Systematic Review: Immigrant Entrepreneurship on Entrepreneurial Opportunity Identification in Europe

1. Introduction

Increasing numbers of immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe has driven growing research interest in the immigrant entrepreneurship field. Following the United States and Australia, Europe has the amount of entrepreneurs among the immigrants particularly in Austria, Germany, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Spain and Italy (Vinogradov and Jørgensen, 2017; Efendic, Andersson, and Wennberg, 2016; Solano, 2016; Levie, 2007; Kloosterman and Rath, 2000; Boissevain, 1984). The main reason that immigrant entrepreneurs flourish in Europe over the last two decades is due to the democratic and stable politically free institution, which providing support and better socio-economic opportunity (Autio and Fu, 2015). The immigrant entrepreneurship phenomenon in Europe is arguable of particular importance to economic growth. It comprehends to unique human capital resources that they are capable with at outside their country-of-origin, in comparison to the non-immigrant entrepreneurs. Recent empirical studies in Europe illustrated the significant impact of immigrant entrepreneurship from several countries (Munkejord, 2017; Vandor and Franke, 2016; Mingione, 2009). OECD report (2018) indicates that immigrant entrepreneurs are more likely to involve in entrepreneurial opportunity identification than non-immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe are. However, there are little studies on a comparative method about entrepreneurial opportunity identification between immigrant entrepreneurs and the non-immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013). Therefore, before conducting further investigate on entrepreneurial opportunity identification among the immigrant entrepreneurs, this paper offers a systematic review of the issue to highlight potential variables that contribute to the topic.

The importance of this study is that it brings an effort to strengthen the research background of immigrant entrepreneurship in Europe and produces official data of the phenomenon, which could nurture research on this topic. Scholars indicate that the financial and economic indicators are essential to the immigrant entrepreneurship in Europe research ventures. Meanwhile, characteristics of the immigrant entrepreneurs are significant to study the phenomenon because it is useful to compare differences with the native entrepreneurs (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013). Apart from providing various range of services and goods to

---

1 Corresponding author: Dr. Nur Suhaili Binti Ramli, email: nursuhaili.ramli@unive.it; Supervisor/Collaborator: Prof. Vladi Finotto; Institution: Department of Management, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice. This is work-in-progress paper. Please do not cite or distribute without permission.
the community, immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe can enrich the strength of particular towns, streets, cities or of specific industrial areas (Rath, and Swagerman, 2016). The European Commission (EC) aware of the potential on immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe and had introduced ‘The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan’ to facilitate entrepreneurship among migrants that already present and residing in Europe (The European Commission, 2015). It summarises that immigrant entrepreneurship phenomenon in Europe had cherished the appearance of the city, promote diversity, and form the base of integration structure. Although many studies on immigrant entrepreneurship in Europe significantly studied particularly on characteristics, push and pull factors and economic contributions to the host country account looking at the social participation of immigrant entrepreneurs like how they see entrepreneurial opportunity at their host country have been limited (Zhou and Cho, 2010). Prior studies had outlined the importance of immigrant entrepreneurship in Europe from a different lens.

The motivation of this study relies on the emerging interest of scholars in the last two decades on immigrant entrepreneurship in Europe as a research stream, and the burgeoning of entrepreneurial programs promote by local governments, agencies, and non-government organisation (NGO) around Europe (The European Commission, 2015). Scholars pointed out that recent literature reviews have increasing concentration on the entrepreneurial opportunity identification, ethnicities in immigrant entrepreneurship, the growing heterogeneity of the geographical areas of investigation (Vinogradov and Jørgensen, 2017; Elo, 2016; Lassalle, and McElwee, 2016), and an increasing demand from other than sociological and quantitative approach (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013). Thus, it is essential to conduct this study while the European Union is working on the issue of migration now. The significance of concentrating on those migrants who are doing entrepreneurial activities is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge through the literature on immigrant entrepreneurship and is hoped to give impact on immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe through the dissemination of the research findings. Another reason that motivates this study is that since existing studies favourably discuss on their economic effects of this phenomenon in Europe, other than non-economic forces must not be ignored such as social contribution that immigrant entrepreneurs make to local economies in the European cities (Jones, Ram, and Villares-Varela, 2018; Turkina and Thi Thanh Thai, 2013).

In sum, this study is the first comprehensive review to focus on immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe on entrepreneurial opportunity identification. Therefore, it is appropriate to conduct a systematic review of immigrant entrepreneurship in Europe before further investigate the phenomenon in a later stage.
2. Methodology

This study follows the “systematic review process” using five peer-reviewed journal databases such as Business Source Premier, JSTOR, Scopus, ISI Web of Science, and ProQuest and searches the appropriate keywords related to the topic (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003). The significance of using these five databases excerpt information on the range of high impact journals, restrictions, update frequency, and practical in use and offered several search abilities (Falagas et al., 2008). The search used a combination of text words and indexed terms. It involved generic terminology such as “immigrant entrepreneurs”, “immigrant entrepreneurship” AND specific types of scheme like “Europe” OR “entrepreneurial” OR “Italy” OR “Germany” OR “the Netherlands” OR “United Kingdom” OR “France” OR “Belgium” OR “Sweden” OR “Norway” OR “Spain” OR “Austria” OR “Greece”. As such, the definition of immigrant entrepreneurship is broad and inclusive of many subtopics.

The significance of conducting a systematic review on immigrant entrepreneurship in Europe is to limit bias, understand the trends in a particular area of the field, and aware of raising issues. In sum, the general aim is to produce a clear overview of the evidence in a particular research area (Petticrew and Roberts, 2008). In doing so, it helps for the replicability of the study within immigrant entrepreneurship in Europe later (Jones, Coviello, and Tang, 2011). The protocol of conducting the review has some procedures and steps to identify the relevant and appropriate peer-reviewed articles for further analysis. It has three main procedures, namely Procedure (1) – Identifying, Procedure (2) – Selecting, and Procedure (3) – Scrutinizing. Figure 1 below recaps the logical flowchart uses in the review.
3. The entrepreneurial opportunity identification

Opportunities in this section follow a definition as solutions to market inefficiencies because they always exist and never reach full productivity or stability (Vinogradov and Elam, 2010). Although the concept of entrepreneurial opportunity identification is heavily used in research, the correlation between the applied study of opportunity identification and the theoretical paradigm of alertness has complexity and understated (Kirzner, 2009; Foss and Klein, 2010). Many studies explored various factors that show a significant role in identifying the entrepreneurial opportunity for new business ventures (Shane, 2001; Cooper, Folta, and Woo, 1995). The interest among scholars of examining entrepreneurial opportunity identification gradually evolved (Rath and Kloosterman, 2000; Baycan-Levent and Kundak, 2009; Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013; Vandor and Franke, 2016; Vinogradov and Jørgensen, 2017). The analysis from 70 articles summarises three critical factors contributed to entrepreneurial opportunity identification. The most common factors identified are appealing in a vigorous examination of opportunities (Shane, 2000; Bouk, Vedder, and Poel, 2013; Guercini, Milanesi, and Dei Ottati, 2017). It follows by alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities (Lassalle and McElwee, 2016; Vandor and Franke, 2016). Previous knowledge of an industry, competitors, markets, or customers necessarily for identifying entrepreneurial opportunities are crucial (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013; Baklanov et al. 2014; Carbonell, Hernandez, and García, 2014). Therefore, investigating the debates within these three spheres on the target group would be compelling to the entrepreneurship research stream.

As pointed out in many empirical studies, geographical origins are an essential factor behind the different entrepreneurial rates within the immigrant group. Therefore, this study split the immigrant population based on the geographical categories classified in the earlier section: North Europe, South Europe, West Europe, and Central and East Europe, while comparing the abovementioned factors on entrepreneurial opportunity identification.

3.1 Active search for entrepreneurial opportunities

Several studies argue that approach to correct information plays a vital part in entrepreneurial opportunity identification (Boissevain et al. 1990; Shane, 2000; Fresnoza-Flot, and Pécout, 2007; Sepulveda, Syrett,
and Lyon, 2011; Guercini, Milanesi, and Dei Ottati, 2017). It describes the action by the entrepreneurs on an active search for entrepreneurial opportunities. Research findings from 70 articles summarise that immigrant entrepreneurs are actively searching for information on entrepreneurial activities at a host country, and it is a critical factor in entrepreneurial opportunity identification. However, several studies have confirmed that the propensity or capability to turn into self-employed varies between non-immigrant (native) entrepreneurship and the immigrant entrepreneurs due to appropriate information that they gathered (Fairlie and Meyer, 1996; Vinogradov and Jørgensen, 2017).

Studies that focused on Central and Eastern European countries are to be less likely to recognise the entrepreneurial opportunities from consistent information like radio, news, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, and other publications. Instead, they are comfortable pursued the information from their contact, self-observation, and networks, which evident from two cases. First, Turkish immigrants have primarily run businesses in two central municipalities in Switzerland, such as Zurich and Geneva, which have a high density of foreigners (Baycan-Levent and Kundak, 2009). It explains that they depend mostly on the pull factors at the host country, such as to fulfil the niche demands; and receiving demand from the direct source through networks, personal contact, and self-observation in a high density of foreigners. Second, the information about the demand for co-ethnic markets becoming attractive to customers beyond a particular ethnic community. In Austria, there is evidence that niche market orientation is shaped by social embeddedness, which information on demand for certain products obtained from either personal contact, self-observation, or face-to-face request, where encountering not only own ethnics plea but also the majority community (Parzer, 2016). Hence, this factor encourages the immigrant to run various businesses within the area where they live. However, the evidence from the Central and East Europe is not enough to generalise that the immigrant entrepreneurs are actively searching for entrepreneurial activities using only personal contact, self-observation, or face-to-face request. Therefore, it is highly recommended to conduct a few studies in some countries within the region to add knowledge and draw overview.

North European countries like Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland considered an emerging region of immigrant entrepreneurship. The immigrant entrepreneurs in this region seek entrepreneurial activities information through various channels, which some are associated with accidental sighting or thorough search for opportunities that can generate importance (Vinogradov and Jørgensen, 2017). The entrepreneurs regardless of their background, may actively seek appropriate information for their entrepreneurial activities. However, immigrant entrepreneurs are expected to be adequate at it because the information that may be extracted from other languages is limited (foreign languages that are available at
a host country) like news channels, newspapers, advertisements, and demands (Vinogradov and Jørgensen, 2017). Therefore, the information on entrepreneurial activities obtained by the immigrant entrepreneurs could be different from the non-immigrant entrepreneurs.

In the Scandinavians countries, the information on the opportunity for entrepreneurship may recognise as an opportunity by the immigrant entrepreneurs but the non-immigrant entrepreneurs not perceived it as an opportunity, due to different sources and languages (Baklanov et al. 2014). The different view is because through strong ties between immigrant entrepreneurs and their families or co-ethnics network, particularly those within the same ethnicity, are easily accessible to entrepreneurial opportunity information, guidance, advice, materials, and contacts (Katila and Wahlbeck, 2012). Besides, social bonds are one of the most critical foundations of entrepreneurial information that prominent to the identification of business opportunities at a host country, other than news channels newspapers, and advertisements (Shane, 2004). These findings are evident in two separate studies conducted in Norway and Denmark. The immigrant entrepreneurs in Norway often well access to an understanding of public information related to entrepreneurial processes. They use distinct methods to search for information and identify more significant consumer needs compared to the non-immigrant entrepreneurs (Vinogradov and Jørgensen, 2017). In the same vein, the immigrant entrepreneurs in Denmark reduce the exposure to risks through social ties, which they obtained entrepreneurial information from trusted sources like family networks and their relatives or friends that had established their businesses there for some times (Baklanov et al. 2014). Although it is evident that the immigrant entrepreneurs depend profoundly on their social ties for getting entrepreneurial information, evidence from the prior study highlighted a different finding. According to Deakins et al. (2007), second-generation immigrants might contravene from the first-generation immigrants who may have excellent access to connecting social capital through more diverse network contacts including within their immigrant and non-immigrant ties.

South Europe observe a similar pattern of searching for entrepreneurial opportunities among immigrant entrepreneurs. Italy, Spain, Greece, and Portugal are popular destinations among immigrants to access Europe continent. Many immigrant entrepreneurs headed to the wealthiest and most dynamic areas in Italy especially in the North region like Piemonte, Lombardy, Veneto and Emilia Romagna upon personal contact and advice by their family network, relatives, and the similar ethnic community that established in such areas (Mingione, 2009; Ambrosini, 2012; Solano, 2016). On the other hand, there are two reasons they heading to these geographical areas. First, these areas are well known as industrial districts, which they can develop profitable, innovative products, markets, and networks. The Italian industrial regions and local supply chains for businesses are highly reliable and accessible (Maria and Finotto, 2008).
Second, there are many co-ethnic concentrated in the areas. Thus, the immigrant entrepreneurs see it as two types of opportunities – relying on either the local community or co-ethnics. Many immigrant entrepreneurs in Italy mainly hire employees from within the entrepreneur’s cultural community because the information about entrepreneurial activities and employment are circulated within it due to strong language and cultural barrier, for example, the Chinese, which commonly found in businesses like restaurants, textile, garment, and food (Mingione, 2009).

In Spain, immigrant entrepreneurs are complacent to live and operate their businesses in the high immigrant populations’ areas such as Catalonia, Madrid, Barcelona, Andalusia, Valencia, and the Canary Islands. Therefore, the immigrants in these areas actively spread information to their community, including entrepreneurial activities through social ties. For instance, the Romanian immigrants distributed brief news items about Romania, distribute some publications like magazines, and establishing a Romanian radio station in Barcelona, which strengthen the network and make the information quickly spread including about entrepreneurial opportunity in a host country (Urbano, Toledano, and Ribeiro-Soriano, 2011).

Portugal and Greece illustrate the similar patterns on immigrant entrepreneurship. In Portugal, immigrant entrepreneurs mostly populated in the metropolitan area of Lisbon, Algarve, and Alenjeto. The search for entrepreneurial opportunity in Portugal relies on the information through social network like family and ethnicity ties, which evidence primarily by the Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs (Oliveira, 2010). Meanwhile, the immigrant entrepreneurs in Greece encountering the particular demand such as niche or co-ethnic products for the community in principal cities like Athens and Thessaloniki. A comparative study between immigrant ethnicities in Greece, such as Pakistani, African, and Albanian, highlighted new findings that could potentially further research. According to Halkias (2015), these immigrant entrepreneurs seek entrepreneurial opportunities through a robust cultural barrier like information share only among Pakistani, African communicate among their community to produce largely homogenous customer base, while the Albanian supplied to a more diverse customer base.

From cases in different countries, the immigrant entrepreneurs in Southern European countries are slightly similar in term of involving in the informal economy and establishing their businesses in the richest and dynamic cities. Although immigrant entrepreneurs identified as a ‘whole’ group, it is highly recommended to extend research on comparative studies between immigrant ethnicities on obtaining entrepreneurial opportunity information. Several cases had illustrated a compelling foundation for discoveries.
The pattern of searching for entrepreneurial opportunities in Western European countries is varied. The family network is essential to be seen in particular immigrant entrepreneurs groups like those in the Southern European countries, and ethnic-based like Afghan, Somali, Indian, and Arabian. In contrast, co-ethnic links are more likely to offer different information and resources compared to the family network (Wang and Altinay, 2012). The immigrant entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, have a balanced combination between the family network and co-ethnic network. According to Bouk, Vedder, and Poel (2013), both family members and co-ethnics are essential suppliers of capitals like financial, information, labour, market prospects, and supply chains especially during critical start-up phase at a host country.

The immigrant entrepreneurs in the Netherlands are vigorously penetrating for new opportunities and markets in other regions, which their same ethnicities were active in the same businesses (Bouk, Vedder, and Poel, 2013). In the same vein, the network based on friendship allows for the flow of information within the Filipino immigrant entrepreneurs in Paris (Fresnoza-Flot, and Pécoud, 2007). This evidence supports the theory by Light et al. (1993) that the role of networks is vital in providing entrepreneurial information and various kind of assistance to immigrant entrepreneurs in a host country. They are also consistent with Aliaga-Isla and Rialp (2012), which immigrant entrepreneurs decided to venture their businesses based on free information and in trust in their fellow citizens or co-ethnics.

Although some of the immigrant entrepreneurs came from active trading and enterprise societies like the Somali, Afghan and Pakistani entrepreneurs, a few of communities studied had partial, such as Latin American and Kurdish entrepreneurs, or very limited business traditions such as Chinese, Ethiopian, Indonesian, Turkish, and Vietnamese entrepreneurs (Sepulveda, Syrett and Lyon, 2011). In the same vein, Vietnamese entrepreneurs in London revealed that their friends all over the world give information on products and check goods before shipping to customers, and this access to different locations with friendship network provided a more extensive choice of sources and information on entrepreneurial activities at a host country, which adds evidently to prior research (Bagwell, 2015).

In summary, the information searching for entrepreneurial opportunities by the immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe has diverse views depending on geographical regions and ethnic-based. Also, the immigrant entrepreneurs’ competences to get information on entrepreneurial opportunities influenced by the differences between countries they come from and the circulation of networks, which explained the different products and services they offer at the host country. It concludes that the capabilities to search
entrepreneurial opportunity information by immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe vary between individuals, and it depends on factors like network ties, which aligned with the expectation by prior studies (Foss and Klein, 2018; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Shane, 2000).

### 3.2 Alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities

The second factors contributed to entrepreneurial opportunity identification by immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe is alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities. Foss and Klein (2010) distinguish two strands to examine entrepreneurial opportunity identification; a Wieser-Hayek-Kirzner strand that is highlighting on knowledge, process, and discovery; while a Bohm-Bawerk-Mises-Rothbard strand that is highlighting on financial control and decision-making under uncertainty. This study follows their suggestion while examining the content of the articles to draw generalisation.

Alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities means the immigrant entrepreneurs accentuates the opportunities that occasionally can be identified by individuals or specific group (e.g., ethnic-based) rather than actively search for them. It contradicts with the action by immigrant entrepreneurs that are actively searching for opportunities discussed in the previous section. It also explains the capacity to identify the opportunities when they visibly emerge, for instance, immigrant entrepreneurs venture into restaurants and grocery stores to fulfil the niche demands in the areas like Thai foods, Indian spices, Korean herbs, and few others. It aligns with the explaining by Puhakka (2011) that the alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities by the immigrant entrepreneurs at a host country as “a unique preparedness to recognise them” (p.86).

Kirzner (1979) defines entrepreneurial alertness as an individual’s capability to recognise new opportunities that unnoticed by others. The analysis scrutinised on the meaning and application of ‘alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities’ in every 70 articles. In general, findings indicate that rich experiences and knowledge influenced immigrant entrepreneurs’ capabilities to identify entrepreneurial opportunities at a host country in Europe. The alertness of entrepreneurial opportunity among immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe divided into two, either forming or exploiting opportunities available (Vandor and Franke, 2016). Comparative analysis indicates that social-cultural environment in a host country influences the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunity through persuading perceived risks, desirability,
and entrepreneurial activities (Shane, 2004). Therefore, it advances the immigrant entrepreneurship study that is focusing on the European geographical.

Although network ties play a significant role in immigrant entrepreneurship, immigrant entrepreneurs do not necessarily depend on their ethnic economy. Zubair and Brzozowski (2018) delve into immigrant entrepreneurs in a scarce area in Austria where markets are poorly developed, and there is very small or none population of the immigrants. Their study demonstrates that immigrant entrepreneurs have to go outside both traditional ethnic-based businesses and not dependent on co-ethnic social capital to venture their businesses because there is no support from their ethnic economy. It contradicts than those immigrant entrepreneurs that are venturing entrepreneurial opportunity at large, vibrant, and dynamic cities discussed in the previous section. The contradiction suggests that it is significant to carry out a study that compares a correlation between immigrant entrepreneurs and opportunities in different European cities; particularly between those highly populated with immigrants and those have less population of the immigrants. Aliaga-Isla and Rialp (2013) highlight that immigrant entrepreneurship understudied in Europe compared to the USA, Australia, and Canada, and it has massive sources and configuration to study the phenomenon in various context.

In the same vein, rural immigrant entrepreneurs in Norway embedded in places they live in to explain the alertness on the entrepreneurial opportunity, which they recognise and build resources and opportunities within the local community rather than co-ethnic community (Munkejord, 2017). It supports the prior study by Yeasmin (2016) that illustrate rural community and spatial embeddedness through social relations, and integration are crucial factors, which immigrant entrepreneurs must aware while recognising entrepreneurial opportunity, and by considering it, they may be able to rebuild the rural areas of Lapland, Finland. The pattern on alertness of entrepreneurial opportunity in North Europe illustrated from the rural areas, and no study explains and focuses on big cities in any Scandinavian countries, or a comparative study between immigrant entrepreneurs in rural and big cities areas. Therefore, it is interesting to examine the alertness of entrepreneurial opportunity within this context by emphasising on knowledge, process, discovery, financial control and decision-making under uncertainty, which elements were pointed out by Foss and Klein (2010).

There is a contradiction situation in the Southern European countries compared to Central, East, and the North part of Europe. As discussed earlier, the immigrant entrepreneurs in Italy mainly concentrate on the Northern part of the country, particularly in big cities like Milan and Turin. Hence, the alertness to entrepreneurial opportunity amongst immigrant entrepreneurs, mainly Moroccan, in Milan is focused to
the immigrant populations living in those areas that have some similar traits (e.g., language, religious views, and food) while they are from different country-of-origins (Solano, 2016). Therefore, Moroccan entrepreneurs perceive these areas mainly because they are aware of their economic power, demands, and the Arabic language is a **lingua franca** in the community to grasp available opportunities. In this case, alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities is not coming from the network ties that discussed earlier but through the individuals’ perception of available resources and opportunities at their local community. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate on immigrant entrepreneurs that venture their businesses in big cities has a different way in perceiving entrepreneurial opportunity identification. Cases in Italy are accentuating that immigrant entrepreneurs do not always rely on the information within network ties but also alertness to entrepreneurial by self-observation.

In contrast, the immigrant entrepreneurs in Greece are not aware of the local government support for entrepreneurship that could support them in their start-up businesses (Halkias, 2015). It illustrates that immigrant entrepreneurs have lack of alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities available. Therefore, it emphatically explains that immigrant entrepreneurs in Greece mostly depend on the information from network ties before venturing their businesses because they may come from active trading and enterprise societies (Sepulveda, Syrett and Lyon, 2011). Immigrant entrepreneurship at country-level-analysis within the same region also elucidate a different result. Thus, a comparative study between countries on alertness to entrepreneurial opportunity could be valuable, as it will add evidence for theory building.

Finding from selected samples indicate that immigrant entrepreneurs in West Europe have a different view on alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities. For example, the Polish immigrant entrepreneurs in Berlin are unresponsively reacting to stagnant opportunities. However, they based on their insights and understanding of location at the host country, financial control, or judgmental decision-making abilities (Lassalle and McElwee, 2016), which elements emphasised in the Bohm-Bawerk-Mises-Rothbard strand (Foss and Klein, 2010). In general, the trend among immigrant entrepreneurs in Germany follows a similar pattern. The intense feelings of discrimination by some group of migrants that still carry their foreign passport are more likely to become entrepreneurs in Germany compared to the non-immigrant entrepreneurs (Constant and Zimmermann, 2006). It explains the significant reason that leads immigrant entrepreneurs to the judicial decision-making abilities on their entrepreneurial behaviour, which correlates with the financial concern in Germany. In the same vein, the immigrant entrepreneurs in the Netherlands are aware on the financial support available such as from a combination of family and friends, co-ethnic network, suppliers, banks, and the local government (Bouk, Vedder and Poel, 2013). It shows the judgmental decision-making with emphasis on financial resources and governance has a natural
association on alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities at a host country, for instance, having monetary relief at the beginning of start-up phase would surge the capability of return-on-investment in the long run (Foss and Klein, 2018). The similar situation in London shows financial concern and judgment decision-making abilities to involve in entrepreneurial activities is high among immigrant entrepreneurs. Sepulveda, Syrett, and Lyon (2011) elucidate that immigrant entrepreneurs have difficulties accessing to the mainstream finance for their lack of collateral and financial records in the UK, which often left feeling excluded and sense discriminated. It explains their action under uncertainty (Foss and Klein, 2018). For example, venturing through loans from their network ties and mostly ended with informal businesses. Case studies from the Western European countries provide a point on ‘alertness to entrepreneurial opportunity,’ which financial constraint and judgment decision-making abilities by immigrant entrepreneurs would give profits or return-on-investment to them while identifying entrepreneurial opportunity at a host country. It is a stark contrast with many prior studies emphasising on knowledge, process, and discovery. Hence, it outlines the crucial point that entrepreneurial opportunities cannot exist until profits are recognised (Foss and Klein, 2018, p.15), which existing studies offer important points broadly. Therefore, the next stage of this study is to test this theory and provide evidence.

In summary, alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities by the immigrant entrepreneurs remains unexplained in Europe. Foss and Klein (2010) emphasise that the concept of alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities continues to be one of the most heavily used, while the definition of opportunities has remained vague and very broadly. In general, immigrant entrepreneurs identify entrepreneurial opportunities based on knowledge and experiences they acquired. Hence, it is appropriate to further conduct a study on entrepreneurial opportunity identification among immigrant entrepreneurs in a comparative approach (Vandor and Franke, 2016).

3.3 Prior knowledge of the industry, market, or customers as a foundation for entrepreneurial opportunity identification

The third factor in identifying entrepreneurial opportunity at a host country is prior knowledge of a market, industry, or customer — it summaries from most selected articles. Although the explanation and examples from the analysis may overlap with ‘actively searching for the entrepreneurial opportunity,’ and ‘alertness to entrepreneurial opportunity,’ it deserves an appropriate section for further discussion and highlights the difference. Prior knowledge of the industry, market, or customers as a foundation for identifying entrepreneurial opportunity specifies that information collected through various sources and
mixed life experience (including business experiences and living abroad) add values for immigrant entrepreneurs.

In general, prior knowledge of the immigrant entrepreneurs is necessary and vital in the process to identify entrepreneurial opportunity at a host country (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013). This is consistent with earlier studies, which point out that knowledge about market, industry, customer wants and needs as well as problems, and approaches to serve them establish supportive division of knowledge in entrepreneurial opportunity identification (Vandor and Franke, 2016; Foss and Klein, 2010; Shepherd and DeTienne, 2005; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Shane, 2000; Venkataraman, 1997). Considering scholars that academically debates on the definition of ‘opportunities’ and concept of ‘entrepreneurial opportunity’ like Foss and Klein, and Shane and Venkataraman, their primary argument on these subjects has an agreement on the importance of prior knowledge in entrepreneurship. Therefore, findings on prior knowledge about the market, industry, customers, and entrepreneurial activities from 70 articles are predictable.

Immigrant entrepreneurs in Switzerland divided into four groups. They have prior knowledge in various areas such as education, business experience, local language competence, other language competence, and accessing capital. Baycan-Levent and Kundak (2009) indicate that the difference in identifying entrepreneurship opportunity among immigrant entrepreneurs in Switzerland lies in their motivation, which related to their prior knowledge like different business experiences, living abroad, education levels, business characteristics, industry, and capital resources. Prior knowledge about the market, potential customers as well as knowledge of Polish language are the fundamental elements in identifying entrepreneurial opportunity in Poland for the immigrant entrepreneurs. For example, an immigrant entrepreneur from Tunisia was unsuccessful in establishing his Kebab business after the first attempt due to lack of prior knowledge highlighted in Poland (Zubair and Brzozowski, 2018). There are only a few studies available in the Central and East Europe region, and it is difficult to summarise the pattern. However, the two case studies emphasising that prior knowledge is crucial to entrepreneurial opportunity identification in both countries.

The empirical finding from Sweden indicates that prior knowledge on customer preferences and linguistic establishment between the immigrants and native inhabitants are the most signification in identifying entrepreneurial opportunity (Efendic, Andersson and Wennberg, 2016). An earlier study had compared the immigrant entrepreneurs in the various background and discovered that the Latin American and African immigrants have a low tendency to venture entrepreneurial activities due to lack of knowledge
about the demands, market, and integration when trying to create a business (Hammarstedt, 2001). The fifteen years gap of research illustrates that knowledge on customer preferences, a language that uses between immigrant and non-immigrants at the host country, and the market still exists. It shed lights the crucial components to investigate further in the next stage of research to understand the problems among the immigrants. The finding in Denmark recorded that prior knowledge on local market structure, country-specific knowledge (a host country), and competitive advantage help the immigrant entrepreneurs either identifying an entrepreneurial opportunity or establishing their businesses there (Baklanov et al., 2014). The results from Norway outlines the importance of prior knowledge about variations of resources, knowledge of consumer needs, and language competencies for entrepreneurial opportunity identification across different groups of immigrant entrepreneurs (Vinogradov, and Jørgensen, 2017). The examples from Scandinavian countries promote that knowledge is necessary for discovering, identifying, creating, and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities (Shane, 2004; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000).

The immigrant entrepreneurs in Valencia demonstrate that prior training in Spain or the country-of-origin and previous involvement as an entrepreneur help to manipulate a standard of knowledge on the market and product. It helps to identify targeted customers and increase the level of confidence while identifying entrepreneurial opportunity within the local community at the host country (Carbonell, Hernandez and García, 2014). Another evidence from Barcelona illustrates that immigrant entrepreneurs with prior entrepreneur background and experience are most likely to identify entrepreneurial opportunities, such as establishing several restaurants, although they have low formal education (Urbano, Toledano and Ribeiro-Soriano, 2011). The immigrant entrepreneurs in Milan strongly believe that prior experiences in the industry and business sector provided general knowledge of the market as well as specific skills required in identifying high-quality products to cater customer’s demands (Solano, 2016). In addition, prior knowledge and experiences in business sector, market, and customers may strengthen the immigrant entrepreneurs’ connections within their community because they can exchange knowledge, introduce tacit and codified knowledge, which cannot obtain directly at the host country (Guercini, Milanesi and Dei Ottati, 2017; Solano, 2016; Arrighetti, Bolzani, and Lasagni, 2014). As a reminder, the immigrant entrepreneurs in Greece identify entrepreneurial opportunities through the family network; thus, their business scales are small and mostly a homogenous customer base. This finding suggests that immigrant entrepreneurs in Greece may or may not have prior knowledge or experiences on the market, product, and customer at the host country. It evident from a small scale and involved the family network. However, it is still early to draw a generalisation because there is a limited study available. It is interesting to obtain findings, data, and study from Greece and Portugal in the future because they will add evidence to the field of study.
Studies from 24 articles in the West Europe region summarise prior knowledge and experiences of the immigrant entrepreneurs are extremely important to identify entrepreneurial opportunity at their host country. It contributes to the immigrant entrepreneurship study in Europe that has emerged in the last two decades. The findings extracted mainly from Germany and the United Kingdom. There are three crucial points outlined in previous studies. First, prior business or management experience has been shown to predict promising entrepreneurship at a host country (Sepulveda, Syrett, and Lyon, 2011; Levie, 2007). Second, the immigrant entrepreneurs in the West European mostly agreed that prior knowledge on market, product, supplier, and customers at their host country, play critical roles on the longevity of their businesses, sustaining businesses, and capitalize on new market opportunities (Storti, 2014; Wang and Altinay, 2012; Fresnoza-Flot and Pécout, 2007; Kloosterman, 2003). Third, the immigrant entrepreneurs with prior experience living abroad are significant to venture new market opportunities at a host country, have a different view on entrepreneurial opportunity identification at a host country, and receive better living and business conditions, which distinguish them from the non-immigrant entrepreneurs (Bagwell, 2015). Besides, having prior experience abroad may also increase various skills such as social integration, communication (through local language), being innovative, and creative. Considering the push and pull factors that immigrants venture into businesses, these factors make them creative and innovative while at the host country. There is much evidence that immigrant entrepreneurs contributed through their creativity and innovation in various industries such as Sandisk, Google, eBay, Estee Lauder, McDonald's, Dell, Heinz, and hundreds to name (Ramli, 2016). They are contributing in a rising number of small-medium enterprises (SMEs) towards the new generation of interactive service, particularly in the ICT sector (Brzozowski, Cucculelli, and Surdej, 2017; Bettiol, Di Maria, and Finotto, 2012).

Most articles that focused in the West Europe region had reached mutual understanding on the importance of prior knowledge and experience among the immigrant entrepreneurs in identifying entrepreneurial opportunity at their host country. In contrast, the finding from France indicates that significant Filipino economies have not developed in many host nations, although the Filipino immigrant entrepreneurs have been living and working abroad. Therefore, it raises two issues. First, several years of living and running businesses abroad is significant to investigate further. Whether spending many years or short period abroad influence the success of immigrant entrepreneurs in identifying entrepreneurial opportunity at host country and explain the longevity of their businesses. Second, conducting a quantitative study like using hypothesis testing, to test the relationship influence between family and co-ethnic network at host country on immigrant entrepreneurs who has prior experience living abroad. In doing so, it hopes to explain this contradiction and adds to the immigrant entrepreneurship literature.
4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the immigrant entrepreneurship study has an extensive range of research area and contributing to the knowledge to better understanding the phenomenon. This paper adds to the immigrant entrepreneurship literature, particularly in the European region. It offers an outline of the immigrant entrepreneurship in Europe works that published in high impact journals with many citations and an impact factor. There are many issues to cater to the immigrant entrepreneurship field. However, this paper outlined a point as the basic understanding that led to such issues in immigrant entrepreneurship, which is entrepreneurial opportunity identification. The systematic review of entrepreneurial opportunity identification among immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe had drawn a brief picture of the essential and necessary knowledge. This paper examined the components that influenced immigrant entrepreneurs in identifying the entrepreneurial opportunity. It outlined the fundamental motivation that pushes immigrant entrepreneurs venturing into businesses at a host country. The dynamic research in immigrant entrepreneurship field illustrated its richness and complexity of the phenomenon, which associated with many factors like social, capital, human, resources (tangible and intangible), and environment. Theories and methodologies used to explain each study had open more debates, like the concept of ‘entrepreneurial opportunity,’ the definition of ‘opportunity,’ and theories from other than sociological perspective like the resource-based view in business management. Therefore, it is crucial to understand at a basic level of how and why immigrant entrepreneurs identify entrepreneurial opportunity in Europe. In doing so, it is hoped to investigate further the study of immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe on how they identify entrepreneurial opportunity, business performances (during crisis periods, business survival), other than co-ethnic industries, global brands, and innovation (Bettiol et al., 2014), which is the focus of the primary study of this topic.

References:


OECD (2018), International Migration Outlook, available at: [https://www.oecd.org/migration/international-migration-outlook-1999124x.htm].


