustable, and adaptive approaches to data generation that are relevant to a specific problem of study (Ritchie et al., 2013). One of the tangible benefits of using a qualitative, narrative approach for investigating immigrant entrepreneurs' business experiences is that this approach allows for complex issues to be included (such as their agency and entrepreneurial context). The narrative approach was borne of constructivists such as Gergen (1998, as cited in Slembrouck, 2015), who highlighted that narrative storytelling emphasizes contextual construction in social relations and everyday interactions. The narrative inquiry approach allows for presenting rich participant descriptions through storytelling and is a sound way of developing a detailed understanding of human experiences as they are being lived daily (Borghoff, 2018; Clandinin, 2013; Webster & Mertova, 2007), including the experience of entrepreneurship.

Unlike other forms of qualitative research, such as ethnography, phenomenology, and case study methods, a narrative inquiry approach was the most effective method for data collection to address the purpose of this study. Narrative inquiry follows a recursive, reflexive process of moving from the telling of lived stories to textual data and finally to the research texts and conclusions (Clandinin, 2013). The approach provides the researcher the unique opportunity to work closely with participants and establish trusting relationships with them, and it allows for an intimate process for participants who present discomfort when disclosing critical events of life experiences (Wimberly, 2011). Additionally, narrative inquiry creates a space (Clandinin, 2006) that allows immigrant entrepreneur business owners' voices to narrate their daily business experiences within their own business context while the researcher gathers valuable facts and story configurations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

With the narrative inquiry approach, it is possible to identify critical events that are revealed within the stories of the participants, thereby illuminating the voices and experiences of marginalized populations and individuals with complexity and extensive detail to reveal meanings embedded not only in the content of the story, but also in the words, images, and symbols used to tell the story (Clandinin, 2013; Maple & Edwards, 2010; Webster & Mertova, 2007). These subtle nuances are not well understood through other approaches such as grounded theory research; although narrative can generate theory, scholars do not view this purpose as its primary aim (Clandinin, 2006). Narrative strategies typically employ small numbers of participants in the creation of retold stories

that illuminate the underlying processes and meanings of those experiences. While the analysis of grounded theory data may lead a researcher to gain a broader understanding of complexities of experience (Glaser, 2002), narrative inquiry's critical events analysis provides depth and richness, allowing the researcher to capture a holistic view shared by the study participants (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Grounded theory may also explain consequences based on the participants' expressed core values while narrative inquiry presents findings in expressed retold realities to create authenticity in the study (Corbin, Strauss, & Strauss, 2014).

Narrative inquiry has been used in entrepreneurial research as an alternative to logico-scientific approaches to social research and has been touted as a fundamental means of understanding human experience (Gartner, 2007; Hamilton, 2013). People draw on the stories held in their memories to guide their interpretation of the events they have experienced; through the triad of expectation, memory, and attention, they are able to assign trustworthiness to their story (Cobley, 2001). The use of narrative research enables a researcher to focus on people's texts, memories, and images in place of a priori theories (Gartner, 2010; Larty & Hamilton, 2011).

In entrepreneurial studies, researchers may apply a narrative inquiry approach to tease out and expose varied and multifaceted entrepreneurial behaviors and experiences such that they can be better understood (Hamilton, Cruz, & Jack, 2017; Smith, 2015). Narrative methods used by scholars to understand entrepreneurs in qualitative studies have yielded insights related to complex and multifaceted aspects of participants'

experiences, allowing researchers to use interpretative analysis to elucidate how

entrepreneurs perceive, think about, and give meaning to their business experiences

(Boers & Boers, 2018; Munoz & Cohen, 2017). Scholars have noted that more research is

needed to develop the use of narrative inquiry in entrepreneurship studies to expand and

add to the knowledge informing a multilayered conceptualization of business venturing

grounded in how current entrepreneurs experience and enact leadership in the context of

their lived experiences (Lewis, 2015; McAdam, Harrison, & Leitch, 2018; Tlaiss &

Kauser, 2018).

Role of the Researcher

My specific role as a researcher was to conduct in-depth face-to-face interviews

with immigrant entrepreneurial business owners currently living in the United States

regarding their lived experiences in relation to the research question. I did not fill any role

beyond the position of interviewer and investigator within this interview process. No

personal relationships or social connections existed between the selected participants and

myself; I had no guiding influence, power, or control over the participants while giving

voice to their stories and experiences through this study.

As a strategy to minimize, monitor, and document potential research biases, I

maintained a journal for reflective self-analysis throughout this process to address

trustworthiness (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). Additionally, personal biases and perspectives

were conditionally and clearly stated during the research process, analysis, and results

phases with all stakeholders (Harry, Sturges, & Klingner, 2005). Other individual

inclinations, perspectives, and biases related to interpretations of the participants'

narratives need to be recognized as potential influences that may impact the story

trajectory. Immigrant entrepreneurs participating in the study were asked probing

questions intended to clarify or explore specific aspects of the research questions. The

interview format by design was semistructured.

Within the parameters of the narrative inquiry design, I closely interacted with

and observed the participants; I understood that potential ethical concerns could arise

during this process (Webster & Mertova, 2007). It was important for me to establish trust

between the participants and myself through the entire research process. It was necessary

for me to discuss personal and business-related sensitivities candidly. I sought to develop

a high level of integrity and trust in my interactions with the participants in order to fully

encourage disclosure and effective discourse. Without trust between researcher and

participant, the qualitative data-gathering process will lose valuable information and

insight (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Due to these genuine concerns and recognized

challenges, a researcher must never lose sight of participant relationships, must maintain

trust with all participants, and must have the ability to relate to the lived experiences and

stories being mutually shared (Garvis, 2015).

Participants shared their personal opinions of people, relationships, organizations,

and experiences from their perspective. The level of trust involved in such disclosure can

leave participants vulnerable to repercussions if their opinions and perspectives become

known to the other members of the story being expressed to the researcher (Clandinin,

2013). Ensuring the privacy of each participant's story and related data, extending

protections for nonparticipants, and respecting participant anonymity are all important in

ensuring that stories are shared effectively while protections are maintained for all

involved (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Participants did not receive incentives for taking

part in the study. The participants were not known before the study. As such, there were

minimal power differentials between the participants and myself. All participants had the

option to leave the study at their choosing, at any time, even if the information they

offered would be incomplete relative to the research objectives (Merriam & Tisdell,

2015).

Methodology

Narrative inquiry was well suited for this study because it is a process by which,

through the stories that immigrant entrepreneurs share, scholars can gain a deeper

understanding of their specific challenges through their individual perspectives on their

daily business experiences, transactions, relationships, and entrepreneurial context

(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Meier & Stremmel, 2010). The strength of the narrative

inquiry approach is that it rests on the epistemological premise that individuals will

inherently attempt to make sense of their experiences through the imposition of story

structures (Duff & Bell, 2002). As such, stories are perpetually being restructured within

the timeline of recent events as they do not exist in a static environment but are reformed

by lifelong personal, social, and community narratives (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Using a narrative inquiry approach allowed me to share the stories and experiences of

immigrant entrepreneurs operating online home-based businesses in the United States in a manner that is holistic in all their complexity, depth, and richness (Nolan, Hendricks, Williamson, & Ferguson, 2018). No attempt was made objectively to revamp the experience of the participants; rather, I provided interpretations of how the immigrant entrepreneurs personally perceived their experiences (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The question of personal perception is a vital element of a narrative inquiry, as it involves how participants reconstruct and present their memories through their responses, especially in the analysis stage, where particular challenges can arise (Hunter, 2010). An individual's perception of a lived reality incorporates the worldview of reality as shared by individuals of a culture, showing their core assumptions and concepts (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Recognizing these tendencies, the narrative approach includes aspects of the individuals' culture; it is important that researchers share the culture of participants to capture, analyze, and retell the meaning of their stories (Nolan et al., 2018; Polkinghorne, 2005). Within this context, I sought to understand, verify, and convey the underlying cultural challenges that shape immigrant entrepreneurs' experiences of living and operating online home-based businesses in the United States.

I conducted virtual face-to-face, in-depth interviews through Skype (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015) with six first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs running small online home-based businesses in the United States to elicit data to document their business life experiences. The use of open-ended, semistructured interviews was appropriate for this study to obtain a rich description of the narrative stories shared by the immigrant

entrepreneurs who participated (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). By using open-ended interviews, I was able to understand the participants' experiences from their individual perspectives, to clarify their interview statements, and to inquire for further information (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Using the format of open-ended semistructured interviews while personally interfacing with the participants in the study conversationally allowed me to capture essential information using reflective journal notes and personal observation (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Narrative inquiry-aligned interview questions based on the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space help to identify critical events based on essential life decisions of participants and how these events impact their lives (Webster & Mertova, 2007). The three-dimensional space narrative approach suggests that interaction involves understanding people's personal experiences as well as their interactions with other people (Wang, 2017; Wang & Geale, 2015). I used this framework to analyze the stories of immigrant entrepreneurs for their personal experiences as well as their interactions with other people, agents, and organizations.

In that the concepts of continuity and temporality are central to narrative research, I incorporated the past and present actions of the immigrant entrepreneurs because those actions are likely to occur again in the future. The setting, situation, or place of these immigrant entrepreneurs relating to the telling of their lived experiences also needed to be considered, as specific locations in their environment might lend meaning to their narratives, strengthening the research design and giving confidence to the research

results. Relaying and relating the story of the immigrant entrepreneur online business owner in the United States involved incorporating the themes, rich details, and perceptions of participants' settings in sharing their personal experiences (Wang, 2017; Wang & Geale, 2015).

Participant Selection Logic

Population. This qualitative study utilizing a narrative inquiry sought to gain a deeper understanding of the entrepreneurial marketing experiences and challenges of immigrant entrepreneurs operating online home-based businesses in the United States through the lens of their daily lived business experiences and of the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets in their entrepreneurial context. In the United States, immigrant entrepreneurs contribute significantly to economic growth and to generating employment for the host economy as well as the core ethnocentric populations (Kerr & Kerr, 2016). First-generation immigrants create approximately 25% of new firms in the United States; in some states (California and New York) the number of new immigrant businesses exceeds 40% (Kerr & Kerr, 2018). The high prevalence of immigrants comprising entrepreneurs globally identifies their behaviors as an important area of research, which is significantly lacking in the United States; scholars recognize that studying the channels through which they impact economies in host countries is required for understanding immigrant-owned businesses in the United States private sector and employment. The Business Dynamics Survey (Goldschlag & Perlman, 2017) estimated ongoing jobs due to immigrant firms

directly account for about 16 million workers; incorporating second-generation immigrants raises the estimate to around 20 million workers (Kerr & Kerr, 2018).

Criterion and snowball sampling. The potential participants I identified for my study were selected using criterion and network sampling as my purposeful sampling approach. In qualitative studies using a purposeful sampling approach, criterion and network sampling are two identified rigorous approaches to sampling strategies; they involve selecting cases that meet *a priori* inclusion criteria of importance and help to identify and understand information-rich cases (Emerson, 2015; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015; Phoenix et al., 2016). Snowball sampling is a criterion-based selection method that has been shown to be very effective to address a targeted population by employing research into participants' social networks (Browne, 2005; Waters, 2015). Snowball sampling relies on precedents and continues until the point at which the initial target sample size has been attained (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017). I chose to apply these specific, purposeful, and proven strategies with the goal of maximizing alignment as well as the differences between study variables by systematically aligning the sampling processes with the research purpose, the research questions, data collection, and analysis. The outlined purposeful sampling approach comprising of several aspects that are mutually interactive, theoretically sound, and structurally supportive maintained the alignment between the scope of the sample and attempted generalizations (Robinson, 2013).

The systematic, practical, and theoretical considerations of saturation impact and define the size of a sample used for a qualitative project (Robinson, 2013). The participant selection for this narrative inquiry study comprised a purposeful sample of six first-generation immigrant entrepreneurial business owners in the United States. Through researching the typical sample size in recent narrative inquiry studies, the decision to use six to eight participants was made due to the design and structure since a typical qualitative, narrative study requires between three and seven participants (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006; Kuzel, 1999; Morse, 2015). Some research scholars have recommended using one to two participants to be observed unless the researcher is developing a collective story since sampling must be consistent with the aims and assumptions inherent in the use of any method (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015; Guetterman, 2015).

The unit of analysis for this study was first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs operating online home-based businesses in the United States; using purposeful selection of study participants who were knowledgeable and had established experience directly related to the research topic provided valuable in-depth research data, primarily through network and snowball sampling (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015; Trochim, & Donnelly, 2008). The sample population met the following inclusion criteria: (a) adults running successful businesses; and (b) first-generation immigrant founders of a small-to-medium online business enterprise, two years or more after start-up within the United States, possessing well-developed attitudes and opinions regarding entrepreneurial marketing experiences of online home-based businesses, and willing to provide in-depth

information on the phenomena under study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). The inclusion criteria for participants were grounded in the literature of similar studies (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a; Dye & Dye, 2018). These criteria for participant selection distinguished the first-generation immigrant business owners who were identified as entrepreneurs in the United States from other business owners who had not shown successful leadership responsibilities and sustainability with online strategies (Overbeke et al., 2013).

The candidate participants were pre-screened using the specified criteria to verify that they possessed the intended study knowledge with regard to their experiences and their ability and willingness for self-expression, in relation to the business entry barriers of first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States running home-based online businesses through the lens of their daily business experiences, their agency, and their entrepreneurial context. As such, the participants were: (a) adults running successful businesses; and (b) first-generation immigrant founders of a small-to-medium online business enterprise, two or more years after start-up within the United States, possessing well-developed attitudes and opinions regarding entrepreneurial marketing experiences of online home-based businesses, and willing to provide in-depth information on the phenomena under study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). The exclusion criteria for the sample were those who did not fit the inclusion criteria stated above and immigrants of known illegal status. Narrative inquiry using the critical events approach was used to address the research question since through this study I sought to explore the thoughts

and feelings of participants, making sense of retold lived experiences. The collection of this data provides researchers with a holistic view of their investigation and enables them to classify occurrences into critical and supporting events, which are often overlooked or not revealed through traditional empirical methodology (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

I adopted and used the first six participants who agreed to be a part of the study, and was prepared to recruit more through snowball sampling if needed to achieve data saturation; using qualitative narrative research, I proceeded to build the complete story of the topic using each individual's own experiences that were carefully saved (Trahar, 2009). Using the range of six to eight participants is a recommended and typical sample size choice for a qualitative study (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Schram, 2006). Using a larger sample size would limit access to a deeper insightful investigation procedure when applying qualitative research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015; Schram, 2006). To achieve minimum sampling bias, accuracy, and more profound results, I employed the use of network and snowball sampling to simplify and augment purposive sampling, to achieve clarity, and identify specific participants in the process who could prove difficult or pose difficulties in being located (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017). For authenticity, reliability, and better recognition, participants were identified through professional networks in the United States, and personal recommendation of such professionalism is given a higher consideration/recommendation in the recruitment of participants (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

The point of saturation determined the exact number of participants who were to be involved (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Data saturation is achieved at the point when sufficient information is gathered, no additional new information could be gathered, and where further coding in the process is no longer attainable (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Depending on the size of the population, data saturation could be reached with as few as six interviews (Guest et al., 2006). Qualitative analysis is concerned about the depth and the richness of information and not with generalizing about a population. Defining data in terms of rich and thick is recommended rather than focusing on the size of the sample (Mason, 2010).

Interviews are an appropriate qualitative data collection method so one's study results in reaching data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The number of interviews needed for a qualitative study to reach data saturation should be structured to enable asking all recruited participants the same questions; otherwise, one will not be able to achieve data saturation (Guest et al., 2006). To further enhance data saturation, I made sure to interview people who have not been previously researched in such a study (Bernard & Bernard, 2012). I was also cognizant to guard against the shaman effect, where individuals or researchers with specialized information on the topic of the research can dilute the data from the sample participants, and did not engage gatekeepers at the research site who may restrict access to the participants (Bernard & Bernard, 2012). I adhered to the safeguards and followed through with these scholarly recommendations,

and communicated directly with each candidate participant to strengthen data collection

and reach data saturation with a sample of six participants (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Instrumentation

To move forward in a study by collecting and reporting useful information in

qualitative research, one-on-one interviews are considered to be the most vital

methodological tool for researchers (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). In this research

study, I utilized an interview script (see Appendix B) to assist in organizing the interview

process. Qualitative researchers often rely on themselves as the instrument for data

collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In narrative inquiry research, both the participants

and the researcher play an essential role in the story retelling process. The participant

provides the facts, and the researcher gathers the facts in a story-telling form of

communication using a semistructured question protocol (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

To reduce the influence of the researcher and enable the participant's intentions

and meaning-making to surface, narrative analysis methodologists suggest as best the use

of a semistructured interview (Georgakopoulou, 2014; Webster & Mertova, 2007). The

semistructured interview is appropriate for an exploratory research that uses narrative

inquiry, and it allows the researcher to ask the participants to tell their stories in their own

unique ways. Using a semistructured interview implies having a constructionist view of

the world, as this allows the researcher to be part of the interview but allows the

storyteller to participate fully in the interview. Therefore, the story is co-constructed by

the storyteller and the researcher, while being conducted in a conversational style with great flexibility and mutual trust (Grollmus & Tarres, 2015).

The instrument used was a semistructured interview protocol developed by two researchers in the UK, Prof. Elizabeth Daniel and Prof. Naveed Anwar, who piloted and standardized the interview protocol for use in narrative studies of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom operating online home-based businesses. The interview protocol can be viewed in Appendix B. The purpose of developing the instrument was so that qualitative researchers can explore the operation of online businesses by immigrant entrepreneurs by applying an entrepreneurial marketing lens to explore how such entrepreneurs draw on the resource to market their businesses. In developing the interview questions, Anwar and Daniel (2016a) considered if online businesses offer such entrepreneurs the opportunity to break out of the traditional ethnic market sectors with which they are traditionally associated. Anwar and Daniel's (2016b) research conducted in the United Kingdom is the only narrative study in the literature that has applied an entrepreneurial marketing lens to explore immigrant entrepreneurship in online home-based businesses, but with a demographically skewed sample of only male respondents with Asian heritage. The authors recommended that further similar studies be conducted in other high-receiving immigrant nations, and with a demographically broader ethnic immigrant sample, to empirically investigate the experiences of other groups of immigrant entrepreneurs with online home-based businesses in using entrepreneurial marketing to create breakout opportunities (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a,

2016b). Permission to use Anwar and Daniel's (2016b) interview protocol for my study taking place in the United States can be found in Appendix C. I also kept a reflective journal and recorded all pertinent information, observations, and situations within individuals' storytelling of their entrepreneurial marketing experiences in the United States operating online home-based businesses.

The interview guide consisted of 10 open-ended questions intended to motivate each interviewee to respond with in-depth pertinent information concerning each question, and which were later analyzed, synthesized, and compared to data provided by the study's other participants. The interview questions were followed by probing questions designed to elicit and tease out closely held details. The interview was in the conversational style of the narrative inquiry tradition rather than what would be a question and answer session. As a narrative researcher, to get more details about the experience being related, I kept an open stance, transparency, and actively listened to the participants, interjecting questions and non-verbal language (Clandinin, 2016).

To add a validity check to the analysis and confidence in the results, I negotiated the meaning of the narratives with the participants (Hoyt, Warbasse, & Chu, 2006). Using qualitative data analysis is more inductive; the analyst seeks to identify important categories, patterns, and relationships in the data through a process of discovery. Since there were no predefined measures or hypotheses, I used verification strategies of the qualitative data within the narrative inquiry analysis paradigm such as the process of inquiry, which is making meaning out of stories told by the study participants and

constructing meaning through narrative to maintain consistency and trustworthiness of data (Clandinin, 2016). The authenticity and substance of the stories were maintained through the narrative analysis techniques being utilized (Webster & Mertova, 2007) to gain deeper understanding of the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

For this narrative inquiry study, I gathered data from six first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States who were purposefully selected through network and criterion sampling and responded positively in the recruitment screening that they were members of the LinkedIn professional platform. I initially used six participants who agreed and committed to participate in the study and test for saturation, with the possibility of extending this number to eight in total, but which was not necessary. Data was collected over video call via Skype and I, the researcher, collected reflective field notes on the data as an observer of the interview process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Data collection continued until the six participants had been interviewed. If recruitment had resulted in too few participants, I would have sought out more participants through snowball sampling until eight were recruited and the study could reach saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation is the point at which new participants will be providing repeated similar concepts and themes in their responses as previous participants (Fusch &

Ness, 2015; Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017). Duration of data collection via interview was between 30 and 45 minutes. The data was recorded in interactive real time via digital audio recording and transcribed to text of participants' responses from those recordings.

The questions I asked included questions on demographics and specific information, as well as probing and open-ended questions. The open-ended interview questions gave participants the chance to reflect and respond in a manner that told a story and maintained the participant narrative integrity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In the case where I believed there was a need for further information, probing follow-up questions and subsequent interviews were requested. I vigilantly monitored data collection through well-documented questioning strategies and the recording of responses in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the interview process. I monitored researcher bias to minimize influence during the study (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

As the interviewer, I used an open-ended interview protocol in the tradition of the narrative inquiry method (Clandinin, 2013). If I determined there would be need for more time for the participants to tell their stories, additional time would be requested and scheduled. If less time was required for the interview, then the interview ended at the minimum allotted time, initially set to 30 minutes. I used digital audio recording and video interaction (unrecorded) to allow for precise transcription of the participants' interviews, detailed visual observation, and environmental perspectives. The audio

recording and field notes provided the opportunity for review of any of the interviews, and to cross-check the data against the analysis process. The participants each had the opportunity to review the accuracy of the data in follow-up contact through the process of member checking (Morse, 2015; Thomas, 2016). The summary of the interview was made available to the participants to have the opportunity to revise their ideas or the summary for improved accuracy in representation of their story. In the event significant changes were made during the review of the summary, a follow-up interview would be scheduled to document the revision and verify the accuracy of the information recorded in the interview (Loh, 2013), but this proved not to be necessary.

A demanding aspect of the narrative inquiry approach is that it may appear at times to be disconnected. Webster and Mertova (2007) worked to counteract disconnectedness by creating a narrative inquiry approach that is based on critical events that may span a multitude of research topics. Critical events provide structure and context to methodologies of narrative inquiry research. According to some studies, shared themes found in human research are supported and more successful through qualitative data collection based on narrative inquiry research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015; Stake, 1995). Due to the substantial amount of qualitative data needed for a study, the critical events process is considered by scholars to be highly effective, particularly in dealing with a concentrated audience (Layne & Lipponen, 2016; Mertova & Webster, 2012).

The critical events method supported and reinforced the research since it is highly detailed, positive, and may be unique in regard to the phenomena under study (Layne &

Lipponen, 2016; Mertova & Webster, 2012). Critical events are best gathered through meeting face-to-face with study participants or through video conferencing such as Skype, which studies have shown to be as close to face-to-face as possible (Nehls, Smith, & Schneider, 2015). The stories were sorted into critical events and categorized as "critical", "like", and "other" in order to process large amounts of data and become aware of the emerging themes (Mertova & Webster, 2012).

Once the qualitative data was collected, I transcribed the data, engaged member checking, proceeded with the analysis, and composed a detailed narrative for the interview with each person, including the scene, plot, character, and event (Webster & Mertova, 2007). At the end of the interview, I assured participants that the information is only for research, that their responses and identities are confidential, and that the materials collected will be destroyed after 7 years.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis plan for this study followed a two-step process. Once member checking was completed, I hand-coded the interview notes by using an Excel spreadsheet to enter the participants' transcribed responses to the questions. Once this data was entered, I codified comments and phrases that were pertinent to answering the interview questions. Continuing, I employed a holistic content analysis of the narrative data, which comprised thematic coding of production and description, cross-referencing, categorizing, and thematic linking to develop restoried data (Clandinin, 2013). To complete the second step of the data analysis process, I employed a critical events

narrative data analysis approach to the restoried data resulting from the first step of the

data analysis process. The trustworthiness of qualitative research generally is often

questioned since the concepts of validity and reliability often cannot be adequately

addressed in the quantitative sense. I applied the critical events approach to capture,

identify, and describe the events contained in stories of experiences detailing place, time,

characters, and events thoroughly (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Collecting data using this

approach provides a more holistic view of the process and investigation, enabling the

researcher to classify, categorize, and compartmentalize occurrences into critical and

supporting events. There is a significant risk to the study when critical and supporting

events are overlooked when applying traditional empirical methods. Applying the critical

events data analysis method to the primary data, I developed reportable research findings,

results, and determinations, allowing identification of critical events related to

overcoming the challenges of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating

online home-based businesses (Layne & Lipponen, 2016; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility relates to internal validity and is achieved in a study when there is

minimal researcher bias and when the researcher spends quality time in understanding the

responses of the participants. Credibility seeks to determine the extent to which research

findings could be believable and truthful, and how the researcher could capture a holistic

representation of the phenomenon being explored (Billups, 2014). Credibility is achieved

through persistent observation by the researcher to avoid or minimize bias, prolonged

engagement in understanding participants' perspectives, and member checking (Billups,

2014; Morse, 2015). I interviewed every participant via Skype for between 30 and 45

minutes. The consent of the participants was gained with the explanation that they could

leave the study if they so wished at any time. I recorded the participants' responses using

a digital audio recorder and also kept a journal for visual observations. I transcribed the

recorded interviews and then gave them back to the respective participants to ensure they

validated and confirmed the transcript as a form of member check. The verification of the

participants' responses was to prevent any form of reflexivity or researcher bias. The

study ended when similar patterns began to emerge in the responses of the participants,

after at least six participants had responded to the research questions (Sutton & Austin,

2015).

Transferability

Transferability relates to external validity and shows the degree to which the

findings of my study could be transferred to other contexts or settings with other

respondents (Burkholder et al., 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The findings of my

study may not be generalized as the primary aim of qualitative research is not a

generalization of the research finding but the depth of information (Burkholder et al.,

2016). I described the original context of my study in detail to include context accounts,

research methods, findings, and samples of data so that readers can determine the

transferability of its results to their specific context (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy,

2013). As such, I provided in-depth, rich description of my participants, their context, and the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Dependability

Dependability is related to reliability; it is the stability of research findings over time and if the same research process and data collection methods could be applied in a different context (Billups, 2014; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Dependability is based on an audit trail showing the researcher's methodological rationale, contextual data, and interpretive judgment (Houghton et al., 2013). To ensure dependability of the study, transcribed responses from the participants must be accurate before coding. I was transparent in describing the research steps I took from the start of my research study through to the development and reporting of the findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I kept accurate clear records of the research path throughout the study. If a different researcher performs a similar study with the same participants within a short time span, the second researcher will most likely get a similar result.

Confirmability

Extracting and collecting accurate and factual answers from my participants requires that I make them comfortable, demonstrate transparency, and allow them to speak freely. In achieving confirmability, the results are to be neutral, accurate, able to be corroborated, and have minimal researcher bias or reflexivity (Billups, 2014). I carefully examined my conceptual lens through the process, the explicit and implicit assumptions, and my preconceptions and values, and how they affected my research decisions in all

phases of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). After the interview, I transcribed participants' responses and made them available for their verification as a member check procedure. Participant validation of response is a valid technique to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research (Kornbluh, 2015). This confirmed that the answers are legitimately those of the participants as they were written and spoken.

Ethical Procedures

In this research, the ethical procedures justified the totality of human encounters/involvements. The justifications started from interactions to the contributions of thoughts/opinions and their evaluations, the collection of viable data from reliable sources, to various pending segments of human treatment and endeavors, which together combine to favor a person in his/her real state (Madichie & Gbadamosi, 2017). Walden University expects all research done on humans to be approved by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). As such, Walden University holds the policy, and it is a requirement to issue written permission before such research work proceeds to students researching on any topic that involves human participants.

Any research work that proceeds before receiving such written permission is in violation of this policy and is marked as unacceptable. It also makes for authenticity and trustworthiness of the results/findings to get approval that designates an acceptance of research relating to ethical involvement (Madichie & Gbadamosi, 2017). The IRB application (Approval No. 01-23-19-0105956) was completed and used to gain access to participants. The IRB is useful for the study of human subjects and it makes sure that

participants or human subjects are protected from being harmed in any way in the course of the study (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). As using human participants requires institutional permissions, including IRB approvals, I did not collect any data until I received approval from the IRB. Getting IRB approval is strictly required of students for their admission to the research center, for data collection, and for other possible prospects, such as gaining access to individual participants.

I certify that data collection activities or ethical procedures did not take place until after receiving the approval certification and the approval number (Approval No. 01-23-19-0105956) from the IRB. In putting the above expression into practice and reality, striving for a profound and accurate research outcome, I avoided any form of data collection before receiving approval from Walden University's IRB, so that it did not pose threats/biases. Ethical challenges/involvements are an act of human relationship and interaction that develop between the researcher and the participants. As such, ethical involvement in this research was highly required/unavoidable (Schram, 2006).

As the researcher and the participants continue to be physically involved, ethical procedures continue to exist through the actual procedure of the research work, bound together through common agreement and mutual contributions in which the aim of accomplishing the purpose of the research work takes priority, and as both parties go through stages of the research development together (Stake, 2010). As a researcher, it was my responsibility to record, document, and safeguard all the available and all the ongoing research materials. I have protected and will continue to protect all given

information at all times, including all issues of privacy and confidentiality (Salami, 2013). Researchers will always face ethical challenges in every stage of the research study, from designing the processes to reporting/interpretation of the research results (Poulis, Poulis, & Yamin, 2013). I ensured that all participants had freedom of speech and were free to be involved in this research study, as the research did not pose any threat, nor risk for participating, and no harm for refusal to participate. The participants had free entry and free exit, all at their individual will.

I ratified through an agreement the issue of honoring the interview invitation. The acceptance of the invitation to participate in the interview by the participant was unconditional, but the participant had to agree to abide by all the governing rules of the interview protocols before commencement of the research process. For purposes of clarity and understanding, the content of the consent form was spelled out clearly along with the interview standards and its governing rules. The rules and the requirements of the IRB were reflected and honored through the contents of the form.

The primary rule of the IRB requires the researcher to handle the data collection with all diligence and without error, and to ensure privacy control, safety, and the confidentiality of both information from the participants and their overall involvement in the research activities (Salami, 2013). Since all data collection activities and other subsequent protocols are reviewed and evaluated by the IRB for acceptance and approval, privacy control must also be applicable and applied to the overall areas of supervision.

Therefore, the IRB determines which research study/conduct satisfies the IRB specifications or the one that is worthy for acceptance/approval.

To begin an intensive research study on sensitive topics, researchers require approval/permission from the IRB. Such research might be an in-depth analysis and general description of proposed research, and of the descriptions of how such a study will create and impart solutions that will mitigate all potential risks confronting the community associated with this study. Therefore, this narrative inquiry study will have the tendency/ability to influence women entrepreneurs, improve job creation, and benefit all the research participants at large. The results ensure the validity of data collection in use and the analytical processes, and also achieve confidence in the privacy and the integrity for all areas of confidentiality, which stand in relation/agreement to all collected data/information (Salami, 2013).

Ethical norms surround issues of confidentiality in individuals' participation, especially in issues of research or in an organized interview exercise (Schram, 2006). As a result of incompetence or inappropriate acts in handling interview protocol, some indisputable facts can be found along the supervision process. There might be unintentional disclosure of participants' privacy or confidentiality of the information already in storage.

I did not under any circumstances persuade any individual or offer compensation in exchange for participating in my research work. Participants were not under any form of obligation to accept the invitation to participate in the interview protocol. The decision

to participate was the exclusive right of the participant. The interview invitation posed no threat of any kind, and there was no compensation/reward for participating or penalty for not completing participation, or for early withdrawal. There was no condition for commitment attached to the invitation for the interview; as such, the participants had free entry and free exit. If a participant had decided to withdraw early, I would have searched for a replacement adopting the same recruitment protocol.

I clearly noted in the invitation publication that all participants would be assigned a special number for identification and I committed to recording and observing all activity of the interview protocol (Poulis et al., 2013). I ensured confidentiality of all participants and their assigned identification numbers during and after the interview protocols and stored them in safe locations. I used a username and password as a protective measure to store all data information in the computer system, as well as in other computer devices to ensure adequate storage and protection mechanisms. In this way, all the associated electronic files and storage folders are stored with respective usernames and passwords. All the hard copies containing related information are stored inside a desk, securely locked for security purposes and storage. For continuous safety measures, any information or link that may expose the confidentiality of the participants was deleted from any computer that is likely to be operated by another individual.

I will only make this information available to individuals or committee members who are directly connected to my research study for review purposes. These persons may include my Dissertation Chairperson, my Committee Member, the University Research

Reviewer, or any other authorized Faculty Member/Body who has the right to review my research documentation. The data has been stored as a secured vital document for a period of 7 years, being a reasonable period of time, and then be destroyed. The hard copies will be destroyed by burning while the soft copies will be deleted from the computer.

Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, and methodology. The methodology included: participant selection logic; instrumentation; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; and, a data analysis plan. Issues of trustworthiness were then examined to explain credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical procedures.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study was to explore the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets. The central research question guiding this study was as follows: How do first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses narrate stories of entrepreneurial marketing experiences, and how do these experiences support breakout from traditionally restricted markets? I designed this question after an exhaustive review of the extant literature to identify literature gaps associated with the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses. To address these gaps, I used narrative inquiry to collect data from the personal narratives of six immigrant entrepreneurs operating online home-based businesses in the United States. Of the six, one was a woman and five were men; all were the primary business owners and currently running their businesses.

By sharing their stories, these first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs allowed me to gain valuable insight into the realities of their daily business experiences, their agency, and their entrepreneurial context. A critical event approach (Webster & Mertova, 2007) was used to capture and analyze essential events in the narratives of the participants, thereby addressing the purpose and research question for the study. The narrative data analysis methodology I used for this study was based on Connelly and

Clandinin's (1990) restorying and thematic analysis methods. When applying narrative

inquiry methodology, the researcher adopts a particular view of experience as the

phenomenon under study (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 375). I used thematic analysis

to examine the collected data to identify and record primary themes throughout

participants' stories (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2006). Thematic

coding was used to organize the restudied data in a two-stage procedure: In Stage 1, I

interpreted each single case and produced a description for each one, and in Stage 2, I

cross-checked the established categories and thematic domains linked to the solitary

narratives for comparative purposes (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002).

The study results presented in this chapter show personal and business

experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs running online home-based businesses in the

United States that have previously been undocumented in the scholarly literature. In this

chapter, I also present significant details of the research setting, along with demographic

data, data collection and analysis procedures, evidence of trustworthiness of the

qualitative data, and, finally, a composite of the study results.

Research Setting

To gather data for this narrative inquiry study, I conducted semistructured

interviews with six first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs operating online home-based

businesses in the United States. I used Skype video conferencing to conduct the

interviews with each of the participants of the study. First, I sent out a request for

interviews through various networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook, as well as to

several business support organizations and local universities. I attached the inclusion criteria to invitations as well as the informed consent letter. All individuals who agreed to participate replied that they would consent to the interview based on the interview protocol. Two of the participants I was able to recruit through the LinkedIn network, and the other four were recruited through a snowball sampling technique (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). After the participants were identified, I contacted them through emails or phone calls to confirm participation and forward to them an expression of interest form and the informed consent form. After they acknowledged consent, they forwarded to me an email with the statement "I consent"; I then requested a date and time for the interview, which were mutually agreed upon.

Demographics

Six first-generation immigrant entrepreneur online home-based business owners took part in the study. Three of the participants were from India, two were from Nigeria, and one was from Germany. The participants were knowledgeable, had experience directly related to the research topic of online home-based business, and provided rich, valuable, in-depth research data for this study. The age of their businesses ranged from a little less than 3 years to over 20 years. They were predominantly men—specifically, five men and one woman—and all were first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs running their own online home-based businesses. Two of the participants had financial and technical business partners, none of the participants currently employed family members in their business, and most of them had family members acting as mentors, support

systems, or advice givers (i.e., in support roles but not direct working relationships). Each

of the participants was highly educated; two had Bachelor of Science degrees, two had

master's degrees, one had a PhD, and one had a Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree.

Demographic data that I collected included each participant's age, ethnic group,

years in the United States, years as an entrepreneur, gender, marital status, if they had

children, type of business endeavor, location, and education level. The pseudonyms

assigned to participants were in an XY format, in such a way that X was presented by the

generic letter P for "participant" and Y was the number identifier assigned to each

participant. The full demographics are in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics and Characteristics

Participant	Age	Ethnic group	Country of origin	Yrs. in the US	Yrs. in business	Industry/ sector	Education	Current location
Participant 1	42	Igbo	Nigeria	27	20	Education	PhD	Atlanta, GA
Participant 2	24	Caucasian	Germany	6	5	Fashion design	Master's	NYC, NY
Participant 3	44	Punjabi	India	20	6	Medical services	MD	NYC, NY
Participant 4	48	Munda	India	28	7	Travel agency	Master's	Seattle, WA
Participant 5	22	Igbo	Nigeria	3	2	Network marketing	Master's	Rochester, NY
Participant 6	41	Bengali	India	27	5	Digital traffic analytics	BSc	Phoenix, AZ

Data Collection

Following IRB approval from Walden University (IRB Approval No. 01-23-19-0105956), I began and continued the data collection process until I was confident that data saturation had been achieved. Data saturation is the point at which new participants provide concepts and themes in their responses that are similar to those of previous participants (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Hennink et al., 2017). To achieve data saturation, I utilized the interview protocol used in a previous European study (for which I had obtained permission; see Appendix C). I followed proper interview protocol to enable me to ask all recruited participants the same questions.

To further enhance aspects of data saturation, I interviewed people that represented a very broad cross section of the target demographic and people who had not been previously researched in such a study (Bernard & Bernard, 2012). I was also careful not to allow potential influence due to the *shaman effect*, where individuals with specialized information on the topic of the research can dilute the data from the sample participants, and I did not engage gatekeepers during the research who might have restricted access to the participants (Bernard & Bernard, 2012). I directly communicated with each participant so as to strengthen data collection, and I reached data saturation with a sample of six participants (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The data collection occurred via audio recording using a digital recorder, and I transcribed participants' recorded responses.

Evidence of data saturation within the set of raw data manifested itself in themes that included issues of passion, need for a job, specialized knowledge, low start-up costs, independence, flexibility, and entrepreneurship. These themes appeared as participants reflected on how they ended up being entrepreneurs, explored their journey in business, and considered why they had chosen the path they were on. It has been posited that a passionate, selfish love of the work drives many entrepreneurs; their core motivators and behaviors are not typically to selflessly serve their employees and society (Shane, Locke, & Collins, 2003). Shane et al. (2003) argued that ego is a central motive driving the work ethic and passion of many business owners to achieve profits, self-interest, and success. The details of the saturation process and what was revealed are discussed thoroughly in the Study Results section.

I coordinated four tasks over a period of 62 days: I recruited the participants via LinkedIn and snowball sampling, scheduled and conducted the interviews, recorded reflective field notes, and conducted member checking by the participants of the study. To establish rigor, the data collection process had a built-in audit trail. The data collection consisted of six in-depth face-to-face interviews via Skype, and email exchanges. I conducted interviews over a period of 8 weeks beginning on February 25, 2019 and concluding on April 29, 2019.

During the period of the interviews, I maintained reflective field notes. Through the reflective field notes, I recorded my thoughts, emotions, body language, other responses, and reflections that occurred during the data collection process. Each of the

interviews was recorded using two recording devices and methods: a software recording option within the Skype video software and a physical Panasonic digital voice recorder. Some of the participants were hesitant to participate in the research; concerns of privacy, uncertainty about data usage, and lack of mutual personal experiences were expressed and addressed. As a result, many of the initially willing participants chose not to continue with setting up the interviews; many chose not to respond after reading the informed consent letter due to concerns of disclosing business practices. Many prospective participants who showed interest turned down the invitation after the first contact discussion via email on study disclosure details without giving a reason.

The participants, during each interview, described their experiences as first-generation immigrant online home-based business owners. The participants were highly educated and had no problem understanding the questions; some clarification was necessary for teasing out more information and richness in the answers. Two of the participants had heavy accents and required some clarification of answers during the interview process. The questions addressed the general experiences of these six first-generation immigrant business owners as they related to their motivation for becoming entrepreneurs, their challenges as first-generation immigrants starting and operating successful online home-based businesses in the United States from the enterprise start-up phase, their experiences dealing with U.S. regulations, institutionalized financial barriers, and racial bias, from the perspective of their individual cultural lens. Each participant shared stories of failure, financial restrictions, and challenges in leading the business past

the 2-year sustainability mark. Many of these experiences, learnings, and insights may help support other first-generation immigrants in creating successful online home-based businesses in the United States.

Initial Contact

I recruited participants by publishing a request on LinkedIn, Facebook, university websites, and other social networking platforms. The criteria for recruitment for potential participants for this study applied to first-generation adult immigrants running successful small to medium-sized home-based online businesses, 2 or more years after start-up within the United States, who possessed well-developed attitudes and opinions regarding entrepreneurial marketing experiences of online home-based businesses and were willing to provide in-depth information on the phenomena under study. The participants were informed of the criteria and selection process through emails or text messages, to which they responded by indicating that they fulfilled the criteria and stating "I consent."

Interviews

On receiving positive feedback on the criteria and their agreement to be part of the study, I emailed the prospective participants the expression of interest form and the informed consent form for their review using my Walden University email. One participant requested to use the Zoom conferencing software method rather than the recommended Skype method; I was able to get him a Skype ID so that we could use the recommended software and set up the interviews. I made follow-up calls/visits to participants for reconfirmation of their intention to participate in the study and to

schedule a date for each interview; each of the participants was very flexible and amenable. Once I had received positive responses from six of the potential participants, which was my minimum for this study, I scheduled interview times and dates with each of them. The interviews were scheduled at the discretion of the participants and were conducted in private settings, including the participants' homes or offices, at the convenience of each individual interviewee.

All of the interviews were conducted successfully without issues; the questions were asked as outlined in Appendix C in order to adhere to a previous study interview protocol. Some of the participants' responses elicited follow-up questions or clarification from me due to incomplete responses or accents. I did not encounter any difficulties, transcription problems, or technical issues that resulted in alterations or impediments regarding the remainder of my data collection process. All of the audio recordings were of high enough quality that no answers were unintelligible and transcription was smooth and without identified errors.

Reflective Field Notes and Journaling

Reflective field notes and journaling were part of the research method because these tools give a researcher the opportunity to question the method, framework, and assumptions used throughout the research process (Baskarada, 2014; Kendall & Halliday, 2014; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). Additionally, keeping reflective field notes affords researchers the opportunity to reflect on their thoughts, experiences, and feelings, which is a visible aspect of the research process (Baskarada, 2014; Kendall & Halliday, 2014;

Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). Through reflective field notes and journaling, a researcher can ruminate on the circumstances that led to the feelings, thoughts, and experiences (Applebaum, 2014; Cumming-Potvin, 2013).

Researchers recognize that self-analysis and reflection are critically important aspects of field research, as biases can be mitigated through journaling within the research process (Rhodes, Dawson, Kelly, & Renshall, 2013; Smith & Noble, 2014). To address researcher bias and reflexivity, I kept a journal to minimize the influences of my own bias on the results. For researchers, having a firm understanding of their influences on the results, mitigating those influences, and having self-awareness all reduce unintentional biases in the results. Using these methods, researchers can understand that their own personality, perspectives, and experiences may influence the results or guide discussions with participants, which may aid them in ensuring that the integrity of the process of making meaning of the phenomena under study is maintained (Berger, 2013; Cumming-Potvin, 2013).

Recording reflective notes, journaling the process, and keeping check on my own perspectives allowed for a very transparent and in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences as told to me in the interviews. My ability to tease out the nuances and ask probing questions added richness and depth to the responses. Allowing each individual to choose their own environment for the interview allowed for a comfortable and familiar environment both at my end and the participant's for each of us to have a distraction-free interaction that was informal yet professional and allowed for

observations of gestures and intonation, adding to my conviction that I had captured

multiple themes associated with the study (Denham & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Lopez-

Dicastillo & Belintxon, 2014; Mackellar, 2013).

I recorded all of the methods, processes, interactions, and interviews involved in

securing the data for this study. I took physical notes of all interviewees' tones,

behaviors, attitudes, and non-verbal communication in addition to the digital audio and

video recordings of the interviews. In preparation for the interviews I ensured that I

would not be disturbed; I asked that they have the same level of commitment and

removed all sources of distractions during the interviews. Although I did take some brief

notes during the interviews, I confined my more in-depth journaling and notes to until

after conclusion of the interviews while the material was still fresh in my memory. This is

a critical skill to have since journaling and other note taking should not be a distraction to

the sharing of the stories being related in real time, ensuring that the researcher and the

participant are both fully engaged.

Member Checking

Member checking is a way of ensuring trustworthiness, quality, and credibility in

research studies involving participant interviews (Reilly, 2013). The participants had the

opportunity to review the accuracy of the data through the process of member checking

(Billups, 2014; Morse, 2015; Thomas, 2016). The transcripts of the interviews were made

available via emails within 72 hours of the interviews to the respective participants for

review and verification, giving them the opportunity to revise their ideas to attest to the

true and accurate representation of their stories as transcribed. Each of the participants declined to comment on or change the transcripts supplied within the agreed upon time frame. Through this process, the accuracy, quality, and credibility of data was ensured (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). All participants expressed their satisfaction with the transcriptions as they reflected the thoughts and experiences that they shared via the Skype interview process.

Data Analysis

Narrative data analyses give the researcher a window into the "critical moments" in a study participant's life; three-dimensional narrative inquiry examines events that caused an individual's life to change (Webster & Mertova, 2007). I started the data analysis strategy at the start of the project to aid in defining the study's purpose and research questions. A fundamental element of narrative inquiry is the understanding of how the researcher uses narrative, visual forms, and observation to represent, interpret, and tell the participants' stories in the research text. The instrument I used in gathering the primary data, which is the narratives of experiences of the study participants, was the semistructured interview. In any narrative inquiry study, the researcher needs to consider the many choices about the best approach to data analysis and provide a clear rationale for which approach will be used. It is imperative that researchers articulate their worldview, influence, and reasons for applying the narrative analysis procedures they employ (Ison, Cusick, & Bye, 2014).

To address the subject of rigor in the study, Boyatzis (1998) posited that using a flexible and multifaceted approach is viable for qualitative studies of this type. The application of thematic analysis as used in this study allowed me the flexibility to apply the chosen paradigms to the material under analysis (King, 2004). The approach selected leveraged prior research by Anwar and Daniel (2016a, 2016b) using inductive codes, theory-driven codes, and prior research-driven codification.

I utilized codification derived from the researched literature related to theory-driven codes; I also identified inductive codes from analysis of the collected data and journal and field notes (Sale & Thielke, 2018). From the work of Anwar and Daniel (2016a) and related literature I was able to identify several prior-research–driven codes to frame the study analysis. Thematic approaches as used in this study offer significant latitude and flexibility from highly structured theoretical approaches when applying qualitative research like narrative inquiry (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). By applying and using these identified codes, I discovered recognized patterns and themes within the data as they applied to the analysis process (Boyatzis, 1998).

After each interview, I transcribed the audio file, and created a detailed narrative written summary of each participant's account of the business challenges of first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States through the lens of their daily business experiences, and their experiences with entrepreneurial marketing to breakout of traditional markets. When researchers doing narrative inquiry studies retell the story of the participants, including the rich details of the setting, interpretations, nuanced minutia

of the interactions are included to share the context of the interview about the

participant's personal experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin,

1990, 2006; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Qualitative data consists of spoken words, text, transcriptions, observations,

pictures, field notes, journals, pictures, and symbols (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Qualitative data analysis refers to the processes and procedures that are used to analyze

the data from in-depth research studies in order to derive a representation of the

researcher's interpretation and retelling of the lived experiences of the study participants

(Clandinin, 2016). The goal is to summarize a connection, explanation, or understanding

between participants, uncovering themes within the data collected. Narrative data

analysis typically occurs simultaneously with the data collection, and analysis reveals the

connections and underlying themes being sought.

The first step of the narrative data analysis for the interview data collected in this

study was based on Clandinin and Connelly's (1987) restorying and thematic analysis

process. Thematic coding as applied to restoried data is a two-stage process: production

and description; and cross-referencing, categorizing, and thematic linking for

comparative purposes (Clandinin, 2016). Practical and contextual data discovered in the

process of retelling stories offer new possibilities when the stories are recalled by the

individual who is sharing them (Caine, Estefan, & Clandinin, 2014). During this process

of retelling, participants share not only their daily life experiences but also define their

vulnerabilities and uncertainties. The narrative inquiry method was the first relational

research methodology that was transactional in nature between the investigator and the participants (Clandinin, Caine, & Lessard, 2018). Thematic analysis of interview transcripts revealed patterns that were combined into five conceptual categories for answering the central research question. The structural analysis of the narrative data enabled the focused material to be seen clearly in the text (Saleh, Menon, & Clandinin, 2014). Through this approach, I re-confirmed the sub-themes and five major conceptual categories. The five conceptual categories are grounded in the conceptual framework and 18 reformulated themes gleaned from the critical events data analysis.

Conceptual Category: Experiences of immigrant online entrepreneurs with market entry

Themes: 1) the desire to pursue digital entrepreneurship; 2) the ability to identify an online market opportunity; 3) low start-up costs

Conceptual Category: Resources accessible to immigrant entrepreneurs to pursue postindustrial opportunities

Themes: 1) family support; 2) access to finance; 3) specialized knowledge in business planning; 4) technology savvy

Conceptual Category: Experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs with breakout from traditionally restricted markets to enter high-growth sectors

Themes: 1) higher education and training; 2) planning for breakout from traditionally restricted markets; 3) pursuing entry into high-growth sectors

Conceptual Category: <u>Experiences of immigrant online entrepreneurs with entrepreneurial marketing activities</u>

Theme: 1) organized entrepreneurial marketing plan; 2) flexibility in planning moves within the digital marketplace; 3) business sustainability through online entrepreneurial marketing

Conceptual Category: <u>Themes from immigrant digital entrepreneurs' narratives of daily business experiences</u>

Themes: 1) demographic age group immersed in the Internet; 2) ethnic culture influences; 3) goal to succeed in the U.S. market; 4) digital entrepreneurship strengthens ethnic market reach within the US; 5) digital identity leads to internationalization of online business

The 18 themes emerging from the restorying and thematic analysis process were the foundation for interpreting the answers to the central research question.

The second phase of the data analysis process was accomplished by utilizing a critical event narrative analysis model (Sharp, Bye, & Cusick, 2018). The restoried events in participants' narratives were then distinguished as *critical*, *like*, or *other*. A *critical* event has a major impact on people involved and is characterized as an event that has a unique defining and confirmatory nature. An event such as this is one that changed the participant's perception. *Critical* events can only be identified after the event happened in an unplanned and unstructured manner (Webster & Mertova, 2007). A *like* event is comparable, and similar to a *critical* event, but it does not have the same unique effect as

the *critical* event. A situation that is somewhat similar possibly highlights or confirms the *critical* event. *Like* events are different, and not as profound as *critical* events. Any other information such as background, that is not related to *critical* or *like* events, is often considered *other* events in critical event analysis and is usually just descriptive of the *critical* or *like* event (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Table 2 is a representation of how the themes that shared similar characteristics were combined into a single category. The interpretations and themes were verified continually during data collection and the five conceptual categories were determined based on the conceptual framework: Kloosterman's (2010) concept of *postindustrial opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs*; and Anwar and Daniel's (2016a) concept of *entrepreneurial marketing in online home-based businesses*. This technique helps to address the possible methodological limitations described by Riessman (2008) and Webster and Mertova (2007) as the tendency to efface the participants.

The critical event approach used in data analysis supports the trustworthiness of data because of its inherent characteristics of openness and transparency in capturing and describing events contained in participants' stories of daily experience (Webster & Mertova, 2007). This feature is demonstrated through a co-construction of meanings, themes, and images (with participants), which eventually guide the interpretations of stories (Thomas, 2012). This element of data analysis is summarized in Table 2 in the construction of 18 reformulated themes gleaned from the critical events data analysis and categorized by conceptual category to answer the study's central research question.

Usually, qualitative researchers draw on triangulation for this purpose (Jack & Raturi,

2006). Webster and Mertova (2007), however, indicated triangulation is not feasible in

story-based studies utilizing the narrative inquiry design.

Table 2

Coding and Theme Examples

Participant	Interview excerpt from participant narratives	Conceptual category	Reformulated theme
Participant 1	"When I started my business I liked that I could create a digital identity that I could mold to best engage my target market, I liked it because half of those people I'm sure if they saw me might not speak to me, if they came to my store, may not like my accent, or maybe my race, but online they don't care who I am, they just buy what they need. If they saw value in my products they would buy it without and prejudice towards my demeanor or presence or accent. I do not speak Chinese for instance and selling to Asia I would not be a very good salesman. Google clicks does not need any inventory or store front so that's why I have a home-based business, I could not afford to rent a store, or file all the paperwork".	<u>Experiences of immigrant online entrepreneurs with market entry</u>	1) the desire to pursue digital entrepreneurship; 2) the ability to identify an online market opportunity; 3) low start-up costs
Participant 2	"So I realized that I was much more fortunate to live in a large city in America, New York City, and from that aspect my opportunities were much more rich and diverse than many other immigrants to the US. I felt like I could give back to society through my efforts and knowledge, this would also help to improve my resume, my reputation in business as well as create value for myself. My business was to sell clothing online and use my support network, my Mother, Sister and others have experience I could draw on beginning with Instagram as a platform. Using Instagram, and basically making a few designs from friends and friends back home to get these Photoshop ready, the designs ready. Basically started with paper and then contacted a friend to do the designs for me, and then got the first t-shirts out there".	<u>Resources accessible to immigrant entrepreneurs to pursue postindustrial opportunities</u>	1) family support; 2) access to finance; 3) specialized knowledge in business planning; 4) technology savvy

(*table continues*)

Participant	Interview excerpt from participant narratives	Conceptual category	Reformulated theme
Participant 3	"We pondered upon the idea what needs to be done. But the business plan kind of took shape with the impulse of the other partners before we founded this company. And the main reason why we both thought that this was necessary was when I was finishing my residency close to 2008, we had something called the electronic medical records and that had just started. Hospitals were implementing it in the hospital but they did not have it as an outpatient and they asked a team of residents and fellows to come up with solutions. What they think will best work for the hospital. They were implementing it as an in-patient at that time. I was working in New York for the first two years of my residency and the hospitals there had in-patient inter-electronic medical records already set up. But they had not done it for the outpatient and they were implementing it then there. I had an advantage of knowing how other hospitals are working and implementing it and what are the challenges they faced. I think our interest in making the system more efficient kind of started there. But then of course, it took years before we thought that this is something we could do and want to so".	<u>Experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs with breakout from traditionally restricted markets to enter high-growth sectors</u>	1) higher education and training; 2) planning for breakout from traditionally restricted markets; 3) pursuing entry into high-growth sectors;
Participant 4	The first few months, even the first few years, it was entirely a cost thing. Since there was just, in the beginning they were just the two of us. And my business partner was in the Bay area in Palo Alto and I was in Seattle then it just grew from there. We talked sooner or later we may consider consolidation yet our market is digital and flexible. That never seemed to happen, because we were able to manage and find the right people worldwide 24/7. And it actually helped us because building a team of the caliber that we have, building that either in Seattle or in San Francisco would have been pretty expensive. And for the first few years since we were funding the company out of our savings, it helped that we were able to do it on a shoestring budget, and still build a very high caliber team. We learned how to work remotely, we were able to do it at a fraction of the cost while building our brand online digitally. I could be here in Seattle, my partner could be anywhere".	<u>Experiences of immigrant online entrepreneurs with entrepreneurial marketing activities</u>	1) organized entrepreneurial marketing plan; 2) flexibility in planning moves within the digital marketplace; 3) business sustainability through online entrepreneurial marketing

(*table continues*)

Participant	Interview excerpt from participant narratives	Conceptual category	Reformulated theme
Participant 5	Since I was (am) a college student, I knew the baggage of forming a traditional business, I could not afford the infrastructures required. I saw my dad doing his more traditional store front business in Nigeria. I saw that investment took from him not only financially but the time, energy, stress and long hours associated. I wasn't impressed with his experiences of wanting a traditional business but I had example to compare (a poor one). He had to sell a portion of our land at one point to keep the business afloat. He lost over ten pounds, he was irritable at times and always talked about work and with all of that, three years after he had to close out his business. I wasn't impressed with that kind of industrial age kind of business where I had to employ people and care for them as well as myself. I saw the world economies and markets change to more like online businesses and eCommerce flexible exchanges and electronic transactions. My idea of business was, as a college student inspired enough by the question of the type of business, it had to be following more like an eCommerce business that I could expand from my estate and track online how I'm doing. The allure of fast, mobile and flexible interactions with customers appealed to me. That's why I decided to set up a business I could work from my house, home based. Online business in general to have more flexibility in my schedule and keep the costs down".	Themes from immigrant digital entrepreneurs' narratives of daily business experiences	(*table continues*)

(*table continues*)

Participant	Interview excerpt from participant narratives	Conceptual category	Reformulated theme
Participant 6	As far as my background in the influence on a business, I think it's just a work ethic. If you asked the people that worked with me and my employees, they also don't tell you my earliest employees get up around 4:00 AM in the morning and I will be up with them, talking to them in the morning, getting to get them the game plan ready and what we want to do. Then my people are up the latest as early up until 10 PM and they will also tell you that I'm also up until 10 PM. We're doing that shift and they had their work schedules to fit their customer needs in an online international business endeavor, so we get up and do what is necessary when it is necessary. Basically it's a non-stop endeavor which is, you're going to go, only your own company gives, you're the hardworking employee of the company. You have the freedom to set your own schedule and create your digital identity, you have to task yourself, you take a break as other people do to fit their waking international schedules. My background in India taught me that the day you get to work your ass off if you want to be where you want to be, then it's up to you to make it happen. The successes you get to deal with it and get the benefits of the successes. My cultural background from India definitely influences my behaviors to be successful in the US, it has influence because you take responsibility for everything that's out there".	Themes from immigrant digital entrepreneurs' narratives of daily business experiences	1) demographic age group immersed in the Internet; 2) ethnic culture influences; 3) goal to succeed in the U.S. market; 4) digital entrepreneurship strengthens ethnic market reach within the US; 5) digital identity leads to internationalization of online business

As previously noted, each of the reformulated themes belong to their respective conceptual categories (see Table 2). The frequency of occurrence varied for several themes that were presented in the data analysis, with some themes more prominent than others. These themes will be discussed in detail in the Study Results section of this chapter. The following is a brief description of each of the 18 reformulated themes.

The desire to pursue digital entrepreneurship. This theme describes the drive and natural inclination to own an online business.

The ability to identify an online market opportunity. This theme describes the aptitude and acumen to recognize an opportunity structure of technology, demand for the product or service, production-related factors, and the institutional framework that is critical to online business success.

Low start-up costs. This theme describes the significantly lower structural and start-up costs associated with operating an online business versus a bricks and mortar retailer, including financial resource access, market access, and government regulations.

Family support. This theme describes the roles played by family members related to emotional, financial, technical, or direct business endeavor support for the entrepreneur.

Access to finance. This theme describes how the entrepreneurs can access critical start-up financial services, including credit, deposit, payment, insurance, and other risk management services to support their enterprise and promote ongoing growth opportunity.

Specialized knowledge in business planning. This theme describes the importance of access to an extensive pool of knowledge, understanding of customers' needs, employee skills, employee experience, marketing, and the online business environment.

Technology savvy. This theme describes the entrepreneur's level of knowledge, experience, proficiency, or grasp of the use of modern technology, especially related to computers, e-marketing, and the Internet.

Higher education and training. This theme describes various types of education given in postsecondary institutions of learning, experiential development, or direct mentoring, related to furthering an individual's intellectual capability and typically resulting in a named degree, recognition, diploma, or certificate of higher education.

Planning for breakout from traditionally restricted markets. This theme describes the process an entrepreneur uses as a strategic business tool to discover, evaluate, organize, examine opportunities, politics, technology, and social norms, and track macro-economic factors that can be used to predict their business plans currently and in the future outside of the scope of traditional ethnic markets.

Pursuing entry into high-growth sectors. This theme describes the desire and strategy to focus on high-growth business sectors since growth is paramount to sustainability and greater returns; a typical high-growth company offers a return to shareholders five times greater than medium-growth companies.

Organized entrepreneurial marketing plan. This theme describes dynamic steps the entrepreneur plans to take in identifying recognized opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers utilizing innovative methods to risk management, resource leveraging, and value creation.

Flexibility in planning moves within the digital marketplace. This theme describes how thriving online businesses require a flexible, change-embracing, and agile strategic planning as they implement effective sequential marketing solutions to meet the constantly evolving demands of customers.

Business sustainability through online entrepreneurial marketing. This theme describes how entrepreneurs are always pursuing market opportunities through applying constant innovation, reacting to changing customers' needs and wants in cheaper, faster, new, and better ways resulting in customer acquisition and retention.

Demographic age group immersed in the Internet. This theme describes how various demographic groups can be categorized by age; young adults, college graduates, and those from high-income households show near-ubiquitous Internet usage while for low-income or elderly it is significantly lower.

Ethnic culture influences. This theme describes the role that background and ethnic group values and cultural influences plays in how immigrants use their experiences and social networks to start entrepreneurial endeavors.

Goal to succeed in the U.S. market. This theme describes how immigrant entrepreneurs' primary desire is to create supplemental income and have flexible schedules while taking advantage of an emerging opportunity in the U.S. market.

Digital entrepreneurship strengthens ethnic market reach within the United States. This theme describes how creating an online persona and digital identity can reduce racial bias and institutional bias, allowing for greater access to the market by ethnic business owners within the United States.

Digital identity leads to internationalization of online business. This theme describes how online digital business models can be customized and merged depending on the type, customer market, products, and services of the company's online technology trading platforms to offer the buying or selling experience to its international customers.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility was achieved through my persistent observation of the audit trail to minimize bias, and through member checking (Billups, 2014; Morse, 2015). I met with every participant in person or on Skype for 30 to 45 minutes. I recorded the participants' responses using a digital audio recorder and also kept a journal for visual observations. I transcribed the recorded interviews and then gave them back to the respective participants to conduct member check. I ensured data saturation to achieve research quality and validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Hennink et al., 2017). The study ended when similar

patterns began to emerge in the responses of the participants after at least six participants had responded to the research questions (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Transferability

Transferability relates to external validity and shows the degree to which the findings of my study could be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents (Burkholder et al., 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The findings of my study may not be generalized as the primary aim of qualitative research is not a generalization of the research finding but the depth of information (Burkholder et al., 2016). I clearly documented the various research steps taken to report the findings of the study. I kept a record of the research path I took throughout the study, the decisions taken, and the process of data evaluation and management. As such, I provided in-depth, rich descriptions of my participants, their context, and the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Dependability

Dependability is based on an audit trail showing the researcher's methodological rationale, contextual data, and interpretive judgment (Houghton et al., 2013). I was transparent in describing the research steps I took from the start of my research study through to the development and reporting of the findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I kept an accurate clear record of the study's audit trail. Such careful description of the audit trail allows for accurate replication of the study by future researchers.

Confirmability

To get valuable feedback and responses from research participants, I recognized

that establishing rapport must be developed so that participants are comfortable sharing

the most critical events in their stories without the use of any bribery or monetary

offerings. To address confirmability, the results are accurate, neutral, and able to be

corroborated, and have minimal reflexivity or researcher bias (Billups, 2014). I have

examined my study's data to notice convergence and divergence of results with explicit

and implicit assumptions within the theoretical foundations of my conceptual framework,

a process adding confirmability to my study results (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). After the

interviews, I transcribed the six participants' stories of experience and made them

available for their verification as a member check procedure. This information was later

confirmed through review of the methods used to collect the research (Kornbluh, 2015).

Study Results

The central research question was developed to provide answers within the

context of the empirical setting and to extend theory by utilizing the narrative inquiry

design (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). Extension studies, such as the present study, not only

provide replication evidence but also extend the results of prior studies in novel

theoretical directions (Bonett, 2012). I utilized the narrative inquiry method to meet the

purpose of the study and collect data through storytelling from first-generation immigrant

entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses. To ensure

trustworthiness of data, a two-stage data analysis process was used. The first was based

on Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) restorying and thematic analysis methods and Clandinin and Connelly's (1987) three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. This approach involves writing about: (a) the personal and social (the interaction); (b) the past, present, and future (continuity); and, (c) the place (situation) to strengthen the research design and confidence in the research results. I compiled and analyzed the participants' responses in a written detailed narrative covering the scene, plot, character, and events (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Restorying was the method I used at this initial stage of the analysis through the gathering of data, analysis of the story (e.g., time, place, plot, and scene), and then rewriting of the data (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006). The second stage of the data analysis was implementing the critical events narrative analysis approach (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Analyzing each individual participant's critical events within the narrative led to the revelation of themes found in paying close attention to the details and descriptions that provided more specific information as to the setting and/or structure of the experiences shared by the participant (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The study results presented in this chapter reveal how first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses were provided with a platform to voice their own personal and business experiences previously undocumented in the scholarly literature. By recording the stories and narratives of the study participants, entrepreneurial leaders, I have sought to offer a deeper understanding about the business and entrepreneurial marketing practices in online home-based

businesses owned by immigrant entrepreneurs (Anwar & Daniel, 2015). The written

narratives contained a scene and a plot, which included sub-sketches describing the key

characters as provided by the participants' stories, in addition to spaces and major events

(Clandinin, 2016; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Researchers also refer to the scene and

plot as place and event, positing that these terms convey a more general meaning. These

stories conveyed the critical events that emerged from actual everyday events occurring

in the lives of the participants, whose narratives exemplified the complex nature of

human interaction (Clandinin, 2016; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Supported by the key insights from the in-depth interviews, the following themes

are presented, intermixed with the participants' own storytelling voices in response to the

central research question.

The Desire to Pursue Digital Entrepreneurship

Participants' narratives revealed their drive and natural inclination to own an

online business. Researchers and scholars recognize that digital entrepreneurship grows

as Internet access increases, and each of the participants intentionally capitalized on this

phenomenon. The participants stated:

> Because I wanted to see if what I learned at school made sense. I wanted to see if
>
> I could turn knowledge into income. I wanted to see if my investment in
>
> knowledge of information systems was just a joke or a fad, or if it was real. And I
>
> hope to be a millionaire someday but I'm not there yet but I'm bringing some
>
> change in as residual income, and it's a good feeling when you realize a stream of

international revenue from China or straight from people you don't know or may not like you, just a joke. Meaning people that may not like your appearance, accent or culture, since they do not see me they just purchase the product or service. That's why I started my online business, to see if my IT training could work to make me successful and if I could make some money. (Participant #1)

I saw the world economies and markets change to more like online businesses and eCommerce flexible exchanges and electronic transactions. My idea of business was, as a college student inspired enough by the question of the type of business, it had to be following more like an eCommerce business that I could expand from my estate and track online how I'm doing the revenue and all of that. The allure of fast, mobile and flexible interactions with customers appealed to me. That's why I decided to set up a business I could work from my house, home based. Online business in general to have more flexibility in my schedule and keep the costs down. (Participant #5)

It was an online business and it allowed me to explore how a business could be to set up and running a business that was home based and online, the risk for me was very low. It just sort of came my way at a time that fit my desire to have my own business and not work for others. (Participant #6)

The Ability to Identify an Online Market Opportunity

Participants' narratives revealed their aptitude and acumen to recognize an online business opportunity and demand for the product or service. Each of the participants

expressed awareness and aptitude for listening to their current and potential customers, evaluating the competition, and following new industry trends and insights. The participants stated:

> The benefit is I'm at home, I have a good work life balance and people are buying at all times 24/7 and the challenge is how to market, what products to offer, how to structure the site to get the most traffic. I am always thinking what content should I put in, design of the site, what would make people interested in looking for my key words, meta data that help them to find my site and content. Where do I place my products on the website, are some of the challenges for me and I am always learning and adapting to what is working. (Participant #1)
>
> Like I said, it's a different kind of business model (digital marketing) that I got to learn about that's very standard here in the United States, that's been a success to a lot of people who don't typically have a super business idea, online and home-based entrepreneurs can rapidly adapt to customer needs and market opportunities. We can find leverage using this platform over retail or traditional methods. (Participant #5)
>
> So the approach and strategy of running and developing my business was fairly well developed as working for others taught me those elements of my business, I saw how they worked and should work. I was already doing because I was email marketer providing traffic for this company I worked for many years prior to doing my own businesses. (Participant #6)

Low Start-Up Costs

Participants' narratives revealed significantly lower structural and start-up costs associated with operating an online business versus a bricks and mortar retailer, including financial resource access, market access, and government regulations. Each of the participants commented that they self-started their businesses and leveraged their profits to grow their business incrementally without large financial commitments, thereby lowering risk. The participants stated:

> I could not afford to rent a store, or file all the paperwork, I was a student and I was top in information systems, strategy and collaboration was my concentration which was my purpose of information systems studies that we discussed. The focus was the first profitability of informant systems and online connecting for flexibility, speed and cost. So, it was stupid for me to go purchase retail property or fixed assets. (Participant #1)

> The allure of fast, mobile and flexible interactions with customers appealed to me. That's why I decided to set up a business I could work from my house, home based. Online business in general to have more flexibility in my schedule and keep the costs down. (Participant #5)

Participant #4 noted: "We learned how to work remotely. And we were able to do it at a fraction of the cost while building our brand online digitally."

Family Support

Participants' narratives revealed the roles played by family members related to emotional, financial technical, or direct business endeavor support for the entrepreneur. Each of the participants indicated that family support, by way of emotional, financial, and logistical support, mentorship or technology skills, supported their individual successes. The participants stated:

> When it comes to suggestions, yes, because I run it by them and they give me suggestions, wife especially, apart from nagging that I'm on the computer too long, especially when I just started. She thought I was on the computer for too long cause I wasn't spending time with the kids, which is justified, but it's the part of the business operation, nagging. When it comes to time, family is especially important. When I go for deliveries, and I have to think, get the business mail, taking care of errands for sure. There was a time I wasn't employed, my wife was my financial support, especially when printing books. So, yes, directly, family and friends are involved in terms of business advice, emotional support, financial and time management. (Participant #1)
>
> I could have my family and my business as well, it fits our structure of having a high level of travel while maintaining a business presence. It gives us a great family–life balance and fulfills my goals as a business owner to help others. The kids were in the pool, but guess what? Mom and Dad were working on Mundai. So we would take a break, get into the pool and get out and do something. But

they enjoy it and I think they're growing up to see how a family business is run.

My husband is very supportive, my kids do what they can. It's a good

environment, it's my oldest daughter who's nine. Actually, last year, she helped us

with the short video and the video was based on how easy it is to open up a

Mundai account, a membership and to store medical records. (Participant #3)

I think... this would not be possible if my wife wasn't taking care of the rest of our

life. So I think more she is sort of so to speak the silent or the invisible partner.

And same but my co-founder's wife. They take care of everything else so that we

can focus 100% of our attention to our business. And some of our friends, close

friends in the network are also helping us. And some of them are investors. That's

a much smaller relationship, but the most important family contribution as from

immediate family. Support emotionally, structurally it's good to have a partner

you can rely on. And my Dad too, he later in his career he started a business in

India. And so just, and he was an entrepreneur too. So being able to bounce ideas

off of him, and get some inspiration, get advice from him is also valuable. He was

a great mentor and sounding board for my business. (Participant #4)

Access to Finance

Participants' narratives revealed how the entrepreneurs can access critical start-up

financial services, including credit, deposit, payment, insurance, and other risk

management services to support their enterprise and promote ongoing growth

opportunity. The participants noted potential obstacles and solutions experienced in their

funding processes, including knowledge of opportunities, trust issues, and risk of
borrowed capital. The participants stated:

> About three years ago we raised a one round of investment to about $3 million.
> And as I said, Make My Trip was the lead investor. When we raised funding, our
> lead investor is the largest travel company in India. So that was easy to approach,
> easy to connect with. And they also felt pretty comfortable that even though they
> were investing a lot of money from India into the United States, they felt
> comfortable with us. (Participant #4)
>
> It was about the money investment initially; I did not have much to begin my
> business and doing an online home-based business seemed the best and only way.
> I began my business in late 2016 so just over two years of operation. I thought the
> only way to start a business is by having huge loans. I mean that's how I saw my
> Dad do it, huge loans. I had to find investors to invest in your stock. The finances
> hasn't been easiest for me, but I know it's just a matter of time, I have the burden
> of all my expenses all by myself. I can figure out sort of various opportunities
> available to start a business from ground zero as long as I guess you had the will
> and the drive to do it incrementally. (Participant #5)
>
> Everything I have ever done, I have done with the capital that we've always had.
> If I don't have the capital for it, I tend to wait until we had the resources or the
> money for me to go buy it out right and we own it with no other partners or
> investors. Leveraging each acquisition and then moving up the business ladder in

size, scope and market share is how we are doing it. I don't believe it's getting to a

point that I will start using some external funding. It's just the need hasn't come up

yet right now. So I could start using external funding, I just have it as an

opportunity or future need at this point. (Participant #6)

Specialized Knowledge in Business Planning

Participants' narratives revealed the importance of access to an extensive pool of

knowledge, understanding of customers' needs, employee skills, employee experience,

marketing, and the online business environment. Using knowledge of online business

environments is similar to traditional business planning; it is about applying useful and

important knowledge that already exists in your business. The participants used many

differing methods to build specialized knowledge in business planning: some were self-

designed, some leveraged existing models, some utilized employee experience, others

hired the expertise. The main issue on this theme noted by participants is to harness this

knowledge in a coherent and productive way to move the business forward. The

participants stated:

I wanted to see if what I learned at school made sense. I wanted to see if I could

turn knowledge into income. I wanted to see if my investment in knowledge of

information systems was just a joke or a fad, or if it was real. That's why I started

my online business, to see if my IT training and education could work to make me

successful and if I could make some money. (Participant #1)

When we started there with just the two of us. And we relied a lot on a network for advice and connections. And we relied on them a lot to help recruit the first few key members of the team. And most of our recruiting has been done... we're just continuing to build contacts within our friends and family network or industry or professional network, and keep finding the right people. We're about 30 people, so clearly and we still continue to grow. We still need a lot more resources and a lot more skills (Marketing and eCommerce) if we have to realize our vision. But the challenge is that we want to maintain the high caliber team and a small lean team targeting the high value employees. So we continue to be selective about how we recruit. (Participant #4)

One thing I still do right now, I read, a lot. I would say there is any online business since they can be unique, I had limited skills in the beginning. You see, most of my day, or not most of my day, at least 3 to 4 hours a day I still spend researching and reading. It might not even has to do with business, it just reading and accumulating knowledge as much as you can. I am one of those guys that loves to read about a subject in Wikipedia, then link to another topic and keep on going. Once you start reading about something, that means Oh, this is interesting, then you go to next page and you just start reading and reading then acquiring more knowledge. (Participant #6)

Technology Savvy

Participants' narratives revealed the immigrant entrepreneurs' level of knowledge, experience, proficiency, or grasp of the use of modern technology, especially related to computers, e-marketing, and the Internet, needs to be aligned to the business. Online businesses are strategically required to have a high level of technology capability. Business start-ups are a challenge for both first-time and experienced entrepreneurs. Operating an online business is a complex undertaking with diverse requirements including building a technology infrastructure that supports both connectivity and flexibility. Capital is often limited during start-ups, so entrepreneurs sometimes have to be creative, especially when it comes to investing in expensive technologies. The participants stated:

But it is much easier even today to start a new business and some of the good people available to us in our networks, the access to new technology and access to really smart people who know what they're doing. Because running a business, I don't think is just one person, with one's family it is a piece of cake. You need to have a good team and coming here definitely gave me that opportunity to meet these people. I had no background of developing a software. So we hired an acquaintance, Deli Masopowa as our technology lead and she's worked in several countries in the past mainly United States because she's based here. But that's definitely helped us get the right people on board. So getting the business plan in was one thing but getting the right developers who would put our vision into a

practical page, a website. And the flow of website, that definitely was not one person's ... or someone can do it alone. It has to be with a good team. (Participant #3)

Yeah, our passion to share what we loved sort of grew from what we loved doing (travel). It helped that we had the technology background in terms of the skillset, our strengths were on the technology side. And we chose an industry where that would give us a very compelling advantage. For example, the problem we picked, there are four or five companies in the world who can even attempt that problem. And because the technology skills required are so deep that most companies don't have that kind of skillset on their payroll. Going online made the most sense based on our technology experiences and background to reach customers within our market. That we found a gap in the industry that the industry leaders, we're not innovating in that space. Nothing important in that direction had happened for last 10 years or so. It also helped that it was a big established industry that we could find a gap in. (Participant #4)

Last year I hired my brother as the head of technology in one of my companies to run software side of operations. He has a master's in the USC in computer science, he is very intelligent and I knew I could trust him. My brother is a very talented individual, very intelligent and knows exactly how to do everything really good. (Participant #6)

Higher Education and Training

Participants' narratives revealed they come from a generation of immigrant entrepreneurs who are highly educated in terms of postsecondary and higher education. Experiential development or direct mentoring were experienced by most. Success in online immigrant business owners in this study was highly correlated to higher education, individual owner characteristics, organizational values, and performance measures. Researchers and scholars understand the positive impact of education, training, experience, and prior knowledge on the success of any business endeavor. Each of the participants indicated that they relied heavily on prior knowledge and experience to move their online business plan forward. The participants stated:

> They do this in recognition of turning information systems knowledge into business reality, I didn't just get a master's degree in it. I'm actually doing it, and I've been successful in getting jobs and the last job I had, I think one of the reasons why I got it was they were impressed that I could generate content, I could publish, my publications were academic and peer reviewed, books, and I was an evangelist for information systems, so I think they're very proud I'm hired as a professor to teach what I have a hobby in, right? (Participant #1)

> And my Dad too, he later in his career he started a business in India. And so just, and he was an entrepreneur too. So being able to bounce ideas off of him, and get some inspiration, get advice from him is also valuable. He was a great mentor and sounding board for my business. (Participant #4)

Not only that, also duplicates what you're doing to networks of people who are

also driven. That's where the aspect of leadership, mentorship, that's what got me

more excited. It really wasn't only about the project, there was the fact that I could

access to mentors, people who would have humongous success that I had always

wanted and see how they were able to develop success from nothing. I had some

alliance with the host licensing Corporation and with another company for

Systems to leverage my time and resources. These are accomplice, that they had

to share profit with me and get a system more like a mentorship program. I

managed to transform my mind into an entrepreneurial mind. I can then mentally

talk to other business. Without this alliances I won't really have a business.

(Participant #5)

Planning for Breakout From Traditionally Restricted Markets

Participants' narratives described the process an entrepreneur uses as a strategic

business tool to operate their online business outside of the scope of traditional ethnic

markets. Planning for online home-based businesses offers opportunities for ethnic

entrepreneurs to shift to high-value markets from traditional highly competitive and low-

margin markets. Application of ubiquitous low-cost, high-impact technologies like

artificial intelligence, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and the

Internet show a positive association between immigrant entrepreneurs' high levels of

entrepreneurship and home-based business successes. The participants stated:

The business plan kind of took shape with the impulse of the other partners before

we founded this company. And the main reason why we both thought that this

was necessary was when I was finishing my residency close to 2008, we had

something called the electronic medical records and that had just started.

Hospitals were implementing it in the hospital but they did not have it as an

outpatient and they asked a team of residents and fellows to come up with

solutions. What they think will best work for the hospital. They were

implementing it as an in-patient at that time. Fortunately for me, I was working in

New York for the first two years of my residency and the hospitals there had in-

patient inter-electronic medical records already set up. But they had not done it

for the outpatient and they were implementing it then there. That was around the

condition that in the time I move to Geisinger (Company). So, I had an advantage

of knowing how other hospitals are working and implementing it and what are the

challenges they faced. While Geisinger was just getting started with these things.

So we both were on that team. I think our interest in making the system more

efficient kind of started there. But then of course, it took years before we thought

that this is something we could do and want to so. So that's the origin of how we

initially started on this. (Participant #3)

That was a big deal because I didn't know how to start a business, I did not know

who or where to begin initially. I've tried participating in different things in the

existing markets like ever popular like bitcoins, virtual currencies and all those

stuffs but those are very volatile. I tried stock, and stock exchange, and all of

those more traditional methods to generate wealth. Those are very volatile as well.

For me, I got very fortunate because back in New York City (Brooklyn), I've

always been big on networking and social connections to get things done. I would

see anyone in the subway was dressed well and another one was walking. I would

walk up to them, ask them questions, learn to know about their background, what

they're doing to be successful (or appear so). That's how I got introduced to my

current business coach and business partner after just such an interaction. He's

been retired since his mid-20's from working a day to day job for others and that

inspired me. He's teaching me how to leverage network marketing methods

throughout the greater markets and within a specific business aspect. From there I

could start working on somewhat more personal profit that I have thought of in

the past. (Participant #5)

So the approach and strategy of running and developing my business was fairly

well developed as working for others taught me those elements of my business, I

saw how they worked and should work. I was already doing because I was an

email marketer providing traffic for this company I worked for many years prior

to doing my own businesses. So and the first company I bought into (50% stake)

was already in business for 2 years prior to that so the business plan was already

there. It was more so a strategic move for me of any company that I've owned and

to buy the next level company that the company above me. Since I was providing

traffic for this company, that's the next easy step for me to buy. That was an

opportunity for myself and my partners to go to the next level by leveraging the

first company, it was available so we did buy it. (Participant #6)

Pursuing Entry Into High-Growth Sectors

Participants' narratives revealed the desire and strategy to focus on high-growth

business sectors since growth is paramount to sustainability and greater returns.

Participants expected that a typical high-growth online company offers a return to

shareholders five times greater than medium-growth companies. The participants stated:

I think that the biggest benefit is that you can reach practically everyone in the

world, and I had offers from even Australia. They wanted some of my shirts. That

helped a lot, like your potential market is huge. Your customer target audience is

critical. The problem, the biggest challenge is probably that it's really saturated

because there are so many online businesses out there that you have to compete

really heavily in market share with other companies. (Participant #2)

The origination of the business was because we both realized that people don't get

access to medical services as easily as it should be. There is a lot of frustration

amongst patients and I'll tell you a personal story as to what really pushed me into

doing that. So there are a lot of things that need to be better than what they are

currently. And the money spent on things is not as efficient. So definitely, it came

from being on both sides. Being a physician, you only get to see one side of it but

when you sit at the patient's chair and you realize how difficult it is for a person

who's trying to get the right care. That's when it really occurs to you as to how much gap there is to fill. Many patients from United States go to the Caribbean countries and they go to Bahamas or to Mexico and get cardiac surgery or dental procedure which is not covered typically by the insurance in the United States. And to bridge that gap, you need someone to actually hold your hand and say, this is the right thing for you and that's what made us work on this. (Participant #3)

Our temperament, or our style is that we'll be patient we'll take our time and do it right. And we don't want to be forced. We don't want to make this a sprint and do unnatural things, just to show momentum, just to show growth. All of that has influenced the problem we're trying to solve. So because of who we are and what we are good at, we have chosen to not raise too much in terms of funding. We had chosen to focus on profitability ahead of growth. We have chosen to focus on being able to stay independent for a long time, through downturns if need be. And that influences how we, which problems or which opportunities we go seek and solve. So we are okay if we are not one of those... runaway successes.

(Participant #4)

Organized Entrepreneurial Marketing Plan

Participants' narratives revealed the dynamic steps the immigrant entrepreneurs took in identifying recognized opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers utilizing innovative methods for risk management, resource leveraging, and value creation. Scholars recognize that many of the market barriers facing immigrant

entrepreneurs are comparable to those facing any small businesses in general and require a focused marketing plan. Issues of establishing an initial customer base, competing with established competitors, securing financing, lacking familiarity with the host country, culture differences, and building a positive trustworthy reputation in the marketplace all were embedded within their entrepreneurial marketing business plan. The participants stated:

> So, basically I did site engine optimization, titled my pages very well, made people find me on search engines and they started buying books, CDs and also clicking on Google ads that were designed to align and match the content to generate more income for me. This led to a flexible marketing approach, if somebody's looking for soccer or African ads, they google ads about soccer and African ads, meta data for searches to lead to my business. So, I started reading about soccer and African ads, they just click on the Google ad and they like what they see, they might buy or buy credit for the click. So, that's why I went into my business, that's how I started my business. That was in 1999. (Participant #1)
>
> For me, I got very fortunate because back in New York City (Brooklyn), I've always been big on networking and social connections to get things done. I would see anyone in the subway was dressed well and another one was walking. I would walk up to them, ask them questions, learn to know about their background, what they're doing to be successful (or appear so). That's how I got introduced to my current business coach and business partner after just such an interaction. He's

been retired since his mid-20's from working a day to day job for others and that

inspired me. He's teaching me how to leverage network marketing methods

throughout the greater markets and within a specific business aspect. From there I

could start working on somewhat more personal profit that I have thought of in

the past. (Participant #5)

I was an email marketer by skill and trade that was basically sending traffic via

this company to much if the content there. I've started building on an existing

marketing plan, I realized that I can also combine plans, some of my business

partners needed a lot of help, meta data analysis, but methods of strategy to gain

the most customer traffic, attitude investments update and basically pushes it for

them to make better marketing decisions. (Participant #6)

Flexibility in Planning Moves Within the Digital Marketplace

Participants' narratives revealed how thriving online businesses require flexible,

agile strategic planning as they implement effective sequential marketing solutions to

meet the constantly evolving demands of customers. Since consumers do not easily adopt

innovations, new dynamic tools for penetrating higher-value markets are needed to

achieve flexibility. The efficiency and efficacy of traditional advertising, sales methods,

relationship skills, and strategies need to be innovated in the digital marketplace.

Participants indicated that by listening to and understanding how their social, industry,

market, and physical networks behaved, they were able to innovate new approaches. The

participants stated:

You definitely have to be committed and you have to realize that this might not replace your day-to-day job. It might not pay off immediately, and you have to be passionate for what you're doing. You should definitely not commit fully into it just because you have one or two sales, or you make some money on it, doesn't mean that you can scale it up so much that it can replace your normal income. Doing it and trying it exposes you to so many more skills and it has a constant learning curve. Everyone should at least consider starting their own business for learning's sake, and exposure. Passion and drive that you are making a positive change for society, networking and staying close to your customers to understand their changing needs, to be very flexible and adaptive. (Participant #2)

Our essential concern, the code of Mundai is making healthcare more accessible, more affordable and on-demand where people are not waiting for a procedure for months, are not waiting for a doctor's appointments for weeks. The biggest challenge is to get it running. From starting with an idea to actually do it is completely a different story. It's very easy to say this is how I plan on paper and then when you start talking to people, getting your feedback, that's when it really hits you that not everything is how you look at things. And I think if I were to go back or if I were the come across a person who is from a similar background and wants to know how I would have done things differently then I think that the first thing I would tell them is it's an ongoing process. You never stop learning new things, it's an ongoing learning. And when I started the business, I realized I did

not have as much insights about digital marketing and that's completely a

different thing, I didn't think I would ever do that. But I took up a course of digital

marketing to better understand that when I hire someone to do the marketing for

us. It's an online business, so we don't go the traditional route. We don't have

signs posted on the street saying sign up on Mundai. (Participant #3)

I saw the world economies and markets change to more like online businesses and

eCommerce flexible exchanges and electronic transactions. My idea of business

was, as a college student inspired enough by the question of the type of business,

it had to be following more like an eCommerce business that I could expand from

my estate and track online how I'm doing the revenue and all of that. The allure of

fast, mobile and flexible interactions with customers appealed to me. That's why I

decided to set up a business I could work from my house, home based. Online

business in general to have more flexibility in my schedule and keep the costs

down. I wanted a network marketing business, eCommerce driven to be flexible

and agile. (Participant #5)

Business Sustainability Through Online Entrepreneurial Marketing

Participants' narratives revealed how the immigrant online entrepreneurs are

always pursuing market opportunities through applying constant innovation, reacting to

changing customers' needs and wants in faster, cost effective, and better ways resulting

in customer acquisition and retention. Online business processes rely heavily on

technologies for growth and sustainability due to the market environment; immigrant

entrepreneurs need to adopt the information-rich decision-making systems to overcome structural operating deficiencies. Factors such as limited financial resources, high costs, short product life cycles, and sluggish business growth impact sustainability and potential growth opportunities. The participants stated:

> You definitely have to be committed for the long run and you have to realize that this might not replace your day-to-day job. It might not pay off immediately, and you have to be passionate for what you're doing. You should definitely not commit fully into it just because you have one or two sales, or you make some money on it, doesn't mean that you can scale it up so much that it can replace your normal income. Doing it and trying it exposes you to so many more skills customer needs and it has a constant learning curve. Everyone should at least consider starting their own business for learning's sake, and exposure. Passion and drive that you are making a positive change for society, networking and staying close to your customers to understand their changing needs, to be very flexible and adaptive. (Participant #2)

> We actively looked for strategies that would leverage that growth. Whether there is a choice to do it in a way that could expand our payroll or expand the headcount. Versus something that may not be as much revenue, but would be highly leveraged in terms of higher margins. We'd go for the latter. We want to stay focused on, what is our true advantage? Which is about technology, and not about building a massive company with thousands of people. Or at least not yet.

We want to stay focused on what is truly unique, and what is truly our strength.

And that that just lends itself to a more online business than an offline business.

It's also synonymous with high value online home-based business strategies it is a

low overhead, high margin business model. Even though it's not as big in terms of

volume, we want to stay with that. Because we want to scale 10 times, 100 times

the size we are at right. Now and we want to be careful about what kind of

company we ended up building. (Participant #4)

Leveraging each acquisition and then moving up the business ladder in size, scope

and market share is how we are doing it. Measured, scaled, sustainable growth, I

don't believe it's getting to a point that I will start using some external funding. So

I could start using external funding, I just have it as an opportunity or future need

at this point. Continued learning gives you better understanding of what you are

going to be purchasing or what you're going to be developing or how to leverage

that product or market. We partnered with a company this woman owned and we

were sending her around 20 million emails a day that helped her business. Then I

realized that I was sending some great value or market knowledge to this

company and realized that they are making money from my own traffic. They

were paying me 35-40 cents a click whereas they were getting paid 65 cents a

click. We have publishers which are email marketers that basically send out

emails and then traffic their links. As we have grown, I have gone on have gained

or have started more online companies, we basically have a new company called

mogotrip.com which is the similar of email marketing. But this company is

certainly based on express marketing, on text marketing. (Participant # 6)

Demographic Age Group Immersed in the Internet

Participants' narratives revealed how various demographic groups can be

categorized by age; young adults, college graduates, and those from high-income

households show near-ubiquitous Internet usage while for low-income or elderly it is

significantly lower. The Internet represents a fundamental marketing shift in how people

connect with one another, buy products or services, gather information, and conduct their

day-to-day lives. Research indicates that nine in 10 U.S. adults are online, with the

younger generation fully embracing technology and the Internet having shifted traditional

retail marketing irrevocably. Knowledge of age, race, gender, income, education,

spending patterns, and community is paramount to an effective online business strategy.

The participants stated:

What influenced me right out of college is that in Germany we have more like a

social democracy, where people, where the government cares for people that don't

have a job, for homeless people, et cetera. There's really no requirement for

people. There's no necessity of people living on the streets. If you're homeless and

if you're struggling, you can always get government funding and they give you an

apartment, access to technology and such. (Participant #2)

My kids do what they can. It's a good environment, it's my oldest daughter who's

nine. Actually, last year, she helped us with the short video and the video was

based on how easy it is to open up a Mundai account, a membership and to store

medical records. So the essential part that Mundai helps patients navigate the

process where they don't even have to look for a physician. And the video was

about how easy it is. Whether it's you saving the records or your lab saving your

cholesterol levels or it's your physician uploading records from his office into

your medical records in the secure cloud and then your name. She did a great job

with the PowerPoint presentation and with the voice-over. And I don't have to tell

her why it is so important for us because she sees us do it and she is involved very

much with it. So that helps. That also encourages her sisters and I hope this

inspires them to create something of their own when they grow up.

(Participant #3)

We're basically an email marketing agency where we have a great deal of clients

that buy from us on a regular basis. We started that from 2 years ago and that's the

doing fantastic now because of that we're basically a top tier platform and

software where people can come and use our software to be able to sort of take

messages on basis to the clients targeted categorical demographics.

(Participant #6)

Ethnic Culture Influences

Participants' narratives revealed that ethnic group values and cultural influences

greatly affect how immigrants use their experiences and social networks to launch

entrepreneurial endeavors. Online home-based businesses offer unique opportunities for

ethnic entrepreneurs to enter higher-value markets and reach new innovative market

sectors through use of computers, low-cost technology, and creation of a digital identity.

Many ethnic advantages (work ethic, cultural empathy, sense of community) are realized

by immigrant entrepreneurs with online home-based businesses due to low cost and

flexibility as well as overcoming traditional institutional biases. The participants stated:

> So I spent 16 years in Nigeria, so I'm actually Nigerian by culture, I identify with
>
> my family and culture in Nigeria even though I now consider myself North
>
> African American. As a Nigerian I had a desire to make available to people
>
> materials and content on African culture, African history, by making more
>
> available to a wider distribution some books, some CDs on my website, and then
>
> started selling. Being an American of North African descent, I think culture has
>
> influenced my business because the content I sell, African content, I have African
>
> perspective of morals, African perspective of family, I've got the African
>
> perspective of sex, the African perspective of marriage, history. (Participant #1)
>
> I would say my background, cultural background at home is that what you mean?
>
> It's two ways. Both cultures affected my decision to form a business, of course,
>
> my technical background. Like I said, my business isn't following the path of my
>
> technical skills yet. Currently what I have my hands on, I would say, solely
>
> influenced by my dreams and somewhat my cultural background. Because back
>
> home, jobs are very limited. It's not easy to get a job like how it is here in the
>
> United States like it's so hard. Most people tend to start developing part from

themselves right off college because they don't see the promise in them getting a job after college. Right in college, you're working on various businesses. Online business, we got the easiest start up. I saw how that somewhat impacted my decision to form a business to myself. (Participant #5)

My cultural background from India definitely influences my behaviors, it has influence because you take responsibility for everything that's out there. You are the one in charge. You're the one that has to make sure that everything is done properly. If it's not then it's that area that comes into you on you or anything else and failure as far as my culture is running is not acceptable. You have to be able to succeed for us to what the heck, I can do it, you have to have confidence. (Participant #6

Goal to Succeed in the U.S. Market

Participants' narratives revealed how immigrant entrepreneurs' primary desire is to create supplemental income, and have flexible schedules while taking advantage of an emerging opportunity in the U.S. market. Scholars recognize that successful immigrant businesses in the U.S. market exhibit supportive family dynamics, strong work ethic, business experience, independence, adaptability, and focus on customer satisfaction. The participants stated:

And I hope to be a millionaire someday but I'm not there yet but I'm bringing some change in as residual income, and it's a good feeling when you realize a stream of international revenue from China or straight from people you don't

know or may not like you, just a joke. Meaning people that may not like your appearance, accent or culture, since they do not see me they just purchase the product or service. That's why I started my online business, to see if my IT training could work to make me successful and if I could make some money. If you have passion, if God gives you an idea, just go do it and learn from your failures and learn from your success and learn to multiply your success. (Participant #1)

I think I always expected the United States to be a big, big marketplace where your possibilities of success are way higher than any other country because of the sheer number of people who live here and high living standard. My outlook for the United States was always kind of there's still the possibility of making the American Dream, or having the American Dream, but starting my business has never changed my approach or view of the United States. There's a lot of diverse people in New York that can help my business and that's the basic setup for my business, leveraging others' skills. So I contribute a percentage of my profits to homeless in New York and I will continue to do that so I feel I can help society. I hope that I can share my success with those less fortunate, I hope to give back to those that can't help themselves. (Participant #2)

I wanted network marketing business, eCommerce driven to be flexible and agile. Some take over a hundred years to run a successful business. In my case, I'm connecting with manufacturing companies here in the United Staes and leveraging

their successful experience. I'm not looking to invest billions in dollars into advertising but instead we get into share profit to people who have entrepreneurial drive and we can distribute this for the bad day. Not only that, also duplicates what you're doing to networks of people who are also driven. That's where the aspect of leadership, mentorship, that's what got me more excited. It really wasn't only about the project, there was the fact that I could access to mentors, people who would have humongous success that I had always wanted and see how they were able to develop success from nothing. That was what I always add value. Most people point to that industry and seen where I only get the money and all of that. Which is there but I saw the opportunity to create impact. (Participant #5)

Digital Entrepreneurship Strengthens Ethnic Market Reach Within the United States

The United States is seeing unprecedented levels of migration, promoting a rise in immigrant business start-ups, with online businesses being the fastest and easiest to initiate for immigrant entrepreneurs. Traditionally, immigrants would follow highly competitive, community-based, low-margin business models. Participants' narratives revealed how they customized online digital business models to align with high-value customer markets and products and services of their company's online technology trading platforms. These applied strategies, incremental experimentation, originality, and highly homogenous digital entrepreneurship are resulting in successful entry to high-value market sectors. The participants stated:

When I started my business I liked that I could create a digital identity that I could mold to best engage my target market, I liked it because half of those people I'm sure if they saw me might not speak to me, if they came to my store, may not like my accent, or maybe my race, but online they don't care who I am, they just buy what they need, and off they go. If they saw value in my products they would buy it without and prejudice towards my demeanor or presence or accent. Meaning people that may not like your appearance, accent or culture, since they do not see me they just purchase the product or service. I do not speak Chinese for instance and selling to Asia, I would not be a very good salesman! (Participant #1)

It can definitely, you are incognito online rather than plastering your face and your identity everywhere. Just replacing it with your business, might help a lot of people who don't feel comfortable expressing themselves, and going out of their comfort zones, racial, ethnic, etc. (Participant #2)

Since we (my partner, family and I) understand India, since I was born there, taking our business to the Indian market has been a pretty straightforward and easy for us. When we raised funding, our lead investor is the largest travel company in India. So that was easy to approach, easy to connect with. And they also felt pretty comfortable that even though they were investing a lot of money from India into the United States, they felt comfortable with us. So that that helps a lot having the cultural connection and trust. So, that has helped. And yet... I think the other way does, how does understanding two different cultures, makes it

somewhat easier to understand a few more. So when we decided to go to China or Japan or Middle East, other parts of the world, so to sort to speak. The non-western influences, non-English speaking countries. It makes it easier for us to understand that as compared to the average United States-only start-up. So, that also helps. So we see that as an advantage. (Participant #4)

Digital Identity Leads to Internationalization of Online Business

Participants' narratives revealed how creating an online persona and digital identity can reduce racial bias and institutional bias, allowing for greater access to markets by ethnic business owners within the United States and internationally. These actions and methods allowed the immigrant online entrepreneurs in this study to offer the buying or selling experience of their e-business to their international customers without pejorative racial or communication inferences. The participants stated:

When I started my business I liked that I could create a digital identity that I could mold to best engage my target market, I liked it because half of those people I'm sure if they saw me might not speak to me, if they came to my store, may not like my accent, or maybe my race, but online they don't care who I am, they just buy what they need, and off they go. If they saw value in my products they would buy it without and prejudice towards my demeanor or presence or accent. (Participant #1)

My customers being homeless they don't seem trustworthy, or they don't have that identity to be like fashionable for example, in a fashion brand. I think that it's still

a requirement to be passionate in whatever you do, if you start an online business,

though I think it can help to have an online business not associated with you if

you're not known to have that passion. I'm trying to say is, if you, let's say you

want to sell X which is, just in my example is just like fashion, but you don't

know what is fashionable and what looks great. You don't really have the sense of

what looks good on a human body, then I think it might be hard for you to start an

online business selling clothes, and so there always has to be a certain association

from you and the things that you are selling. It can definitely, you are incognito

online rather than plastering your face and your identity everywhere. Just

replacing it with your business, might help a lot of people who don't feel

comfortable expressing themselves, and going out of their comfort zones.

(Participant #2)

As a full-time student, I have limited time and resources to devote to a full-time

business to follow my dream and passion to be independent. I've always had the

independent mindset even from childhood and wish to create my own identity.

I've always wanted to do things, to help others achieve their goals and help

society. I felt that by controlling things by myself, and control my time instead of

following someone else's dreams or direction in life was the best path for me. It

was about the money investment initially; I did not have much to begin my

business and doing an online home-based business seemed the best and only way.

Reaching an international customer base digitally removes many barriers. I was

always looking for ways that I could create an impact to society, help others, help my country of Nigeria. I could achieve some of the dreams only if I left Nigeria and followed my dreams in America where there is more opportunity. That was why I decided to start the business. (Participant #5)

Summary

In this chapter, I presented my research work in presenting overall study and data analysis results with a total of six participants. The results of this qualitative study provided answers for the central research question: *How do first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses narrate stories of entrepreneurial marketing experiences, and how do these experiences support breakout from traditionally restricted markets?* Based on the findings of this narrative inquiry study, a total of five conceptual categories grounded in the conceptual framework and 18 reformulated themes gleaned from the critical events data analysis were identified, leading to thick, rich stories as data used to answer the central research question. The conceptual categories were as follows: (a) experiences of immigrant online entrepreneurs with market entry; (b) resources accessible to immigrant entrepreneurs to pursue postindustrial opportunities; (c) experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs with breakout from traditionally restricted markets to enter high-growth sectors; (d) experiences of immigrant online entrepreneurs with entrepreneurial marketing activities; and, (e) themes from immigrant digital entrepreneurs' narratives of daily business experiences. The 18 themes cover: the desire to pursue digital entrepreneurship; the ability to identify an

online market opportunity; low start-up costs; family support; access to finance; specialized knowledge in business planning; technology savvy; higher education and training; planning for breakout from traditionally restricted markets; pursuing entry into high-growth sectors; organized entrepreneurial marketing plan; flexibility in planning moves within the digital marketplace; business sustainability through online entrepreneurial marketing; demographic age group immersed in the Internet; ethnic culture influences; goal to succeed in the U.S. market; digital entrepreneurship strengthens ethnic market reach within the US; and, digital identity leads to internationalization of online business.

The issue of trustworthiness in narrative research is based on having access to reliable and trustworthy records of the participants' stories. I utilized the critical event approach for data analysis because of its inherent characteristics of openness and transparency in thoroughly emphasizing, highlighting, capturing, and describing events emerging from participants' stories of daily experiences. The issue of trustworthiness in my qualitative study was examined through the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

In Chapter 5, I further interpret the study findings in terms of how they compare and contrast to the literature described in Chapter 2. I also describe how future scholarly research can extend these findings and further study the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based

businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from

traditionally restricted markets.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study was to explore the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets. Researchers use qualitative methods to explore real-world issues (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). "People are always tellers of tales. They live surrounded by their stories and the stories of others; they see everything that happens to them through those stories and try living their lives as if they were recounting them" (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 1). This narrative inquiry research study documented through storytelling the daily entrepreneurial marketing experiences of first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, whose strategy was to break out of their online products and services from traditional ethnic markets frequented by immigrant businesses in order to break into high-growth sectors. The narrative inquiry research method allowed me to collect data from long, in-depth conversations with the six participants regarding their experiences, all of which exemplified and provided the complexity and richness of human understanding and experience (see Clandinin, 2013; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

This study was framed by two primary concepts that focus on the marketing challenges facing immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online businesses: Kloosterman's (2010) concept of postindustrial opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs, and Anwar and Daniel's (2016a) concept of entrepreneurial marketing in

online home-based businesses. A critical events analysis of six participants' narratives revealed the following 18 prominent themes: the desire to pursue digital entrepreneurship; the ability to identify an online market opportunity; low start-up costs; family support; access to finance; specialized knowledge in business planning; technology savvy; higher education and training; planning for breakout from traditionally restricted markets; pursuing entry into high-growth sectors; organized entrepreneurial marketing plan; flexibility in planning moves within the digital marketplace; business sustainability through online entrepreneurial marketing; demographic age group immersed in the Internet; ethnic culture influences; goal to succeed in the U.S. market; digital entrepreneurship strengthens ethnic market reach within the United States; and digital identity leads to internationalization of online business.

Interpretation of Findings

Most of the results in this narrative inquiry study confirm or extend existing knowledge, and each narrative presents issues aligned with findings in the reviewed literature in Chapter 2. During the critical events data analysis process, I observed no discrepant data contradicting the themes and theoretical suppositions presented within the conceptual framework or the extant scholarly literature. In this section, I present and review the findings by the finalized conceptual categories of this narrative inquiry study as emerging from the data analysis, and I compare them with corroboration of ideas and findings from the conceptual framework and the extant scholarly literature. I provide evidence of how the study findings confirm and/or extend such existing knowledge from

within the field of immigrant entrepreneurship studies. Extension studies such as my study provide replication evidence and extend the results of previous studies in new theoretical directions (Bonett, 2012).

Experiences of Immigrant Online Entrepreneurs With Market Entry

One of the specific topics explored in this study is how first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs choosing to initiate and run online home-based businesses built their international absorptive capacity for leveraging and applying external knowledge by focusing on the physically proximate local and international markets (Qiu & Gupta, 2015). The study results support how immigrant entrepreneurs have first applied moderate risk, low financial committed entry, and linear growth behaviors, and then taken calculated risks to escalate their market penetration and commitment to accelerate significant positive returns. My research findings extend prior research that indicates that ethnic minorities in many developed countries are associated with high levels of entrepreneurship (Broughton, 2015; Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015).

The findings are also aligned with studies related to how the marketing activities of many immigrant firms have been characterized as "haphazard" (Altinay et al., 2014). Several of the participants did not initially have a structured marketing strategy yet were able to create a dynamic and effective method rapidly through chaotic or "haphazard" learning. These findings confirm that immigrant entrepreneurs must be able to access appropriate resources and skills to effectively market their online business to transcend

traditional low-growth, ethnic enclave markets and reach higher value markets (Anwar & Daniel, 2017; Lee & Black, 2017; Rusinovic, 2008).

The findings of the study draw on the immigrant entrepreneur's passion, vision, network skills, and related literature to posit how first-generation immigrant home-based online start-ups are able to enter host markets that are physically abstracted from their home markets or experiences and use superior attached entry and growth modes. The participants collectively behaved in a manner that is more likely to be emotionally and cognitively comfortable in pursuing innovative, dynamic approaches to sequential market entry than traditional low-risk entrepreneur behaviors. Research regarding high-value market opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs to succeed and overcome common institutional barriers is extended through this study (Aliaga-Isla & Rialp, 2013; De Massis et al., 2018; Fatoki, 2014). None of the six participants indicated that their approaches to starting businesses in the United States were impeded, due to the fact they had created a digital online identity to bypass bias. These findings are a confirmation of prior research indicating that online home-based business strategies can mitigate gender, racial, or social biases (de la Cruz et al., 2018; Wynarczyk & Graham, 2013). Each of the participants noted that strong family support was key to their success, through leveraging social capital, social networks, relationships, or ethnic community support (Chreim et al., 2018).

Resources Accessible to Immigrant Entrepreneurs to Pursue Postindustrial Opportunities

The findings of the study delineated and qualified that researchers must take into account the impact of Kloosterman's (2010) scholarly research on mixed embeddedness. The study findings align with how Kloosterman (2010) accurately predicted that the effects of opportunity, resource access, and issues related to institutionalized racial and cultural bias of the host country are a major consideration for first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs. Social values, norms, immigrant culture, and host country institutional bias are a dynamic construct that the participants were able to successfully navigate to create sustainable value. More traditional business endeavors available to first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs prior to online business ventures enabled them to embed their businesses in ethnically similar neighborhoods (Halkias et al., 2011). The digital online marketing approach combined with a home-based business results in a low-cost, high-potential opportunity for first-generation immigrants to reach restricted or distant high-value markets. The study participants showed great ingenuity when financing their start-ups; half used organic growth, and the other half secured angel investors. None of them secured traditional institutional bank loans. These findings confirm prior research that found that the financing strategies of immigrant owners were predisposed to avoid traditional business financing (Anwar & Daniel, 2015; Ostrovsky et al., 2018).

The participants each expressed through their lived experiences how recognition of international market exposure and leveraging their human capital and technical

capabilities allowed them to achieve domestic and foreign market success early in their business start-ups. Due to having few financial resources, limited access to human capital, no traditional structural restrictions, and other tangible resources combined with low IT costs led to a very dynamic marketing strategy and behaviors. These factors and behaviors resulting in international new ventures following an accelerated growth profile fits what is referred to as "born global firms" (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Rennie, 1993). The study results support each of the participants' goals of being born global firms from their initiation and not growing from local or domestic markets into international markets through recognition of high-value expanded markets. Each of the participants had the intellectual capital and skills to discover, evaluate, recognize, and take advantage of high-value markets internationally through online home-based business models at inception to create flexibility and sustainability (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005).

Experiences of Immigrant Entrepreneurs With Breakout From Traditionally Restricted Markets to Enter High-Growth Sectors

My research findings confirmed the importance of digital marketing strategies used by ethnic minorities to successfully achieve sustainable growth as first-generation home-based immigrant business owners running online businesses (Altinay & Altinay, 2008; Basu, 2010; Daniel et al., 2014). Each of the six participants regarded their strategy and online home-based business models as the path to reaching international markets and high-growth markets from a small-scale enterprise, also supporting existing research (Fiore et al., 2013). The study results align with existing research on how entrepreneurial

marketing for an online business start-up needs to be flexible, adaptive, progressive, growth-oriented, and low-cost to support a sustainable enterprise (Miles et al., 2016; Morrish, 2011; Morrish et al., 2010; O'Cass & Morrish, 2016).

My study results were consistent with how germane entrepreneurial digital marketing methods are required for a first-generation immigrant online business owner to distinguish high-value opportunities. The concept of creating sustainable nonethnic business relationships, reputation trust, and market penetration across linked diverse market segments has been conceptualized and supported by this study (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b; Griffin-EL & Olabisi, 2018; Kloosterman, 2010; Ram et al., 2016). This study was consistent and aligned with research done by Vorley and Rodgers (2014) related to how important home-based businesses are to immigrant business owners. Existing research related to dynamic factors identified as "push/pull" and "opportunity/necessity-based" was confirmed by the participants' lived experiences of starting a flexible business with very low costs and high value through leveraging existing infrastructure (home) and inexpensive technology (computers and Internet) that allowed for scaled formation of their business ventures.

Experiences of Immigrant Online Entrepreneurs With Entrepreneurial Marketing Activities

Much of the existing research on immigrant entrepreneurial marketing in online home-based businesses has been demographically skewed, whereas my study had a broader exposure of gender, ethnicity, technology skills, education levels, income levels,

and ages, expanding on Anwar and Daniel's 2016 studies which were narrow (sampled only male respondents with Asian heritage). Anwar and Daniel (2016a, 2016b) recognized that many of the immigrant online home-based businesses they studied showed opportunities for breakout, and the marketing applied in those businesses was haphazard and yet homogenous. My study confirmed much of those observations, in that half of the participants had no marketing strategy identified and created their methods through trial-and-error adaptive learning modes. The participants each felt that they achieved a high degree of innovation by creating their own models of what worked for them in their specific business. It was also apparent from my study that each of the participants had a significantly different marketing path to success, and that they differed in how they secured new customers and how they retained existing customers in highly varied market sectors.

The study results support a high level of social embeddedness, differing market strategies, and highly diverse backgrounds of the participants, each leading to successful (for the entrepreneurs) enterprises. The study participants' lived experiences confirm existing research in that each had a high level of passion, family support, and technical capability (or capability to access needed skills) to reach extended and traditionally restricted markets (Allen & Busse, 2016; Anwar & Daniel, 2017; Griffin-EL & Olabisi, 2018). As posited by Bates (2007), accepted entrepreneurship marketing theory related to business creation is conventionally structured around three elements; the critical element for sustained growth of a business is access to markets.

Themes From Immigrant Digital Entrepreneurs' Narratives of Daily Business

Experiences

Addressing the challenges faced by first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs

running small businesses in the United States through this study allowed me to fully

understand how important the role of immigrant entrepreneurs is to the economic health,

economic development, and prosperity of the United States. Current research has

indications that most businesses fail after 5 years, and that the traditional model of

business is a stage model of growth; it is also apparent that immigrant business owners

additionally face institutional bias, racial bigotry, and constrained resources. The

emergent applied strategies used by the participants to sustain and grow their businesses

profitably through an online home-based business model allowed for a significantly

higher success rate than traditional SMEs run by immigrants, confirming the work by

Anwar and Daniel (2016a, 2016b, 2017). To reveal the underlying themes, the conceptual

framework that grounded this study was a combination of two primary concepts that

focus on the marketing challenges facing immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States

operating online businesses: Kloosterman's (2010) concept of postindustrial opportunities

for immigrant entrepreneurs, and Anwar and Daniel's (2016a, 2016b) concept of

entrepreneurial marketing in online home-based businesses.

The data analysis for this study involved a process of disassembling data into

common codes, reassembling data into themes, interpreting meaning, and making

conclusions. The following five categories emerged from the data analysis: (a)

experiences of immigrant online entrepreneurs with market entry; (b) resources accessible to immigrant entrepreneurs to pursue postindustrial opportunities; (c) experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs with breakout from traditionally restricted markets to enter high-growth sectors; (d) experiences of immigrant online entrepreneurs with entrepreneurial marketing activities; and, (e) themes from immigrant digital entrepreneurs' narratives of daily business experiences. These categories and the 18 themes align well with Kloosterman's theory of mixed embeddedness (2010), extending the knowledge of how first-generation immigrant home-based online business owners can successfully apply a dynamic marketing strategy to create high growth and sustainability.

Through the results it was revealed that small-business immigrant entrepreneurs concentrated on cost control; digital identity (internationalization of online business); recognition of high-value, high-growth market sectors; new customer base opportunities; customer communications for retention; market differentiation; customer focus; and international exposure to sustain and grow their businesses profitably. The participants were very cognizant that their business endeavors had implications for positive social change, including improving business and marketing strategies, enhancing personal prosperity, advancing employee prosperity, improving work–life balance, improving the U.S. economy, and promoting economic development. Through offering popular products, differentiation, high-value growth market focus, and cost control, the participants have been able to sustain, expand, and grow their businesses profitably.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations are a characteristic of every research study, and are defined elements of the study that are out of the researcher's control and may affect the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Golafshani, 2003). The first limitation I addressed in my study was that of my not being an immigrant in the United States. My nationality could inadvertently contribute to bias and judging research participants and their responses solely by the values and standards of my own cultural heritage. In narrative research it is essential to establish trustworthiness by relating the data in its original or unmodified state, avoiding narrative smoothing, to entirely give voice to the participants (Clandinin, 2013).

Given that in my study I considered economic and technology factors related to eCommerce in the global marketplace, the rich, thick descriptions of the interview data and checking for researcher reflexivity mitigated limitations on researcher bias within the interview process. To further minimize researcher bias, I asked a debriefer who is an immigrant scholar working in the United States and skilled in qualitative methods to analyze the same data, and the results were compared and contrasted with my own results (Anney, 2014). This additional trustworthiness check also mitigated this limitation as the external debriefer, Prof. Nicholas Harkiolakis, is both a qualitative and quantitative methodologist and published author in research methodology (Harkiolakis, 2017).

The second limitation of the study was that narrative inquiry, as all qualitative methods, has received scholarly criticism for not offering statistical generalization, preventing generalization of data results to the population from the sample of six first-

generation immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses. When applying a narrative inquiry approach to address the subject of dependability, I adhered to a strict level of transparency, consistency, and accuracy in the data collection, analysis method, retelling, and results of the research materials (Burkholder et al., 2016). The final decision or judgment as to the transferability of the findings in the study is up to the reader; the researcher needs to address transferability through a clearly specified audit trail, which I have developed within the study methodology (Prowse & Camfield, 2013). I related the data collected in its original or unmodified state, avoiding narrative smoothing, to entirely give voice to the participants (Clandinin, 2013). Since the researcher is only responsible for collecting the narrative context of a qualitative study, ensuring transferability of a qualitative research study's inferences cannot be absolute (Erlandson et al., 1993).

Recommendations

This study contributes and adds insight to the existing research area by filling in the identified gap in research by exploring through narrative inquiry experiences on how first-generation immigrant business owners apply strategic entrepreneurial marketing practices to achieve market sector breakout of successful SMEs within the United States operating online home-based businesses and the implications of those practices 5 years after start-up (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a; Kloosterman, 2010). This research conducted using storytelling from first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs helped to confirm, extend, and show alignment with existing research supporting how immigrants break out

from traditionally restricted markets. The explorative and interactive process of telling, unfolding, and retelling the story itself is considered an artful endeavor; teasing out the nuances and detail lends itself to be interpreted almost as an art form. Through this study I have attempted to describe these very personal experiences, lived experiences not to be captured in conceptual abstractions (Clandinin, 2013; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The potential benefits of this study are gaining deeper understanding of the marketing practices and behaviors first-generation immigrants utilize in the United States to break out from traditionally restricted low-value markets through the lens of their daily business experiences, their agency, and their entrepreneurial contexts. The findings of the study may provide information and effective strategies experienced by owners of successful SMEs that will help scholars to further understand successful behaviors and first-generation immigrants to reach higher-value markets and increase success rates.

The following are recommendations for future research I make based on my analysis of the narratives provided by the participants of this study from interviews, direct observation, reflective field notes, journal entries, and interactive discussions of the participants. While the findings of this study are not intended to be directly transferable as transferability is always left up to the reader to decide (Houghton et al., 2013), there is evidence to suggest that first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs need to gain a deeper understanding of and insights into how digital identities, adaptive marketing strategies, and opportunity recognition behaviors can positively influence home-based online businesses within the United States.

Through the findings from this research I have shown that first-generation immigrants within my participant sample each expressed a common marketing approach and digital identity to circumvent institutional bias and social norms that has contributed to enterprise longevity. Future research should promote and explore alternative views of first-generation immigrant entrepreneurial behaviors and marketing strategy that seek to create new opportunities for immigrant business owners running online home-based endeavors. Extending the research seeking to determine how immigrants can improve their working lives, contributing to economic growth for the host country, and through the diversity of their experiences explain how breakout from traditional low-growth ethnic enclave markets into high-value, high-growth international markets thereby improve their daily lives specifically and society in general. This study was exploratory and the findings provide opportunities for both qualitative replication and quantitative validation in future research (Morse, 2015).

Methodological Recommendation 1: Qualitative Replication

The importance and prevalence of replication research vary greatly depending on the applied discipline and research area considered in the study sample. The participants selected allowed for the data in this study to be collected from various demographic regions across the United States, ranging from New York to California. In social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, linguistics, and economics, use of replication research will contribute to the concept of the scientific method, involving observations that can be verified and repeated by other researchers. Scholars and researchers support

the stance that a study is not complete or valid until it has been replicated; hitherto, many qualitative study results generally prove difficult to reproduce, undermining the scholarly community's ability to accumulate knowledge (Marsden, Morgan-Short, Thompson, & Abugaber, 2018).

There is the need to replicate this exploratory narrative inquiry study within the United States with a similar set of parameters, method, and design, using a higher sample size to see if the results are supportive. To support my study, the original research question, method, and analysis should rigorously be maintained if the replication study will have the potential to empirically support the results of the initial study, either by clarifying issues raised by the initial study or extending its generalizability.

Replication of this study is supported by participants' comments and references to common circumstances such as institutional bias, lack of financial resources, ethnic background, technical skill sets, need for flexibility, and a desire for the business to be 'born global'. These common inferences relate to the following five conceptual categories: (a) experiences of immigrant online entrepreneurs with market entry; (b) resources accessible to immigrant entrepreneurs to pursue postindustrial opportunities; (c) experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs with breakout from traditionally restricted markets to enter high-growth sectors; (d) experiences of immigrant online entrepreneurs with entrepreneurial marketing activities; and, (e) themes from immigrant digital entrepreneurs' narratives of daily business experiences.

The five conceptual categories decomposed into 18 themes. Each of the six participants related experiences from their childhood, background, culture, or life experiences that served as the driving force of their entrepreneurial motivation. For example, P5 observed his father running a traditional business in his home country of Nigeria, the negative financial toll it took on his family, and his desire to share his country's culture with the world. He wanted to reach an international customer base and do it in a flexible low-cost, low-stress manner with limited capital or financial risk. Gaining a better work–life balance resonated with several participants. P3, P4, and P6 specifically noted that the basis of their drive to initiate their businesses began due to their desire to work for themselves in a more flexible manner.

Additional exploratory narrative inquiry, phenomenological, or ethnographic designed studies would help to aid in replication and extend the limited existing knowledge base for scholars. Using ethnography would offer a researcher insight into how different immigrant cultures approach running home-based online marketing and how their backgrounds may affect business sector focus or marketing strategy, showing how research findings will vary across different cultures. Research could also explore meanings and lived experiences of first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs related to sustainability beyond 5 years, behavior patterns, beliefs, failure lessons, racial bias, institutional bias, and best practices leading to the identified prime factors and tension related to running an online home-based business in the United States. Also, potential future research could include a phenomenological method whereby the researcher could

show how study findings might vary across different cultures through exploring perceptions, feelings, meaning, essence, and structure of lived experiences of a particular phenomenon.

I believe an important note for future researchers to consider is challenging classical models of how immigrants design their online digital identities and marketing strategy for international business endeavors. Traditional or historic models of marketing fail to provide the needed insights to explain how successful online business strategy is developed. User-driven international culture has an aspect of conscious and unconscious behaviors, social networking, social media, and international social community challenges tradition. The level of interconnectivity our modern society has shown in the last decade reveals a driven nonlinear approach to marketing strategy in order to be successful. Traditional marketing is applied to conscious cognitive aspects; the more difficult to understand are the unconscious and emotional sets of human behaviors (Cooke & Buckley, 2008).

Research shows that there is a large number of existing entrepreneur business developmental models describing how new ventures are created and developed, yet the information on how new ventures emerge is scarce in comparison and remains a challenge for entrepreneurship scholars (Becker, Knyphausen, & Brem, 2015; Rasmussen, Mosey, & Wright, 2011). I believe there is a gap in the literature related to how entrepreneurs recognize opportunity leading to potential research to develop an integrative perspective regarding the formation of entrepreneurial opportunities and how

digital marketing strategy can exploit those opportunities effectively. Anwar and Daniel (2016b) posited that online home-based businesses provide a unique set of conditions that lend themselves to innovate current methods of marketing and promote business diversity. Drawing on the work of Gelderen et al. (2008), Anwar and Daniel (2015) discussed the gaps in their literature review of home-based online business ventures and suggested extending research for a more inclusive foundation of knowledge regarding entrepreneur venture fit relative to explaining negative cycles or a 'dark side' versus positive cycles.

The findings of this study support how specifically first-generation immigrant business owners are risk adverse, have limited access to finance and limited resources, desire flexibility in their workday, and are highly motivated, yet are prepared to take on self-directed high-value market sector opportunities and innovate unique marketing approaches in developing a business. The 18 themes that emerged from the five conceptual categories frame the macro environment describing how participants managed their business behavioral practices within the context of U.S. governmental policies, laws, social norms, and their cultural background. The drive to improve society was shown in half of the participants' responses and reasons for initiating a business that supports their underlying goals for business. P1, P2, and P3 each expressed an innate desire to improve society in general, with P1 and P3 also focused on improvements back in their home countries, while P4, P5, and P6 expressed more of a self-driven desire to improve the lives of their families and employees within the United States. For example,

P1 stated: "I had a desire to make available to people materials and content on African culture, African history, by making more available to a wider distribution some books, some CDs on my website, and then started selling". Also, P2 stated: "I felt like I could give back to society through my efforts and knowledge …".

Also, on the basis of the study results, there is the indication that immigrant entrepreneurs are seeking nontraditional markets, with P5 sharing how choosing a market to fit his skills and personality were important: "I've tried participating in different things in the existing markets like ever popular like bitcoins, virtual currencies and all those stuffs but those are very volatile …". P5 also recognized that being born global addressed new digital market opportunities best: "I saw the world economies and markets change to more like online businesses and eCommerce flexible exchanges and electronic transactions". Each of the six participants shared how including family and cultural relationships were an important aspect of their chosen business model, it factored heavily in their desires to have a good work–life balance. These insights show how immigrant entrepreneurs are seeking their own path, finding market opportunities, choosing not to work in a traditional position, and begin as self-employed dynamic, innovative, entrepreneurial business owners.

Methodological Recommendation 2: Quantitative Validation Through Mixed Methods

The concept of transferability is the extent to which findings, data, and discovery from a situation or setting can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other

participants (Burkholder et al., 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I would recommend a quantitative research method to provide additional insight into the transferability of my exploration into first-generation immigrant online home-based business owners' daily lived experiences. Although many aspects of my study showed commonality and alignment between participants in many of the experiential responses, the voices had many weaker nuances that a more expanded study would solidify. Expanding the study to actively include selection of participants from across more diverse cultural backgrounds, demographic locations, business sectors, and broader high-growth and international markets could extend and confirm my findings. The study results are supported by the respondents' comments and study data specific to their cultural backgrounds and work-based environments in their specific locations (e.g., New York City, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Rochester, N.Y.), and relate to the themes of crucial life experiences, entrepreneurial motivation, managing work–life balance, and ability to effectively identify high-value online market opportunity. Application of a quantitative study methodology has the potential to substantiate discrepancies and similarities not recognized through qualitative research and may generate further recommendations for future studies.

Qualitative approaches can be further supported via quantitative methods since there is a heavy reliance on a positivist approach to performing research that dominates the literature with statistical multivariate techniques and standardized data collection for data analysis (Harkiolakis, 2017). Very few research studies exist in the literature on

immigrant entrepreneurs running home-based online businesses and the instruments

developed and tested on samples of men of Asian heritage running businesses in the UK,

hence characteristics of women, other migrant backgrounds, or business sectors may be

missed (Anwar & Daniel, 2015). Another interesting behavior noted in the participants'

responses aligns with Martinez Dy's (2014) concept of 'whitewashing' through creation

of a digital online identity, which each participant mentioned was an important aspect of

the marketing strategy to circumvent racial and communication bias with their

international customer base. Recognizing these types of issues raised by methodologists

in the study of immigrant online home-based business owners is a critical next step for

researchers to explore new areas and extend this study related to the themes of digital

entrepreneurship, work–life balance, building social capital, dynamic entrepreneurial

marketing plans, and internationalization of online business.

I would recommend that a quantitative approach be part of a mixed methods,

phenomenological, or ethnographic study to add broader perspective and vigorous

generalizability to support this qualitative narrative inquiry study design regarding the

successful behaviors of first-generation immigrants running home-based online

businesses in the United States. The recognized limitations of a qualitative narrative

inquiry study design, such as language description given by participants, lack of accuracy

in the mirrored reflection of lived experiences, translated meanings, and obscured or

omitted aspects (unconscious or consciously), threatens the validity of narrative inquiry

studies (Polkinghorne, 2005). Polkinghorne (2005) defined how the detachment of storied

descriptions and the actual lived experience meaning is posited as having four sources: (a) the limits of language to capture the complexity and depth of experienced meaning; (b) the limits of reflection to bring notice to the layers of meaning that are present outside of awareness; (c) the resistance of people because of social desirability to reveal fully the entire complexities of the felt meanings of which they are aware; and, (d) the complexity caused by the fact that texts are often a co-creation of the interviewer and participant. These recognized limitations of a qualitative narrative inquiry study design could be mitigated to a large extent through future alternative quantitative methods as discussed.

Recommendations for Future Research

Some of the 18 themes that emerged from my study revealed several opportunities for future research that will allow for a more contextual exploration of behaviors of first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs running online home-based businesses in the United States. In particular, they could be used as a basis for future research to explore how a full or partial application of specific digital marketing, market sector breakout, digital entrepreneurship, digital online identity motivations, and ethnic culture influences that drive entrepreneur behaviors could be used to improve the performance and sustainability of small to medium enterprises in the United States. Based on the data, analysis, and findings of this study, I have developed appurtenant recommendations for further research in four areas in particular.

Entrepreneurial ability to identify an online market opportunity. The theme 'entrepreneurial ability to identify an online market opportunity' provided insight into the

behaviors, competencies, and skills needed for immigrant online entrepreneurs to recognize the high-growth sector opportunities that can support a successful home-based online business. There is a need to explore behaviors that successful entrepreneurs have applied to understand the impact they have on enterprise initiation and sustainability. Another key area for further research is a greater understanding of how first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs develop their insights, competencies, and skills, how they interact, and how they can lead to high-value, high-growth markets and breakout from traditional ethnic business behaviors. Scholars have acknowledged the value of developing innovative behaviors, market planning techniques, digital presence, business competencies, and technical IT skills for immigrant entrepreneurs to compete in the highly connected socially fluid international community (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a; Kloosterman, 2010). As my study revealed the need for immigrant entrepreneurs running online home-based businesses to have well developed IT technical skills, aptitude, self-discipline, and market opportunity acumen, gaining a better understanding of how to recognize an opportunity structure of technology, demand for the product or service, production-related factors, and the institutional framework that is critical to online business success is needed.

Entrepreneurial planning for breakout from traditionally restricted markets. The theme 'entrepreneurial planning for breakout from traditionally restricted markets' directly focuses on the central research question of this study: How do immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses narrate stories

of entrepreneurial marketing experiences, and how do these experiences support breakout from traditionally restricted markets? Through this theme I found indications that each of the participants interviewed in this study have intentionally focused on higher-growth and higher-value markets instead of more traditional ethnic enclave-based business ventures to create a born global presence online. All of the participants in this study had highly developed IT skills, hired those skills, or took trainings to gain those skills that helped them to apply a dynamic marketing plan to lead their start-ups to a successful business and proven sustainability. The impact of these skills, innovative and adaptive marketing plans, on the performance and growth of their enterprises needs to be investigated. It is also important to understand if first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs have different behavioral approaches to market planning than other entrepreneurs, and how those behaviors support growth and restricted market breakout (Allen & Busse, 2016; Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2017; Griffin-EL & Olabisi, 2018).

Flexibility in planning moves within the digital marketplace. The theme 'flexibility in planning moves within the digital marketplace' indicated that the first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs interviewed in this study have recognized the impact of flexibility and adaptive methods (not chaotic) to become fast movers in their chosen markets to secure new customers, keep existing customers, and take advantage of new opportunities within the fast-to-market international marketplace. Several of the participants in this study commented on how the international digital platform phenomenon is near a tipping point to extend its impact on the global economy. The

impact the highly fluid digital platforms have on online entrepreneurial business ventures, which include search engines (Google), social platforms (Facebook), digital marketplaces (Amazon), and digitalized business technology is becoming increasingly ingrained in our social norms and behaviors; we are all connected, creating sustainable customer value.

This new environment will continue to influence business models and the market in innovative ways, requiring entrepreneurs to be highly flexible and adaptive to keep pace. P5 and P6 each mentioned how blockchain planning is important to their business planning. P5 stated: "I saw the world economies and markets change to more like online businesses and eCommerce flexible exchanges and electronic transactions …". P5 also discussed blockchain economy: "I've tried participating in different things in the existing markets like ever popular like bitcoins, virtual currencies and all those …". P3 commented on how distributed network solutions are changing how cybersecurity and financial services to the healthcare industry have had to be considered and her business plans revamped to accommodate. Further research needs to be pursued to consider how a global connected society will affect entrepreneurs in interacting with, reaching, and retaining customers in the future.

Business sustainability through online entrepreneurial marketing. The theme 'business sustainability through online entrepreneurial marketing' helps to describe how entrepreneurs are always pursuing market opportunities by applying constant innovation, reacting to changing customers' needs and wants in cheaper, faster, new, and better ways, resulting in customer acquisition and retention. This study on first-generation immigrant

entrepreneurship in the United States involved the recognition, execution, and exploitation of market opportunities for new goods and services across national borders that supported growth and sustainability of business ventures. The participants' lived experiences in running their successful ventures included the decisions and plans applied to gain new customers, retain existing customers, and add long-term customer value for sustainability. These storied new ventures dissected from the participant interviews and discussions revealed how most of the participants chose to initiate their business as born global (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Rennie, 1993; Qiu & Gupta, 2015).

To address the impact of how first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs will navigate sustainability and a highly dynamic digital market, further exploration of the first-generation immigrant entrepreneur in relation to their wider global socio-economic environment is needed. Further research should be conducted to consider the agency of the entrepreneur and the interaction of multi-platform digital marketplaces, level of reliance of business processes on technologies, international customer interconnectedness, and how global economies are shaping the meaning of success, failure, growth, and survival.

Implications

Positive Social Change

Entrepreneurial narratives can evolve into an ongoing social process in which people learn from their own experiences as well as others' and that influences the development of their unique individualistic theories, applying these theories, and

enabling social change within their communities (Rae, 2010). As a form of social capital and human capital, business networks within ethnic communities in the United States offer opportunities to promote positive social change for aspiring business owners to go beyond ethnic business networks' training, yet without proper education on the integration of marketing in entrepreneurship training curricula and programs (Kozlinska, 2012).

There is essentially no research to investigate why such an essential element of business operation is missing from training programs meant to facilitate novice entrepreneurs in successfully launching and operating a business. Considering 25% of small or medium enterprises in the United States are owned by immigrants (Blanding, 2016), my study addressed the critical element of how immigrant online entrepreneurs may obtain access to marketing education programs with practical value and delivered in a way that holds real-world significance for these entrepreneurs (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b).

To advance positive social change for immigrant entrepreneurs through education, training, and policy, immigrant entrepreneurs need a platform to voice their experiences (Ram et al., 2016). My qualitative, narrative study conducted within the constructivists' paradigm offers a platform to oppressed and marginalized social groups to share their experiences (Cooper & White, 2011). The conversation developed through the participants' storytelling using the in-depth interview method can provide new

perspectives and meanings from within a given social context to promote social change (Clandinin, 2007, 2013).

Immigrant entrepreneurs, both on-ground and the growing group emerging in the digital marketplace, make a substantial contribution to the U.S. economy. Immigrants account for nearly a third of all new small businesses and hold a third of internationally valid patents in the United States. All small business owners know the hardships related with starting and maintaining a business, and also know the value of a supportive business community, including customers and fellow entrepreneurs who can offer guidance on local regulations and are willing to help with referrals to new potential clients and partners. Policymakers must recognize that in the current economic and political climate in the United States, immigrant business owners face a certain level of scrutiny as well as judgment that can make their breakout from traditional markets more challenging. Immigrant-owned businesses are undeniably an important part of United States economic life. It is recommended that policymakers in the United States unfriendly to immigrant entrepreneurs study the experiences of online immigrant entrepreneurs and contribute to positive social change through recognizing the value this vital group contributes to the building of the national, regional, and local communities' economies.

Policy Implications

This study has critical implications for policymakers within the area of labor discrimination. Based on prior research, there are indications that the level of discrimination in the online environment is tantamount to that encountered in the offline

world and that online interactions, albeit socially and visually rich, do not obscure or disregard racialized bodies (Daniels, 2009, 2012). Martinez Dy (2014) highlighted the practice of whitewashing, noting that immigrant entrepreneurs hide their ethnic or racial identities in the online world to improve their business status. The important information gleaned from this narrative study by analyzing its participants' storytelling may inform entrepreneurship educators and policymakers of the socially constructed reality as well as what challenges immigrants who own online home-based businesses have to contend with.

In theory, there is no government objection in the United States to immigrants starting businesses, provided they have the proper documentation. Immigrants have higher business ownership and formation rates than nonimmigrants, primarily in large urban areas where ethnic cultures are embedded in urban life. The one area that causes issues is the gray zone that immigrant entrepreneurs enter when their business has no physical presence. This creates challenges for immigrants and nonimmigrants alike, but it was especially troublesome for immigrants. In states with significant foreign business presence, financial institutions like banks and insurance companies have greater experience of serving people who are not American. States that are 'unfriendly' to foreign businesses require state residency to let an entrepreneur become an owner, manager, shareholder, member, or director of any business entity. Disseminating the results of my study in the extant literature can better inform policymakers on the shared value of online immigrant entrepreneurship in the United States between immigrants and

host-country nationals. The continuation of such research to inform policymakers may support alteration in certain state laws that set up multiple legal challenges for immigrant entrepreneurs to operate on-ground or online businesses.

Theoretical Implications

The lack of exploratory research on the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets, is a critical knowledge gap resulting in entrepreneurship theoretical frameworks lacking diversity, generalizability of findings, and ethnic inclusivity (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b). Only one narrative study in the literature conducted in the United Kingdom has applied an entrepreneurial marketing lens to explore immigrant entrepreneurship in online home-based businesses and with a demographically skewed sample of only male respondents with Asian heritage (Anwar & Daniel, 2016b). On the basis of the study's findings, there is indication that while immigrant online home-based businesses appear to offer opportunities for a breakout, the reliance on haphazard marketing lacking in an innovative approach resulted in highly homogeneous approaches to marketing. The authors of this study recommended that further similar studies be conducted in other high-receiving immigrant nations, and with a demographically broader ethnic immigrant sample, to empirically investigate the experiences of other groups of immigrant entrepreneurs with online home-based businesses in using

entrepreneurial marketing to create breakout opportunities (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a, 2016b).

My study, as a replication of Anwar and Daniel's 2016 studies in the United States, confirms the importance of anchoring immigrants' digital entrepreneurial experiences in their specific social and economic contexts and the need for more multi-level analysis to capture the complex interplay of micro-level individual, meso-level organizational, and macro-level national influences regarding the study problem. These are all pathways of future theoretical investigations that can better inform academics, policymakers, financiers, and immigrant entrepreneurs. Through empirical investigation into immigrant digital entrepreneurs' experiences with entrepreneurial marketing to support their online businesses, my study fills the gap of missing knowledge in the theoretical foundations of the conceptual framework. This study contributes original, qualitative data to entrepreneurial marketing theory and resource-dependency theory that may prove useful in future related research.

Recommendations for Practice

The results of this study will be important in empowering immigrant entrepreneurs who, due to the financial and social barriers endangering the sustainability of immigrant firms as well as business start-ups in general, may be dissuaded from initiating a small business. The study's results may be used to inform novice immigrant entrepreneurs that the initiation of an online home-based business, along with innovative thinking, can help mitigate the many barriers that immigrant entrepreneurs commonly

encountered in the past. The study results, which include experiences and information with entrepreneurial marketing, may be used to prove that initiating an online home-based business can be another active route for immigrant entrepreneurs to build a sustainable business.

In the United States, almost 25% of small, on-ground, low-market sector enterprises held by immigrants are more likely to fail than those founded by natives (Blanding, 2016). Immigrant entrepreneurs tend to embed their businesses in ethnically similar neighborhoods (Halkias et al., 2011). Kloosterman (2010) posited that ethnic/immigrant entrepreneurs could realize opportunities to launch businesses in high-threshold, high-growth, postindustrial sectors. The Gen-Zs and Millennials within the immigrant entrepreneurs demographic are now working through online home-based businesses to support professional practice of growth and breakout opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs to break out from restricted markets. The results of this study make a contribution to practice towards supporting the sustainability of immigrant entrepreneurship.

Conclusions

While there has been a great deal of research on immigrant entrepreneurship in the United States, as unique sources of innovation and hence promoting diversity in the business ecosystem (Van Gelderen, Brand et al., 2008; Whalen & Akaka, 2016), little is known about the business practices in online home-based businesses owned by immigrant entrepreneurs, including those of entrepreneurial marketing (Anwar & Daniel,

2015). Kloosterman (2010) asserted that "qualitative research [is required] to grasp the social embeddedness, strategies, and careers of immigrant entrepreneurs" (p. 41) and to gain in-depth insight into the immigrant entrepreneurship experience. Scholars recommended that a deeper understanding is needed on the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets (Allen & Busse, 2016; Anwar & Daniel, 2017; Griffin-EL & Olabisi, 2018).

The findings of this empirical investigation advance knowledge on the interface between immigrant entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial marketing and online home-based business, and contribute original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework. In applying entrepreneurial marketing theory (Stokes, 2000) and RBT (Barney, 1991) in this study, an empirical and theoretical contribution is made to the emerging literature regarding online home-based business as a leading generator of income resource for immigrant entrepreneurs (Anwar & Daniel, 2014) and interfaced literature in mixed embeddedness and resources and opportunity structure accessible to immigrant entrepreneurs (Adendorff & Halkias, 2014; Kloosterman, 2010; Kloosterman et al., 2016), to guide and interpret the experiences of immigrants owning online home-based businesses.

Through my study I have provided a theoretical and practical understanding of how online immigrant-owned firms can enter the market in postindustrial sectors and

strengthen their longevity through entrepreneurial marketing activities (Anwar & Daniel, 2016a). To advance positive social change for immigrant entrepreneurs through education, training, and policy, this category of people needs a platform to voice their experiences (Ram et al., 2016). The qualitative, narrative approach I used within this study's design offered a platform to oppressed and marginalized social groups to share their experiences (Cooper & White, 2011). The conversation developed through the participants' storytelling using the in-depth interview method can provided new perspectives and meanings from within a given social context and promote social change (Clandinin, 2007, 2013). The important information gleaned from this narrative study by analyzing its participants' storytelling and also how they relay their stories can help to promote social change by revealing to entrepreneurship educators and policymakers the socially constructed reality as well as what challenges immigrants who own online home-based businesses contend with on a daily basis. Future research should promote alternative views of online home-based business that aim to create new possibilities for immigrants' working lives, and in which the diversity of their experiences is captured.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

Good day, I am a doctoral student at Walden University inviting you to participate in my research about the daily business leadership experiences of immigrant online business owners in the United States running online businesses and the implications of these practices for enterprise longevity five years after their business's start-up phase. The purpose of this study is to explore the entrepreneurial marketing experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in the US operating online home-based businesses, and the implications of these experiences for supporting breakout from traditionally restricted markets.

Eligibility for participation in this study includes the following criteria: a) adults running successful businesses, and b) first-generation immigrant founders of a small-to-medium online business enterprise, five years after start-up within the United States. I believe that your experience would be a great contribution to the study. Therefore, I am reaching out to discern if you might have an interest in participating in the research. The study is important as the findings may provide current and future immigrant business leaders of small to medium-sized enterprises with the tools, marketing, and strategies needed to address inequities in employment, market segment, and upward mobility faced by immigrant business owners in the US. Additionally, leadership research often focuses heavily on studies conducted from the host business owner perspective, and this contribution would add to the immigrant business owner leadership body of knowledge.

If you would be interested in being a part of this study, please review and return the signed consent form which is attached to this email. If you would like to request additional information, you may reply to this email. Thank you in advance for your consideration.
Respectfully,
Craig D. Smith

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Participant No. Identifier: _____

Ethnicity: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

Years as immigrant entrepreneur in the US: _____ Location(s): _____

Years of operating online business: _____ Home-based: _____

1. How and why did you set up your business?

   - check for start date (year)

2. Why did you set your business up at home?

   - What are the benefits and challenges of working from home?

3. Why did you start an online business?

   - What are the benefits and challenges of an online business?

4. How long have you lived in the US?

5. How has your background influenced your business?

   - Check if it has influenced the type of business, home-based/online

   - Check if it has influenced the formation of their business or their approach to

     running it

6. What ongoing links do you have with [state name of country of origin] – and how do

   these influence your business?

7. Has running your business changed your view and approach to living in the US?

   - and/or has living in the US changed your approach to running a business? In what

     ways?

8. Is your family involved in the operation of your business – or friends? How and why are they involved?

9. Describe your approach to starting and developing your business? For example,

   - did you know what you were going to do and develop a business plan with sales forecasts?

   - did you raise external funding?

   - did you have the resources and skills you needed – if not, how have you obtained or developed these?

   - have you developed alliances with other firms or gained commitments from customers or suppliers?

10. Are there any other issues or factors that you have found important in starting and running your business?

Appendix C: Permission to Use Interview Protocol From Prof. Anwar Naveed

Daphne Halkias, PhD <daphne_halkias@yahoo.com>
To: Naveed Anwar

Oct 8 at 4:15 PM

Dear Naveed-- thank you so much for your collaboration. When we are done with the study, we will publish and you will be co-author. Happy to collaborate in similar research initiatives.

Best regards--
Daphne

_____

Daphne Halkias, PhD.
Professor, International School of Management, Paris, France
Fellow, Institute of Coaching at McLean Hospital, Harvard Medical School Affiliate
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⌄ Hide original message

On Monday, October 8, 2018, 3:43:07 PM GMT+3, Naveed Anwar <naveed.anwar@northumbria.ac.uk> wrote:

Dear Prof Halkias,

Thanks for your email. I am pleased to know that you are following my papers. It is also good to know about your student's research. Please let me if I can be on any help for this research and I am looking forward to do some research/paper/grant collaboration in this research area.

Please see below our interview protocol. I hope it is helpful.

Online Home-Based Businesses
Interview Guide