

Understanding the Nature of Ethnic Entrepreneurship: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract²: Ethnic entrepreneurship has attracted growing scholarly attention, yet its conceptual boundaries and practical implications remain ambiguous. This study enhances understanding of the phenomenon by conducting a systematic literature review that synthesizes insights from authoritative and peer-reviewed sources. The analysis identifies clear indicators distinguishing ethnic entrepreneurship from non-ethnic forms, including definitional boundaries, the unique characteristics of ethnic entrepreneurs, and the interplay of economic, social, and cultural motivations. The findings reveal that while ethnic entrepreneurs face common challenges such as high failure rates, resource constraints, and integration barriers, they also rely on distinctive strategies shaped by migration experiences and co-ethnic networks. These include forming co-ethnic partnerships, pursuing franchising, relocating businesses, shifting sectors, and, in some cases, return migration. Success is further influenced by adaptation strategies, transnational ties, and community-based resources. The study contributes theoretically by positioning ethnic entrepreneurship as a distinct but related field within entrepreneurship research, demonstrating that entrepreneurial behavior is shaped not only by economic rationality but also by socio-cultural embeddedness. Practically, it provides insights for policymakers and support organizations to design targeted interventions that extend beyond purely economic measures and better reflect the lived realities of ethnic entrepreneurs. A conceptual framework is developed to integrate these findings, offering a foundation for future research and policy innovation.

Keywords: Immigrant, ethnicity, ethnic entrepreneurship, migrant investor, middleman minority, ethnic/enclave economies

Over recent decades, global migration has brought ethnic entrepreneurship (EE) to the forefront of academic and policy debates. EE, combining the concepts of entrepreneurship and ethnicity, refers to business activities undertaken by individuals whose group identity is rooted in a shared cultural heritage and who are recognized as such by others (Adiguna, 2012). Scholars (Aldrich & Waldinger, 1990; Ong et al., 2024; Zhou, 2004) emphasize that beyond generating

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economic value, ethnic entrepreneurship contributes to immigrant integration, social cohesion, and local economic revitalization.

Empirical evidence underscores its economic importance. In the United States, ethnic businesses have supported the regeneration of suburban and small-city economies (Lachman & Brett, 1996; Stauber, 2001), while in Canada they are viewed as potential drivers of national economic recovery (Fortin, 2001; Fortin, Lemieux & Torres, 2016). Studies further show that economic-class immigrants are more likely than native-born individuals to own businesses and that these enterprises often display resilience during downturns, buffering communities from financial shocks (Berry, Rodriguez & Sandee, 2001).

Despite its socio-economic significance, EE remains fragmented and conceptually underdeveloped. A key issue is the absence of a unified definition. Related concepts such as migrant entrepreneurship (Ram, Jones & Villares-Varela, 2020), refugee entrepreneurship (Bizri, 2017), diaspora entrepreneurship (Elo, 2016), minority entrepreneurship (Mavoothu, 2009), and return migrant entrepreneurship (Marques, Galvão, Mascarenhas & Pinto, 2022) are often used interchangeably, despite representing distinct phenomena. Another challenge is the overgeneralization from mainstream entrepreneurship theories to EE, which overlooks its unique cultural, social, and structural dynamics. While economic motives are central to entrepreneurship generally, EE also incorporates social and cultural dimensions (Zhou et al., 2019).

Furthermore, limited attention has been paid to the motivations and success factors shaping ethnic entrepreneurs. While general entrepreneurs often pursue profit (Taktak & Triki, 2015), ethnic entrepreneurs frequently engage in self-employment to overcome language barriers (Allali, 2010), credential recognition issues, and discrimination. Non-financial motives such as cultural preservation, community support, and social mobility are also crucial but remain underexplored.

This lack of conceptual clarity and theoretical grounding limits both academic progress and the development of targeted policy interventions. Accordingly, the main purpose of this paper is to investigate ethnic entrepreneurship and its related matters through a systematic literature review for better understanding the concepts and generating knowledge (insights) about the EE focusing on its definitions, the characteristics, the approaches, the challenges and issues, their business alternatives, the success factors, and supporting theories of ethnic entrepreneurship. By addressing these gaps, the study seeks to provide a more coherent foundation for future research and more effective policy support for ethnic entrepreneurs.

Conceptualization of Ethnic Entrepreneur

This paper focuses exclusively on the entrepreneurial activities of immigrants in host countries, that is, individuals born in one country who migrate and engage in business ventures for various reasons. Although multiple overlapping labels exist to describe such entrepreneurs, this study uses the term ethnic entrepreneurship, which has been widely adopted by supranational bodies, experts, and researchers. To ensure a comprehensive review of the literature, however, it is important to recognize other terms that may appear in searches. Table 1 briefly presents these labels and their conceptualizations, though distinguishing them can be challenging due to their conceptual proximity and overlap.

Literature review shows, the frequency of using the first three terms in studies are more than the others. Immigrant and “migrant entrepreneurship” are common alternative terms used to the EE. The first, “immigrant entrepreneur”, would only include the foreign-born individuals who have immigrated over the past few decades and establish a business in their host country (Brzozowski, Cucculelli & Surdej, 2017). This definition excludes, however, members of ethnic

minority groups who have been living in these countries for several centuries, such as Afro-Americans in the USA, Jews in Europe, or aborigines in general (Volery, 2007). The second term, “migrant” entrepreneur is a person who moves to another country for at least 12 months and establishes a business (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021). Thus, the difference between the two designations relates to persistence in the host country.

Table 1
Terms Associated with Entrepreneurship

Term	Definition
Ethnic entrepreneurship	An individual who establishes a business and belongs to an ethnic minority. This category extends beyond first and second generation to include indigenous minorities (Barrett & Vershinina, 2017; Glinka, 2018).
Immigrant entrepreneurship	Defined as that process by which an immigrant, who has come to re-settle in a new/host country apart from his native country or country of origin, establishes a business venture which creates value (Arun & Okun, 2020).
Migrant entrepreneurship	A foreign-born individual who moves to another country for at least 12 months and establishes a business; can include within-country migrants (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021).
Refugee entrepreneurship	Refugee entrepreneurs is “individuals conducting business outside their usual country of residence due to having been forced to leave their country to escape war or persecution” (Newman & Christensen, 2021).
Return migrant entrepreneur	A domestic-born individual who lives abroad for a period and then moves back to their home country and establishes a business there (Bai, Holmström-Lind, and Johanson, 2018).
Diaspora entrepreneurship	An individual who establishes a business and has access to a diaspora network across multiple geographies. This category extends beyond first and second generation. (Brzozowski et al., 2017; Elo et al., 2019; Kurt et al., 2020).
Minority entrepreneurship	Business owners who are not of the majority population. For example, the US federal categories include Black, Hispanic, or Latin American, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, or Alaska Native descent. This group occasionally includes women (Butler and Greenc, 1997; Waldinger, Alderich and Ward, 1990).

Source: the researcher

Methodology

A systematic literature review was conducted to examine published scientific materials on ethnic entrepreneurship and related topics. This method is suitable for synthesizing large bodies of information (Petticrew & Roberts., 2008), carefully collecting resources, and providing guidance for future research (Rousseau, Manning & Denyer, 2008). This method, applied in a transparent and systematic manner, generates coherent and comprehensive results that enhance understanding of a phenomenon in the scientific literature and guide practical actions. When applied in a

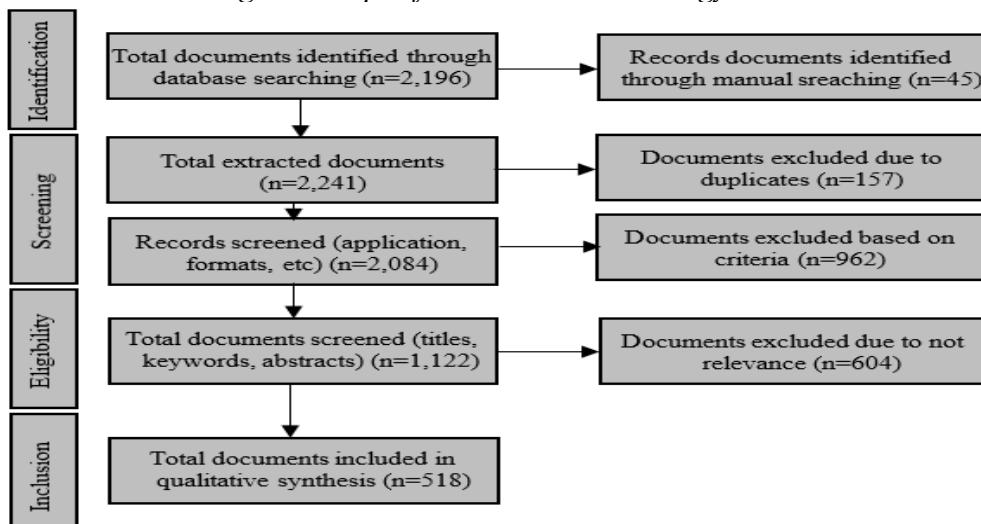
transparent and structured manner, it generates comprehensive results that enhance understanding of a phenomenon in the scientific literature and inform practical actions.

The review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses framework (O'Dea et al., 2021) to ensure transparency, replicability, and clear documentation of the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion stages. A review protocol was developed in advance to guide the systematic retrieval of relevant sources from multiple electronic databases. Both automated and manual searches were conducted, and preliminary scoping confirmed that all relevant perspectives in the field were captured. The PRISMA process include four steps (Page et al., 2021):

1. *Identification*- Comprehensive retrieval of all potentially relevant records from the selected electronic databases, ensuring that both published and indexed literature covering ethnic entrepreneurship.
2. *Screening*- Titles and abstracts of the retrieved records are carefully examined to assess their relevance to the research objectives, and studies that do not meet the relevance criteria are systematically excluded from further consideration.
3. *Eligibility*- Full-text sources are carefully evaluated against a set of predefined criteria, including publication period, language, peer-review status, relevance to the research topic, author affiliation, and alignment with the study's scope, ensuring that only the most pertinent and methodologically sound articles were selected for inclusion in the review.
4. *Inclusion*- After applying all screening and eligibility criteria, the final set of studies is selected for inclusion in the review. Only the sources that meet all predefined standards of relevance, quality, and alignment with the research scope are retained, forming the foundation for the subsequent systematic analysis and synthesis.

In this research, all records were managed using EndNote (version X9), and VOSviewer (version 1.6.15) was used to catalog, organize, analyze, and synthesize the data. Accordingly, Figure 1 presents the PRISMA flow diagram, showing the number of records identified, screened, excluded, and included in the final synthesis. This structured approach ensured comprehensive coverage and a transparent review process.

Figure 1
PRISMA Flow Diagram- Steps of Research Methodology



Data Analysis

Identification of Sources

The identification phase aimed to locate all potentially relevant studies on ethnic entrepreneurship and related topics. A comprehensive search was conducted across multiple electronic databases, including SAGE Journals, ScienceDirect, Scopus, Web of Science, Wiley Online, and Google Scholar. Search terms included combinations such as “Ethnic entrepreneurship” OR “immigrant entrepreneurship”, “Ethnic entrepreneurship” AND “definitions”, “Ethnic entrepreneurship” AND “motivations”, “Ethnic entrepreneurship” AND “challenges” etc. Both automated and manual searches were conducted to enhance coverage and validity. Preliminary scoping ensured that all relevant perspectives in the field were captured.

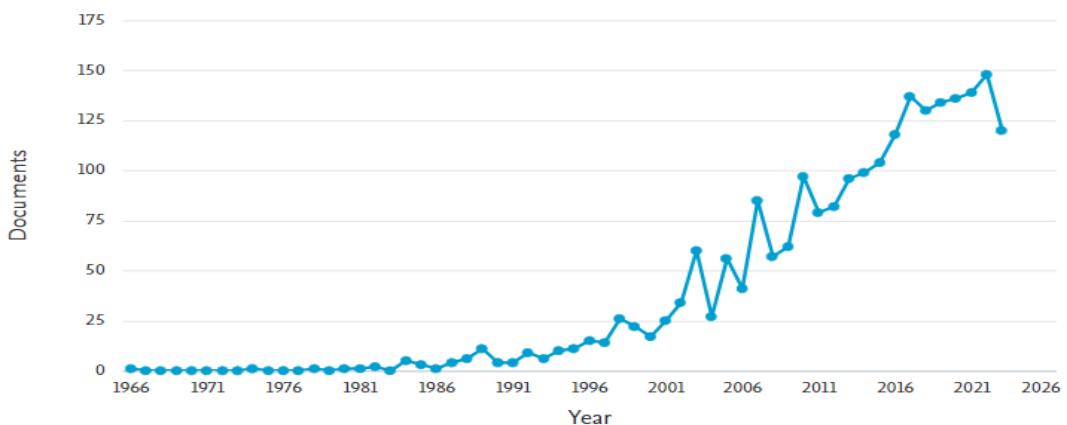
A total of 2,241 records were identified from various sources, including peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and grey literature. All records were imported into EndNote (version X9) for reference management, where duplicate entries were identified and removed prior to the screening stage. The characteristics of the identified sources are summarized in the following tables and figures.

As shown in Table 2 and Figure 2, the publications reviewed span the last 60 years (1963–2023). The number of sources began to increase noticeably in the early 1990s, with a particularly steep rise in recent years. The peak output occurred in 2022, representing the highest frequency of publications within the study period.

Table 2
Resource Years of Publication

Year	Documents	Year	Documents
B.2000	175	2012	82
2000	17	2013	96
2001	25	2014	99
2002	34	2015	104
2003	60	2016	118
2004	27	2017	137
2005	56	2018	130
2006	41	2019	134
2007	85	2020	136
2008	57	2021	139
2009	62	2022	148
2010	97	2023	120
2011	79	2024	0
Total	2241		

Figure 2
Years of Publication

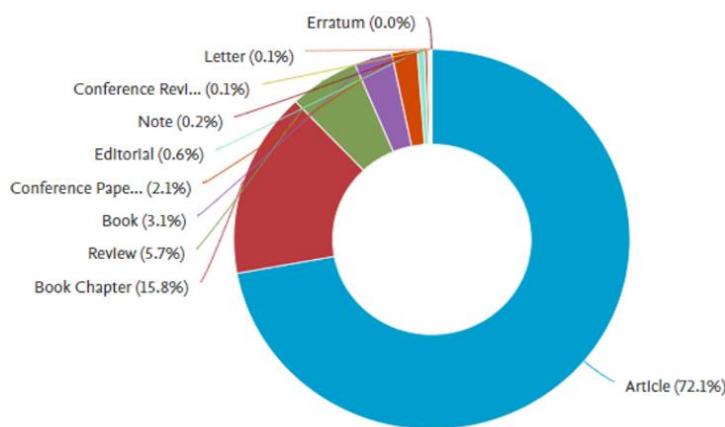


The table presents the number of sources by country, showing that research on ethnic entrepreneurship originates from 93 countries. The highest publication frequencies are in the United States (n=578), the United Kingdom (n=288), Canada (n=142), and Australia (n=104). These nations, along with others identified in Table 3, such as the Netherlands (n=89), Germany (n=80), and Italy (n=70), are major immigrant host countries, which likely accounts for their strong representation in the literature.

Table 3
Types of Extracted Resources

Documents type	Percentage
Article	72.2%
Book Chapter	15.8%
Review	5.7%
Book	3.1%
Conference paper	2.1%
Editorial	0.6%
Note	0.2%
Conference review	0.1%
Letter	0.1%
Erratum	0.1%
Total	100

Figure 3
Types of Extracted Resources



As shown in Table 3 and Figure 3, the sources are diverse, with journal articles comprising the majority (72%). Research on ethnic entrepreneurship spans multiple disciplines, most frequently in social sciences (1,194 sources), followed by business, management, and accounting (886), economics and finance (554), and arts and humanities (352). This distribution underscores the interdisciplinary nature of the field, integrating socio-cultural, managerial, and economic perspectives.

The VOSviewer analysis identified 3,857 keywords, of which 150 met the minimum threshold of seven co-occurrences. Based on their total link strength, these keywords were grouped into eight clusters. As shown in Figure 4, the most frequent keywords are Entrepreneur (n=390), followed by Entrepreneurship (n=227) and Ethnicity (n=198).

Figure 4
Ten Most Frequent Keywords among Sources

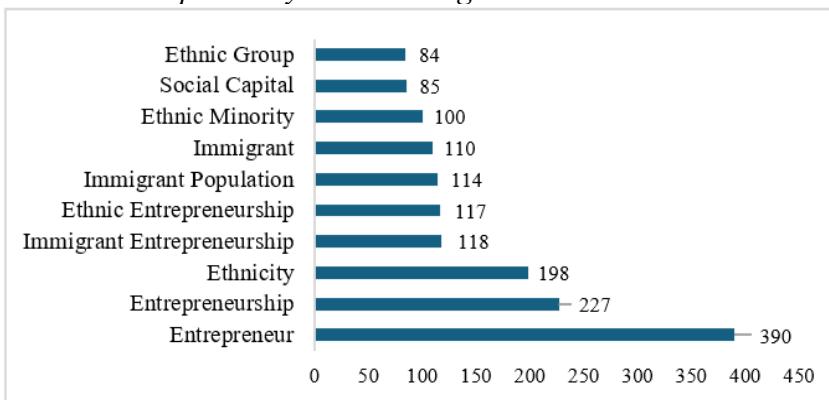
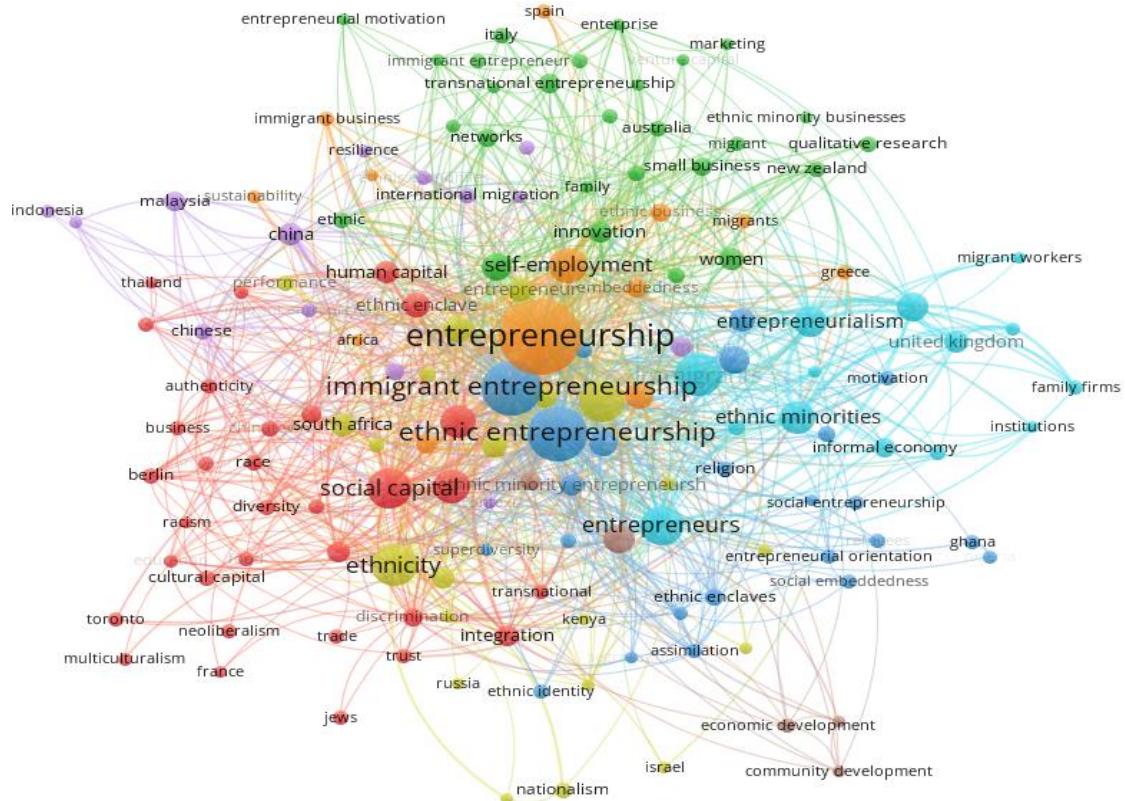


Figure 5 presents a conceptual map of ethnic entrepreneurship, illustrating networks among emerging concepts and their relationships. Each node represents a keyword identified in the analyzed documents, and links between nodes indicate their co-occurrence in publication subsets. The most frequent keywords appear at the center, with node size and label font reflecting co-occurrence frequency (Gudanowska, 2017). Similarly, link strength denotes how often connected terms appear together, with stronger links indicating higher co-occurrence.

Figure 5
Map of the Research Trends Based on Author Keywords



Screening

After removing duplicate records, 2,084 unique documents remained. Titles and abstracts were screened for relevance to ethnic entrepreneurship, excluding studies that did not address entrepreneurship, ethnicity, or related conceptual frameworks, as well as non-academic materials such as news articles, editorials, and conference summaries. This screening excluded 962 records, leaving 1,122 studies for eligibility assessment.

Eligibility

To select the most relevant sources, several eligibility criteria were applied. Publications had to be issued between 1984 and 2021 and cover areas like business, management, entrepreneurship, sociology, psychology, engineering, technology etc. Full-text availability in English or French was required. Only peer-reviewed journal articles relevant to ethnicity, entrepreneurship, immigrant investment, ethnic entrepreneurship, or cultural aspects were included, and authors had to be affiliated with reputable universities or recognized research institutions. Abstracts, keywords, and citation data were imported into EndNote, and duplicates were removed. Finally, a content-based filtering step retained only articles most closely aligned with the research title and scope.

Included

Based on these criteria, 518 papers were identified as relevant and closely aligned with the study's main concepts. This final set of sources provides a comprehensive and reliable foundation for the subsequent analysis, synthesis, and discussion of ethnic entrepreneurship, ensuring that only the most pertinent and methodologically sound research informs the study's findings.

Findings and Discussion

Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Definitions and Conceptual Perspectives

Ethnic entrepreneurship combines the concepts of "ethnic" and "entrepreneurship," yet as a single construct it differs from general entrepreneurship. The literature shows that the concept of entrepreneurship has evolved over time, with early definitions often emphasizing material and economic indicators. As illustrated in Table 4, five additional factors have gradually been incorporated into definitions of entrepreneurship over time (Prince, Chapman & Cassey, 2021).

Table 4

Prominent Definitions of Entrepreneurship by Definitional Theme

Theme	Definition	Author(s) / year
Uncertainty	To bear risk in the reselling of agricultural and manufactured produce	Cantillon (1734)
	Organization and management of a business undertaking and assuming the risk for the sake of profit	Hull, Bosley and Udell (1980)
	The attempt to predict and act upon change within markets	Knight (1921)
	The process by which individuals pursue opportunities without regard to the resources they currently control	Stevenson and Jarillo (1990)
	Major ownership and management of a business venture without employment elsewhere	Brockhaus (1980)
Business creation	The creation of new enterprise	Low et al., (1988)
	The creation of new organizations	Gartner (1988)
	New entry	Lumpkin et al.,(1996)
Innovation	Innovative change within markets through the carrying out of new combinations	Schumpeter (1934)
Opportunity	Recognizing and acting upon market opportunities	Kirzner (1979)
	The discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities	Shane et al., (2000)
Value creation	A dialogic between individual and new value creation, within an ongoing process and within an environment that has specific characteristics	Bruyat and Julian (2001)
	Creating shared value for others	Lackeus et al., (2016)

Source: Prince et al. (2021)

An entrepreneur is an individual who identifies and exploits opportunities by managing risk, fostering innovation, and creating businesses to generate profit (Hitt, Ireland, Sirmon & Trahms, 2011). While general entrepreneurship primarily emphasizes economic objectives, often overlooking non-economic dimensions, ethnic entrepreneurship incorporates both economic and socio-cultural factors. In this context, an ethnic entrepreneur is typically the owner-manager of a business who shares a cultural identity with a particular social group (Achidi & Priem, 2011). This shared identity can foster solidarity, internal loyalty, flexibility, and personal motivation, serving as key drivers of business development.

Table 5 presents various definitions of ethnic entrepreneurship. A Word Cloud analysis of these definitions shows that “ethnic” and “ethnicity” are central concepts. As illustrated in Figure 6, Ethnic Entrepreneurship occupies the central position, with related terms surrounding it, indicating that ethnicity is a defining element rather than a mere descriptor. This underscores scholarly emphasis on how ethnicity shapes entrepreneurial opportunities, resources, and strategies, aligning with theoretical perspectives such as the mixed embeddedness approach, which considers ethnic entrepreneurship as influenced by both individual agency and structural conditions.

Table 5
Definitions of Ethnic Entrepreneurship

Author	Title of source	Definition
(Min Zhou, 2004)	Revisiting Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Convergencies, Controversies, and Conceptual Advancements	EEs are often both owners and managers of their businesses, with group membership rooted in a shared cultural heritage recognized by outsiders. Importantly, they operate within social structures where individual behavior, social relations, and economic transactions are shaped and constrained.
(Carmichael, Drori, & Honig, 2010)	Transnational and immigrant entrepreneurship in a globalized world	Entrepreneurial activities that involve individuals whose group membership is tied to a common cultural heritage or origin and are known to out-group members as having such traits
(Adiguna, 2012)	Exploring Transnational Entrepreneurship: On the Interface between International Entrepreneurship and EE	Entrepreneurial activities that involve individuals whose group membership is tied to a common cultural heritage or origin and are known to out-group members as having such traits.
(Cruz & de Queiroz Falcão, 2020)	Ethnic and Immigrant Businesses Taxonomy and Its Impacts Towards Entrepreneur	Defined as business-ownership by immigrant and ethnic-group members, which generally promotes ethnic economic mobility.
(Allali, 2010)	Maghrebian Entrepreneurs in Quebec: An Exploratory Study and a Conceptual Framework	The EE can be defined as someone who identifies, assesses, and exploits opportunities through a business he or she starts, acquires or inherits and that has tight relationships with an ethnic community they belong to.
(Alexandre-Leclair, 2014)	Diversity as a motive for entrepreneurship? The case of gender, culture and ethnicity	EEs are the owners and managers of their own businesses, where membership in the group is linked to a cultural heritage or common origin and is recognized by out-group members as having such characteristics.
(Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021)	Beyond disciplinary silos: A systematic analysis of the migrant entrepreneurship	The authors define migrant entrepreneurship as the entrepreneurial activity of foreign-born individuals in a country other than that of their birth.
(Hossain, Ahmed, & Islam, 2022)	Ethnic minority entrepreneurship: Influencing factors of ethnic minority	Ethnic entrepreneurship is known as business activities in a particular location undertaken by individuals from different cultural background to the indigenous population.
Ozafsarlioglu, S. (2024)	Ethnic Entrepreneurship: A Qualitative Study on Entrepreneurial Tendency of Meskhetian Turks	Ethnic entrepreneurship is the phenomenon where individuals from specific ethnic backgrounds engage in entrepreneurial activities. These individuals are influenced by various factors, including entrepreneurial tendencies, cultural values, social networks, and economic opportunities.

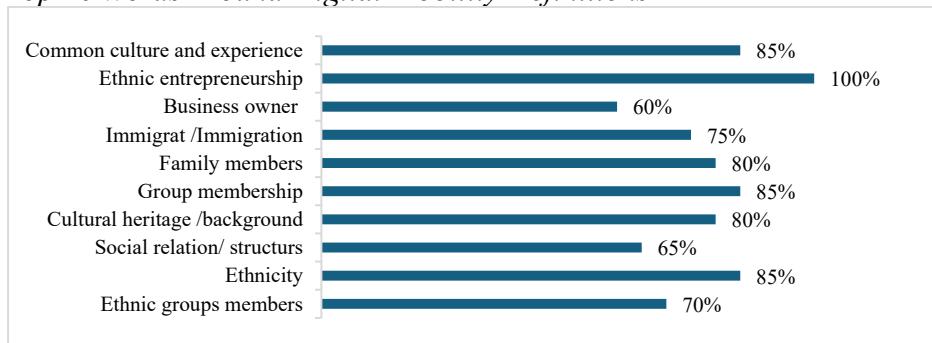
Source: the researcher

Figure 6 *World Cloud Map of EE Definitions*



An analysis of ethnic entrepreneurship definitions shows that certain words appear more frequently than others. Figure 7 presents the ten most common terms surrounding Ethnic Entrepreneurship, reflecting its key dimensions. These recurring keywords indicate the aspects most frequently emphasized by scholars, highlighting dominant conceptual domains in the literature. However, including additional definitions could shift the distribution and prominence of keywords, potentially altering the identified dimensions. This suggests that while current findings capture prevailing trends, the conceptualization of ethnic entrepreneurship remains dynamic and open to further refinement as the field develops.

Figure 7
Top 10 Words Around Digital Mobility Definitions

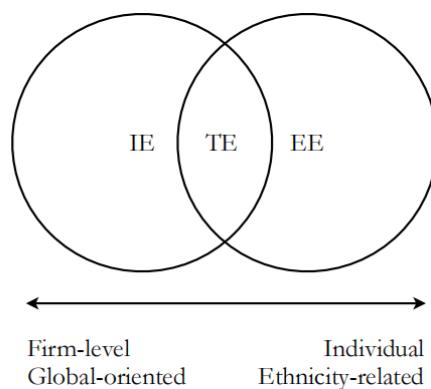


The terminology used in definitions of ethnic entrepreneurship suggests that ethnic entrepreneurs rely heavily on social relationships to establish and sustain their businesses. They often cultivate strong ties within their ethnic community (Martinelli, 2004) to initiate and grow entrepreneurial activities. In this context, ethnic entrepreneurship can be understood as “a set of connections and regular patterns of interaction among people sharing a common national background or migration experience” (Waldinger, 2001). Theoretical emphasis is placed on these interactive patterns, with much research highlighting the role of the ethnic community (Chaganti & Greene, 2002), broader ethnic society, and group dynamics in shaping entrepreneurial processes.

A review of definitions indicates that ethnic entrepreneurship (EE) contrasts sharply with international entrepreneurship (IE) (see Figure 8). IE involves outward-looking, cross-border business activities such as exporting, franchising, or establishing foreign branches, with less focus on the entrepreneur's identity (Adiguna, 2012; Grozdanovska, Jankulovski & Bojkovska, 2017; Young, Dimitratos & Dana, 2003;). In contrast, EE emphasizes individual-level, inward-looking actions, centering on the entrepreneur and their ethnic identity rather than market geography

(Adiguna, 2012). According to Carter and Ram (2003), an ethnic entrepreneur identifies, evaluates, and exploits opportunities through a business they start, acquire, or inherit while maintaining strong ties with their ethnic community. Similarly, Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) define EE as “a set of connections and regular patterns of interactions among people sharing a common national background or migration experiences.” Drori, Honig & Wright (2009) highlight that EE involves individuals whose group membership is linked to a shared cultural heritage recognized by outsiders, and Busenitz and Lau (1996) emphasize that EE must be understood within its cultural or ethnic context.

Figure 8
The Spectrum of IE, TE, and EE Definition



Source: Adiguna (2012)

Focusing on the main keywords in definitions of ethnic entrepreneurship shows that, while EE contributes to the economic advancement of immigrants (Sequeira & Rasheed, 2006; Iyer & Shapiro, 1999), it also plays a crucial role in the development of immigrant communities (Logan, Alba & McNulty, 1994). EE is closely linked to the social standing of individual immigrants and their groups within the ethnic community (Sanders & Nee, 1996) and is influenced by factors such as family, group, and social networks, which vary across ethnic groups. These networks facilitate entrepreneurial initiatives and provide a competitive advantage, often conceptualized as social capital, encompassing access to employees, information, markets, suppliers, and financing within the ethnic community.

The decision to engage in entrepreneurship in host countries thus has multiple dimensions. Starting a business serves as an economic act, generating self-employment, employment, and income. However, in immigrant communities, it also involves social considerations: funding sources (self, family, ethnic networks, formal institutions), choice of employees (family, ethnic kin, or outsiders), the ethnic orientation of the business, and the intended duration of operations.

An important intersection between ethnic and international entrepreneurship is transnational entrepreneurship (TE), where entrepreneurs leverage ethnic networks to pursue opportunities across national borders (Adiguna, 2012). TE combines the inward-looking, community-based focus of EE with the outward, market-oriented activities of IE, allowing immigrant entrepreneurs to operate transnationally while maintaining strong ties to their ethnic communities. This hybrid form demonstrates how social capital within ethnic networks can bridge global markets, creating both economic and social value.

The Characteristics of the EEs

Entrepreneurship is closely linked to the traits of the entrepreneur. Generally, an entrepreneur is described as a person who creatively plans, establishes, and manages a business using limited resources while accepting responsibility for both risks and rewards (Alexandre-Leclair, 2014). Entrepreneurs are starters, initiators, challengers, and drivers who create something new, whether a business, project, or company, and provide leadership and direction for their ventures (Dogondaji & Aliyu, 2022). Additional commonly cited traits include curiosity, passion, leadership, confidence, persistence, optimism, and discipline (Galbraith et al., 2014; Meadows, 2016). All of these individual characteristics (see Table 6) are present in ethnic entrepreneurs; however, due to the inherently social nature of ethnic entrepreneurship, social features tend to be more prominent.

Table 6
An Entrepreneur / Ethnic Entrepreneurs' Characteristics

Characteristic	Definition	Source
Creator	A common element in definitions of entrepreneurship is the process of emergence. Scholars stress that creation is a core characteristic, involving the generation of value, new businesses or organizations, new markets, and new products or services.	Hjorth (2014), Nyström (1993), Fayolle (2007), Brush et al. (2003), Hyttinen et al. (2013), Korsgaard et al., (2011)
User of opportunities	Authors place opportunity at the core of entrepreneurship, which involves discovering, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities. The entrepreneur's role is to assess an opportunity's value and decide whether to pursue it.	JD (2020), Gedeon (2010), Fairlie & Fossen (2020), Baum et al., (2014), Rae (2014), Hills et al., (1997), Shepherd et al., (2005)
Decision-maker	Entrepreneurship requires the ability to assess and act on opportunities. Decision-making, involving both choice and commitment, is central, as entrepreneurs decide how to exploit opportunities for market success.	Weber et al., (2005), Gibcus et al., (2008), Shepherd et al., (2015), Ndemo et al., (2007), Payne et al., (2006),
Evaluator	An entrepreneur also acts as an evaluator, assessing their skills, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. This process enhances competencies and helps identify opportunities, especially when creativity or innovation is needed.	Bulut et al., (2010), Welpe et al., (2012), Taktak & Triki (2015), Gustafsson et al., (2012), Haynie, et al. (2009), Wood et al. (2014).
Risk Taker	Risk-taking involves attempting new ventures under uncertainty. Unlike most people, entrepreneurs embrace risk, making bold, calculated decisions to drive innovation, gain a competitive edge, and foster personal growth.	Kozubíková et al., (2017), Guo & Jiang (2020), Lopera et al., (2018), Brockhaus (1980), McGrath et al., (1992), Mat et al., (2020).

A key characteristic of ethnic entrepreneurs is their predisposing factors, including the skills, goals, and motivations they and their communities bring to opportunities. Hirschman (1982) argued that an ethnic group's socioeconomic achievements are shaped by members' human capital and sociocultural orientation. Although many immigrants are highly skilled, barriers in host countries can limit their full potential (Galarneau & Morissette, 2009). Predisposing factors thus highlight how individual capabilities and cultural context shape entrepreneurial potential and explain challenges in achieving economic success.

Residence selection is another important factor influencing business development. Immigrants often concentrate in urban areas (Statistics Canada, 2022), resulting in three main business patterns: (1) ethnic-owned economies with co-ethnic employees, (2) ethnic enclave economies clustered around a territorial core, and (3) ethnic-controlled economies where co-ethnics exert sectoral influence (Morris, 2000). Settlement choices, linked to community ties, shape the structure, scope, and success of ethnic entrepreneurship.

Strong ties to their ethnic community are also defining, crucial for mobilizing resources (Zimmer & Aldrich, 1987). While basic resources like labor and capital are common to all entrepreneurs, ethnic entrepreneurs often access them through familial and community networks. These networks intersect with economic roles, residential patterns, and institutions, shaping how capital is raised, labor recruited, and suppliers or customers engaged. Strong community connections provide critical social and economic support, transforming business activities into collective endeavors that reinforce the ethnic social structure.

Approaches to Ethnic Entrepreneurship

Ethnic entrepreneurship is generally examined through three main approaches, structural, cultural, and situational, which explain how immigrant entrepreneurs establish and develop businesses in host countries.

The structural approach emphasizes the social, political, and economic structures of the host society. Opportunities often arise from peripheral markets abandoned by large local companies, creating niches that immigrant entrepreneurs can exploit (Allali, 2010). Immigrant entrepreneurs occupying these niches, sometimes called middleman minorities, act as intermediaries or distributors for mass-consumer products (Zhou, 2004). From this perspective, ethnic entrepreneurship emerges as a response to structural conditions rather than purely cultural values or personal motivations.

The cultural approach highlights the role of culture in shaping entrepreneurial behavior. Cultural values and environments, derived from family, ethnic groups, and local surroundings, can facilitate or constrain entrepreneurship (Robichaud, 1999). Scholars have emphasized traits such as authority, self-restraint, equality, and individuality (Bales & Couch, 1969), as well as hard work, frugality, future orientation, and respect for elders among Korean entrepreneurs. Ethnic origin and contextual factors further influence entrepreneurial motivations (Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2009). These perspectives suggest that shared cultural elements create both opportunities and constraints for immigrant entrepreneurs, helping to explain why certain groups pursue business ventures in host countries.

The situational approach focuses on the relationship between immigrants and host societies, positing that entrepreneurship often arises in response to rejection or exclusion by the host country (Allali, 2010; Robichaud, 1999). Social disadvantages, such as discrimination or unemployment, push immigrants toward self-employment, fostering income generation, wealth creation, and social

mobility within ethnic communities (Helley & LeDoyen, 1994; Morris, 2000). While some studies (Sowell & Friedman, 1981) emphasize structural constraints, others highlight cultural factors as determinants of economic outcomes.

Taken together, structural, cultural, and situational approaches provide complementary perspectives on why immigrants engage in entrepreneurship. Unlike general entrepreneurship, which emphasizes personal initiative, innovation, and risk-taking, EE is shaped by the interplay of structural constraints, cultural resources, and situational pressures. This synthesis underscores that understanding ethnic entrepreneurship requires consideration of social context, cultural embeddedness, and adaptive strategies, beyond individual-level explanations alone.

The Motivations of the EEs

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a challenging career, marked by uncertainty, obstacles, failures, and daily frustrations (Segal, Borgia & Schoenfeld, 2005). This raises the question: what motivates ethnic entrepreneurs to embrace such risks in a host society?

Classical research frames motivations as push and pull factors. Push factors drive individuals into entrepreneurship due to negative circumstances, such as job dissatisfaction or limited employment opportunities (Urbański, 2022), while pull factors attract individuals through positive incentives like independence, self-fulfillment, and wealth (Ramkissoon-Babwah, 2015). Push and pull factors include economic and non-economic drivers and are often seen as mutually exclusive. Beyond **these**, ethnic entrepreneurs are influenced by additional factors (see Table 7). Migrants often show greater risk tolerance, reflecting adaptability and resilience (Vandor, 2021). Ethnic and social networks provide access to resources, information, and trust, creating protected markets, reliable labor, and customer loyalty (Baycan-Levent, Masurel & Nijkamp, 2003). Entrepreneurship offers a pathway to livelihood and social status, particularly for disadvantaged immigrants (Arboleya & Mueller, 2017). Discrimination and exclusion from mainstream labor markets further push immigrants toward self-employment (Dallalfar, 1994), while contextual factors like institutions, geography, and ethnic background can facilitate or hinder entrepreneurial activity (Alexandre-Leclair, 2014). Age and generational differences also shape push and pull motivations.

Some scholars emphasize that overcoming social disadvantages is a primary driver for immigrant entrepreneurship (Allali, 2010). Ethnic ownership economies promote wealth, income, employment, and social mobility for co-ethnics facing unemployment or discrimination (Morris, 2000). Migrants are also willing to enter challenging sectors with long hours or low returns (Brenner, Menzies, Dionne & Filion, 2010). Overall, ethnic entrepreneurship reflects a convergence of classical push/pull motivations with unique social, cultural, and structural factors. Unlike general entrepreneurs, ethnic entrepreneurs are guided by risk tolerance, community networks, social disadvantage, and structural navigation, producing adaptive and resilient entrepreneurial behaviors.

Table 7
Reasons for Immigrants' Entrepreneurship in the Host country

Motivation	Definition	Source
Monetary gains	All business ventures, whether entrepreneurial or conventional, ultimately aim to generate profit. Entrepreneurs, including EE, seek to maximize financial gains, either as personal income or business profit.	Cachon, 2013; Wach, 2016; Dunkelberg, Moore et al. (2013); Wach & Stephan (2016)
More Freedom and authority	Entrepreneurial ventures typically provide greater autonomy than conventional businesses, allowing owners to control operations and make key decisions. This drive to be one's own boss is especially strong among ethnic entrepreneurs.	Rothwell, 1975; Waltower, 2023; Roth, 2011; Yang & Aldrich, 2014; Dawson, 2021
Unemployment	Many immigrants face greater challenges than natives in finding traditional employment. Entrepreneurship allows them to address their own unemployment and often provides jobs for family members and co-ethnics.	Allali, 2010; Islam, 2007; Masurel et al., 2002); Olufemi, 2020; Marić, Jeraj & Žnidaršić 2010
Using blocked opportunities	Migrants often invest in sectors avoided by previous owners due to unattractive conditions, such as long hours or low returns. Ethnic entrepreneurs typically start businesses to meet unmet customer needs within their ethnic community.	Allali, 2010; Zhou, 2004; Masurel et al., 2002; Alvarez, & Barney, 2008.
Existence of ethnic and social networks	Ethnic and social networks strongly motivate immigrants to start businesses. By initially targeting their own community with familiar products and channels, they create a protected market, reliable labor, and loyal customers.	Baycan-Levent et al., 2003; Kerr & Mandorff, 2023; Tesfom, 2006; Minai., Ibrahim & Law, 2012;
Networks of family, relatives, and co-ethnics	Family, co-nationals, and co-ethnic networks motivate minorities toward entrepreneurship, boosting self-confidence and providing privileged access to information, capital, and labor, which enhances business capabilities.	Baycan-Levent et al., 2006; Salaff et al., 2003; Bagwell, 2008; Fadahunsi, Smallbone & Supri, 2000;
Taking benefit from previous experience	Selective immigration systems often favor highly skilled immigrants with relevant experience, making them confident in applying their expertise to start businesses in their previous fields.	Farashah, & Blomquist, 2022; Allali, 2010;

The challenges

Entrepreneurs face numerous challenges, including high failure rates, financial instability, uncertainty, intense competition, stress, overwork, burnout, prolonged timelines, rising costs, poor planning, inadequate operational control, and misjudgment of complex business environments (Hasan, 2022; Reeves, Zappe & Follmer, 2019; Raj, 2016). These difficulties arise throughout the business lifecycle, from brand development to market penetration and profitability.

EEs face additional, specific challenges (see Table 8). Financial constraints, such as limited capital and restricted access to bank financing, are particularly critical, often leading to small, labor-intensive businesses (Lee & Black, 2017; Bruder, Neuberger & Räthke-Döppner, 2011). For example, Islamic entrepreneurs in the Netherlands and other ethnic groups often invest in low-capital, low-skill sectors like retail, wholesale, and restaurants (Kloosterman, Van Der Leun & Rath, 1999; Basu, 1998). Adaptability is another major challenge, as ethnic entrepreneurs must adjust to new environments, with acculturation affecting cultural and psychological adaptation; slow adaptation can cause feelings of hopelessness (Kelly, 2018; Barozzino & Hui, 2013; Berry, Rodriguez & Sandee, 2001). Unfamiliarity with host-country regulations, labor markets, fiscal policies, and administrative systems further complicates business operations (Chu, 1996).

Table 8

Ethnic entrepreneurship issues and challenges in the host country

Challenge	Definition	Source
Adaptability	Ethnic entrepreneurs must continually adapt to many factors to which native-born in host countries may be oblivious. It is the process of change in response to a new environment.	Xu, 2019; Yeasmin, 2016; Ramakrishnan, 2018; Atapattu, 2020; Bruder, 2011; Volery, 2007; Allali, 2010; Elmassah, 2022; Everett, 2015; Chen, 2019; Abd Hamid, 2020; Cooney, 2008; Barth, 2020
Financial constraints	Ethnic entrepreneurs most common problems are related to finance, like finding money to finance projects, lack of capital, difficulty in obtaining bank finance, covering current costs, etc.	Elo, 2022; Elo, 2022; Brenner, 2010; Zhou, 2004; Ivanova-Gongne, 2024; Fashakin, 2023)
Unfamiliarity with new environment	Fiscal policies, labor regulations, administrative procedures, intellectual property rules, and bankruptcy laws influence ethnic entrepreneurs' decisions. Limited familiarity with these factors adds to their challenges.	García-Cid, 2020; Oluwatobi, 2018; Wilkes, 2019; Lee, 1999; Kloosterman, Van
Language barriers	The challenge includes limited proficiency in the host language, unfamiliarity with business jargon, restricted access to networks, and lack of recognition for their native language and culture.	
Social integration	Cultural diversity in host regions presents challenges for migrant entrepreneurs, such as resource competition and social conflicts.	
Strong native and non-	For various reasons, many ethnic entrepreneurship are small. Therefore, they are not able to compete with	

native competitors	large native and non-native competitors who have a large share of the market.	der Leun, and Rath, 1999; (Gold, 1988; Teixeira, 1998; Brenner et al., 2010; Allali, 2010)
lack of credit rating	EEs, often recent immigrants, usually lack the credentials and community recognition to start a business. Limited early contacts with banks, suppliers, and customers restrict access to finance, resources, and market opportunities.	
Racial discrimination	Racial discrimination limits immigrants' access to traditional employment, pushing them into small businesses, which are often difficult to sustain.	(Light, Ivan and Steven Gold. 2000; Ensign et al., (2011);

Cultural, social, and personal factors also affect success. Language barriers, limited credit history, restricted networks, youth, and lack of experience can impede performance (Allali, 2010; Brenner et al., 2010; Gold, 1988). These challenges highlight the multi-dimensional environment of ethnic entrepreneurship, reflecting an interplay of structural constraints, personal limitations, and cultural barriers. Financial difficulties are compounded by limited networks and local knowledge, while personal factors such as inexperience and adaptation struggles further hinder competitiveness. Unlike general entrepreneurs, ethnic entrepreneurs must navigate these obstacles while building trust within both their ethnic community and the broader market, emphasizing the need for targeted support and policies to enhance resilience and long-term success.

Theoretical Strategies in Ethnic Entrepreneurship

The literature identifies three primary strategies through which ethnic entrepreneurs adapt in host countries: middleman theory, enclave theory, and immigration-related theories, which often overlap in practice.

Middleman minority theory (Blalock, 1967) describes minority entrepreneurs who act as intermediaries between dominant and subordinate groups, typically serving marginalized ethnic communities (Zenner, 1991). Historically, middleman minorities were sojourners aiming to accumulate quick profits in easily transferable businesses, often in economically disadvantaged or minority neighborhoods. Today, they also operate in affluent urban and suburban areas and enter markets overlooked by native entrepreneurs due to low profitability or challenging conditions (Zhou, 2004). Strong coethnic ties allow them to minimize labor costs through family and ethnic networks, maintain small businesses, rely heavily on in-group resources, and fill economic gaps in the host society (Cobas, 1987).

Ethnic enclave theory focuses on the spatial and social concentration of coethnic populations, offering protection, mutual support, and access to shared resources such as labor and capital (Portes, 2018). Enclave economies are spatially identifiable, with a significant proportion of immigrant workers employed by coethnic business owners. Traditionally, enclaves operated in immigrant neighborhoods sustained through dense social networks and reciprocal support. As enclaves evolve into multiethnic or suburban settings, entrepreneurs may simultaneously function as middleman minorities and enclave participants (Zhou, 2004). One key advantage of enclaves is protection from discrimination, helping members overcome barriers encountered in mainstream labor markets (Portes & Bach, 1985). Studying enclave formation provides insights into the intersections of immigration, ethnicity, urban dynamics, economic systems, and social inequality.

Finally, immigration-related theories view migration as a strategic process that enhances productivity, prosperity, and social mobility in both origin and destination countries through the flow of money, goods, and knowledge (De Haas, 2021). Migration is interpreted as an optimization strategy, in which individuals or families relocate to access higher and more secure economic opportunities. These theories emphasize migration networks, economic benefits, and adaptive behaviors that underpin immigrant entrepreneurship.

The EEs' Success Factors

Entrepreneurial success is a multidimensional concept influenced by financial and non-financial factors (Gorgievski et al. 2011; Hamilton et al., 2021). Economically, it is measured by profits, sales, ROI, survival, and employee growth (Dej, 2010). Key occupational factors include innovation, speed, integration, and flexibility, while political and macroeconomic conditions also affect engagement in entrepreneurship (Sobel & King, 2008). Lerner & Haber, (2001) classified success factors as environmental, counseling, governmental, and psychological, whereas Bygrave (2004) highlighted cultural, personal, political, and organizational dimensions. Elmassah, James & Bacheer. (2022) further grouped factors into individual, organizational, and environmental categories. Environmental factors, such as government policy, infrastructure, R&D, training, intellectual property, and socio-political conditions, affect success, though some argue personal and organizational traits are more decisive (Hisrich, 2006).

These general models, however, do not fully capture ethnic entrepreneurial success (see Table 9), which is shaped by unique social, cultural, and structural conditions (Howell, 2019). Social and ethnic networks foster trust, cooperation, and access to critical resources, enabling smoother transactions and agreement enforcement (Iyer et al., 1999). Human capital, education, skills, and professional experience, enhances potential, though foreign qualifications may be undervalued in host countries (Akinsola, 2020; Allali, 2010; Dai & Liu, 2009). Training and internships can bridge gaps and improve entrepreneurial readiness. Family networks provide financial, labor, and emotional support, particularly in early migration stages (Sanders & Nee, 1996). Intra-family loans, low-cost or unpaid labor, and high trust allow handling of high-risk transactions and lower operational costs, enhancing resilience and competitiveness.

Transnational networking further promotes ethnic entrepreneurial performance by bridging connections with the homeland and leveraging shared resources such as information, contacts, and trust (Kariv, Menzies, Brenner & Filion, 2009). Activities include maintaining ties, facilitating newcomer adaptation, sending remittances, recruiting labor, and transferring knowledge (Aldrich et al., 1990), indirectly improving business operations through trust and communication. Support from the ethnic community, advice, informal loans, identifying opportunities, collaboration with co-ethnic suppliers, and hiring within the community, creates a protective environment that reduces early-stage competition and increases stability (Chand & Ghorbani, 2011).

Table 9
Ethnic Entrepreneurship Success Factors

Success factor	Definition	Source
Ethnic ties and networks	Ethnic ties and networks create the trust that supports economic activities among co-ethnics. Rooted in immigrants' national culture, this social structure is a key asset for ethnic entrepreneurial success in the host country.	Sanders et al., 2002; 2006; Adler et al, 2002; Iyer & Shapiro, 1999;
Human capital	Immigrant community members and co-ethnics are a readily available human resource whose education and experience can boost ethnic entrepreneurs' chances of success.	Ireland et al., 2001; Allali, 2010; Dai & Liu, 2009
Family	Family is a vital source of social capital for immigrants, offering financial, human, and emotional support that significantly contributes to the success of ethnic entrepreneurship.	Evansluong, Ramírez-Pasillas, 2019; Ljungkvist et al., 2023
Transnational networking	Transnational networking, connecting ethnic entrepreneurs with their country of origin to share information, contacts, and trust, plays a key role in boosting the performance of ethnic businesses.	Kariv et al., 2009; Salaff et al. 2003; Aldrich et al., 2003; Robinson 2005
Acting as intermediary between capital & labor	A successful ethnic entrepreneur effectively bridges capital and human resources within their community, making strategic decisions on business focus, financing, and growth—key factors that greatly enhance the chances of success.	Greene, Gatewood, Brush, Hart, & Carter, 2003; Baker, Aldrich, & Nina, 1997; Khan-Gökkaya, Mösko Higgen, 2019; Quandt & Arcury, 2017; Kvist, 2012
Training and familiarization with the new environment	After settling in the host country, immigrants often pursue training in language, business practices, laws, communication, and technical skills. Those who actively engage in and apply this training are more likely to succeed as entrepreneurs.	Chu et al., 2010; George Nagy et al., (2013); Masurel et al., (2002)
Satisfaction of the ethnic customers	Ethnic entrepreneurs primarily serve their communities, where customer satisfaction builds loyalty, ensures sustainability, and can attract non-ethnic clients, broadening the business's reach.	Oudenhoven et al., (2006); Salami, Hegadoren, Kolawole, & Diaz, (2019)
Relation with communities	Host-country communities support immigrants through advice, training, and guidance. Effective communication helps EEs integrate, network, and access financial, legal, and tax assistance.	

In sum, ethnic entrepreneurial success arises from combining general business skills with immigrant-specific factors. Social and ethnic networks, family and community support, transnational connections, cultural familiarity, and resilience help navigate host-country challenges. This dual focus on economic and social goals distinguishes ethnic entrepreneurship, as

it simultaneously advances personal prosperity and strengthens the cultural and economic vitality of immigrant communities.

The EEs' Alternatives

Research shows that most immigrants decide to pursue entrepreneurship only after migration, even when their immigration pathway is business-oriented. For instance, Robichaud (1999) found that most Portuguese immigrants in Quebec had no prior business intentions, with similar findings across other ethnic groups (Menzie, Diochon & Gasse, 2007). As Allali (2010) notes, entrepreneurial aspirations often emerge from challenges in securing employment rather than pre-existing ambitions. The lack of prior planning leads to unclear goals (Quince & Whittaker, 2003) and weak strategies (Bewayo, 2015), increasing failure risks, especially among small ethnic ventures. When businesses struggle, entrepreneurs face critical decisions, whether to continue, close, or adapt. Some minimize losses by selling or liquidating assets (DeTienne, 2010; Shepherd, 2003), while others form partnerships with co-ethnic peers to gain referrals, strengthen credibility, and boost sales (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Aldrich et al., 1990).

Franchising offers another solution, enabling entrepreneurs to invest in proven business models with structured training, reliable supply chains, and strong brand support (Murphy, 2006). Low failure rates make franchises an attractive option. Some entrepreneurs relocate to cities or provinces offering better opportunities (De Haan, 2008), often staying in smaller centers if satisfied with local conditions (Sapeha, 2017), while others move after initially settling only to meet immigration requirements (Nguyen, 2020).

Finally, some ethnic entrepreneurs migrate again or return home when unable to meet their goals. Cultural and social motives, such as reconnecting with family or roots, often influence these choices (Archdeacon, 1984). Returning may grant new status or open business opportunities. Others diversify, seek government aid, or collaborate with competitors to remain viable.

Theoretical and Practical Contribution

This study makes valuable contributions from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Theoretically, it demonstrates that ethnic entrepreneurship (EE) is a distinct phenomenon within the broader field of entrepreneurship, despite sharing certain similarities with general entrepreneurship. Through a systematic literature review, the study highlights common challenges, such as high failure rates and the need for strategic planning, as well as unique characteristics of EE, including reliance on co-ethnic networks, cultural embeddedness, and migration-related mobility. This comparative perspective deepens understanding of EE, positioning it as a distinct but related field within entrepreneurship research.

The study further shows that while general theories of entrepreneurship often emphasize economic rationality and market-based strategies, decisions in EE are also shaped by social and cultural factors. By identifying strategies unique to ethnic entrepreneurs, synthesizing recurring literature themes, and framing them as theoretical constructs, the research provides a foundation for future studies to distinguish EE from general entrepreneurship and expand theoretical insights. It also examines immigrant decision-making models, illustrating how economic, social, and cultural drivers intersect with rational choice and socio-cultural embeddedness in entrepreneurial behavior.

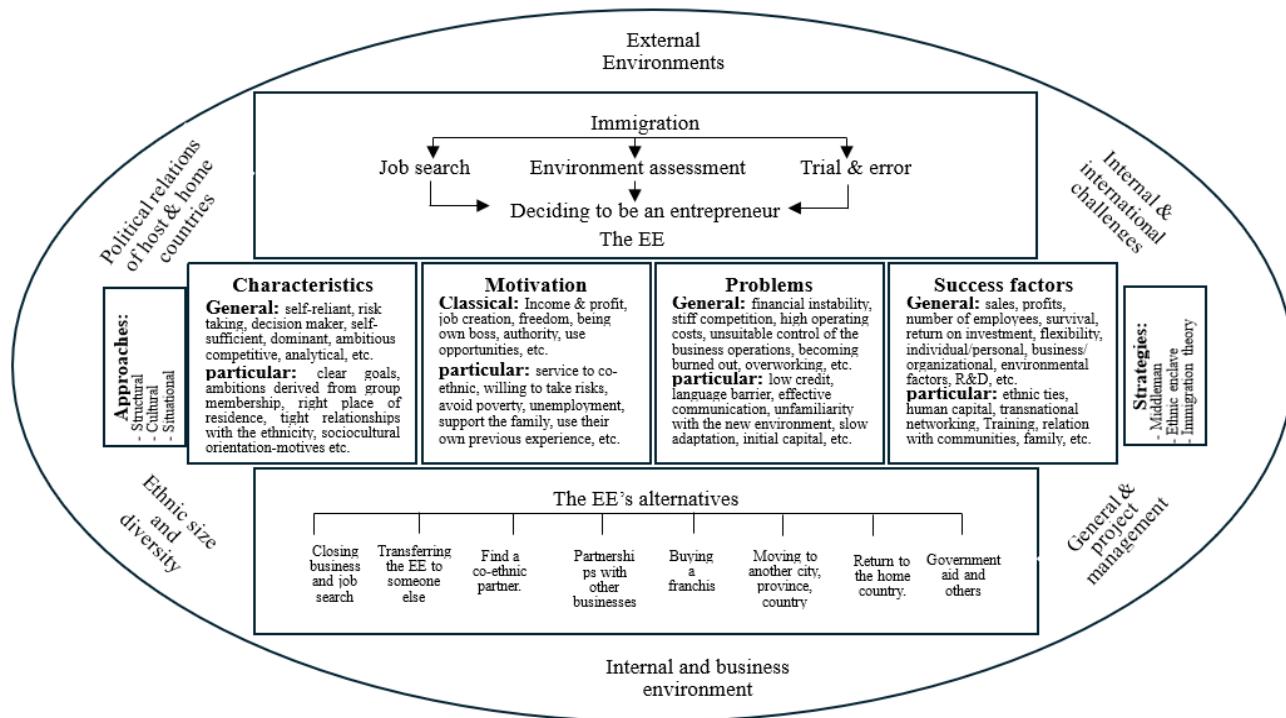
From a practical perspective, the study provides actionable insights for policymakers, support organizations, and entrepreneurs. Recognizing both shared challenges and distinctive

characteristics of EE enables more targeted interventions. The research highlights strategies commonly employed by ethnic entrepreneurs, including business closure, co-ethnic partnerships, franchising, relocation, industry shifts, and return migration, offering guidance for designing support programs tailored to their needs. By emphasizing social and cultural dimensions of decision-making, the study underscores the importance of policies that go beyond purely economic measures, such as facilitating co-ethnic collaboration, supporting integration into local business ecosystems, and leveraging transnational opportunities. Collectively, these insights can enhance resilience, sustainability, and growth of EE while contributing to regional and transnational economic development.

The conceptual framework (Figure 9) shows that ethnic entrepreneurship (EE) typically begins after immigration, often triggered by challenges such as limited job opportunities, language barriers, workplace dissatisfaction, and employer-related conflicts. Most ethnic entrepreneurs do not plan to start a business before migration; the process often develops gradually through environmental assessment, trial and error, and adaptation to the host country. While not all immigrants pursue entrepreneurship, those who do generally possess clear goals, relevant education and experience, socio-cultural orientation, and strong ties to their ethnic communities. Their motivations often extend beyond financial gain, including supporting family, serving their community, overcoming discrimination, and gaining personal and professional growth.

Ethnic entrepreneurs face both general business challenges and unique obstacles, such as restricted credit access, limited experience, unfamiliarity with local systems, and cultural or language barriers. Success is multidimensional, measured through profitability, business survival, customer base, and long-term sustainability, but is strongly influenced by ethnic networks, human and social capital, transnational connections, family support, training, and engagement with local communities. Broader environmental and political conditions, as well as knowledge of management practices, further shape outcomes. Overall, the framework captures the interplay between individual capabilities, social networks, cultural embeddedness, and environmental factors, providing a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and drivers of ethnic entrepreneurship.

Figure 9
The Nature of Ethnic Entrepreneurship



Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, as a systematic literature review, it relies entirely on previously published research. Its findings are therefore constrained by the scope, quality, and context of existing studies, which may not capture all aspects of ethnic entrepreneurship across countries or industries. The absence of primary data means that the insights and conceptual framework are drawn from secondary sources and may not fully reflect current trends, emerging practices, or the lived experiences of ethnic entrepreneurs.

The review may also be affected by publication bias, as studies reporting significant or positive results are more likely to be published than those with null or negative findings, potentially underrepresenting challenges, failures, or unconventional strategies. The search was limited to English and French publications in selected databases, possibly excluding relevant research in other languages or less accessible journals. Furthermore, while the study compares ethnic and general entrepreneurship, it cannot capture the full diversity of individual entrepreneurial experiences, local economic conditions, or cultural nuances that shape entrepreneurial behavior. Finally, as entrepreneurial ecosystems, migration patterns, and policy environments evolve, the findings and framework reflect a synthesis of literature up to the study period and may require updating in the future.

These limitations suggest several avenues for further research. Empirical studies could complement this review by collecting primary data on ethnic entrepreneurs' experiences, strategies, and outcomes across countries and industries. Expanding the scope to include more languages, cultural contexts, and underrepresented regions would enhance understanding of ethnic entrepreneurship globally. Longitudinal studies could examine how evolving entrepreneurial ecosystems, migration patterns, and policy environments influence ethnic entrepreneurs' strategies

and success over time. Addressing these gaps would build on this study's insights, validate the conceptual framework, and further refine both theoretical and practical understanding of ethnic entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review advances understanding of ethnic entrepreneurship by synthesizing fragmented research and contrasting it with general entrepreneurship. It shows that ethnic entrepreneurs face common challenges but are uniquely influenced by migration-related factors, including cultural embeddedness, co-ethnic networks, and mobility. They employ distinct strategies, such as closure, partnerships, franchising, relocation, and return migration, to navigate these challenges. The study provides a foundation for future research and offers practical insights for policymakers and support organizations to enhance the resilience and sustainability of ethnic entrepreneurial ventures. Furthermore, the findings highlight the evolving nature of ethnic entrepreneurship, where strategies are shaped not only by current opportunities but also by anticipated changes in social, cultural, and economic environments. The review also emphasizes the potential for ethnic entrepreneurs to facilitate cross-border knowledge and resource flows, acting as bridges between economies. These insights underscore the importance of a multidisciplinary perspective to fully understand the complexity of ethnic entrepreneurial activity.

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