



**BRITISH ACADEMY
OF MANAGEMENT**

BAM
CONFERENCE

3RD-5TH SEPTEMBER

ASTON UNIVERSITY BIRMINGHAM UNITED KINGDOM

This paper is from the BAM2019 Conference Proceedings

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Abstract

Previous studies reveal that social networks are drivers of opportunity recognition. While there is little discussion on opportunity recognition in tourism, recent development in societies is the impact of information and communication technologies. Information and communication technologies have drastically changed individuals' lifestyles and entrepreneurial practices, unlocking new ways of connectivity and networking. Building on this rationale, this study draws on the social network and social change theories to explore the effects of social networks on tourism entrepreneurial opportunity recognition. The qualitative case study approach is used to collect data from restaurateurs in Austria. The empirical evidence reveals a two-dimensional effect of networks on opportunity recognition. The paper proposes an integrated framework to comprehend the nature of networks in entrepreneurship and offers practical implications for policy building and a strategic framework for entrepreneurship development. It also provides a relevant theory that could be adopted in tourism entrepreneurship process and education.

Keywords: *Tourism Entrepreneurship, Social networks, Opportunity Recognition, Tourism Entrepreneurs, Restaurateurs*

1. Introduction

Opportunity recognition is an important element of entrepreneurship (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Lee Lim & Xavier, 2016). For this reason, it has increasingly gained significant attention among entrepreneurship scholars (Busenitz, 1996; Mot, 2011; Shane, 2000; Arcdichvili & Cardozo, 2000; Kirzner, 1997). Several studies explore the antecedents of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition in individuals for example (Ardichvile, Cardozo & Ray, 2003; Wang, Ellinger, & Jim Wu, 2013). Among other factors, social networks are found to be a major source of information (Ozgen & Baron, 2007; Kontinen & Ojala, 2011; Sharma & Salwan, 2016; Iansiti & Levin, 2004; Hoang & Antoncic, 2003; Arenius & de Clercq, 2005; and core antecedents of opportunity recognition (Singh, 1998; Sigala, 2016; Koning & Daniel, 1999). Social network impacts entrepreneurial development (Sigala, 2016; Sula & Elenurm, 2017), and has a positive influence on resource accessibility for exploiting market opportunities (Tang, Kacmar, Micki & Bausenitz, 2012; Casson & Giusta, 2007; Zhao, Ritchie & Echter, 2011). Additionally, the social network provides access to relational and functional resources (Nieminen & Lemmetyinen, 2015; Strobl, Peters & Raich, 2014).

Nevertheless, a key aspect of the social network is the paradigm shift from offline to online due to the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs). There is a growing recognition of ICTs for multiple purposes (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Evidence shows that ICTs are becoming a routine part of people's lives (Neuhofer & Ladkin, 2017; Kim, & Tussyadiah, 2013; Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2014; Gretzel & Tazim, 2009). Some researchers (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009; Wang, Xiang & Fesenmaier, 2014a) point out that social media enables individuals to facilitate and create added value in numerous ways. Of course, entrepreneurs are making use of these technological developments (Nambisan & Nambisan, 2008). The trend indicates that digital tools are precipitating cross-border networking for identifying and creating new ventures (Elenurm, 2018).

So far, little is known about opportunity recognition in tourism entrepreneurship literature. Previous studies on social network and entrepreneurship in tourism predominantly focus on

resource mobilisation (Strobl, Peters & Raich, 2014; Dickinson, 2017; Casson & Giusta, 2007; Zhao, Ritchie, & Echtner, 2011); as well as destination reputation (Strobl & Peters, 2013). We see evidence that networks are a major instrument for tourism destination management. Therefore, drawing on the social network and social change theories (Sablonierre, 2017); this paper explores that role of networks in tourism entrepreneurial opportunity specifically in the food service segment. The objective is to examine how changing networks affect tourism entrepreneurial opportunity recognition among restaurateurs in Austria.

The study is relevant because entrepreneurship begins from opportunity recognition. Also, the rapid increase of awareness and usage of internet has precipitated a new paradigm of networks which facilitates greater interconnectivity and interactivity among individuals (Neuhofer & Ladkin, 2017; Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2014). There are less empirical studies on the topic of social networks and tourism entrepreneurial opportunity recognition. Therefore, exploring how restaurateurs integrate their networks to achieve their entrepreneurial competencies should contribute to the lacking literature on tourism enterprise development and tourism entrepreneurship (Koh, & Hatten, 2002; Solvoll, Alsos, & Bulanova, 2016; Cheng, Li, Petrick & O'Leary, 2011).

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Opportunity recognition

According to Baron (2006), opportunity recognition is a process through which ideas for new business enterprise are identified. Shane & Venkataraman (2000) perceive opportunity recognition as a process whereby entrepreneurs identify, recognise, and discover potential opportunities to create and develop new firms, markets and technology. While Smith-Nelson, Sardeshmukh, Shruti, Sebor, & Reiter-Palmon (2011), conceives entrepreneurial opportunity recognition as "an individual's ability to recognize business opportunities from changing environmental events that may produce new and or useful products or services or a means for which an existing business may generate a profit measured in consideration of quantity; quality and originality or opportunities identified in response to a given stimuli or set of circumstance. Another notion is that entrepreneurial opportunity recognition is the discovery of an idea to create a new enterprise and the search for information regarding market and technological possibilities (Eren, 2003).

While Christensen, Madesen & Peterson (1989), see opportunity recognition as perceiving a possibility to create a new enterprise; or significantly improving the position of an existing business in both situations resulting in new profit potential. These definitions show a lack of consensus about the notion of opportunity recognition in academic literature (Ardichili & Cardozo, 2000). The perceived conceptual ambiguity stems from the fundamental differences in philosophy of science (Alvarez & Barney, 2008; Lee Lim & Xavie, 2016). The realist perspective grounded from neoclassical equilibrium economic theory assumes that entrepreneurial opportunities are general knowledge and that every individual can recognise all opportunities. It is the risk propensity of individuals rather than information about the opportunities, that ascertains who becomes an entrepreneur (Shane, 2000; Kirzner, 1997). While the constructionists perspective holds that people cannot recognise all opportunities. This view claims that market imperfection with information asymmetry initiates information gap and that; entrepreneurial opportunities do not appear in a well-packaged form (Venkataraman, 1997). Thus, the process of identifying entrepreneurial opportunity depends

on individual's potentials and readiness to discover them (Stevenson, & Gumpert, 1985). The current study adopts the constructionists' perspective of opportunity recognition and the definition of (Christensen, Madsen & Peterson, 1989).

2.2 Opportunity Recognition Process

An entrepreneurial opportunity emerges when a business idea is perceived to be suitable for transformation into commercial reality (Krishna Shrestha, 2015). It includes the creativity process of preparation and incubation that leads to an insight of business ideas and afterwards their evaluation and elaboration for a business opportunity (Lumpkin, Hills & Shrader, 2004). This process consists of three phases with divergent description (see Lindsay & Craig, 2002; Ardichvili, Cardozo & Ray, 2003).

While opportunity recognition is a three phase process, extant studies suggest a number influencing factors demonstrated in several models (see Volkmann, Tokarski & Grunhagen, 2010; Ardichvili & Cardozo, 2000; Baron & Ensley, 2006; Wang, Ellinger & Jim Wu, 2013); built on different assumptions drawn from a wide range of disciplines (Shamudeen, Keat & Hassan, 2017). Evidence suggests that prior knowledge, alertness and social networks are three essential components and determinants of opportunity recognition (Ardichvili & Cardozo, 2000). There is somehow interplay between these three components. First, prior knowledge of market means of serving the market as well as customers' problems, influences alertness. Secondly, social network is the component concentrating on the relationship among the entrepreneurs (Ardichvili & Cardozo, 2000). Additionally, other studies examine the link between personality traits and opportunity recognition (Baron & Ensley, 2006; Ucbasaran, Westhead & Wright, 2009). For example, Kirzner, (1997) examines relationship between entrepreneurial alertness, opportunity discovery and opportunity recognition. Although some scholars argue that personality traits cannot be considered as an effective explanation of an entrepreneur's choice of developing a venture (Gartner, 1985), literature shows a strong connection between personality traits and social networking. The individual personality traits such as openness to experience are related to social networking (Nihan & Burcu, 2013), and ofcourse generate social capital from the interactions among members of the networks (Arenius & De Clercq, 2005). Indeed, personality regulates and influences how an individual's attitudes and values are developed progressively (Robbins & Judge, 2013). It may foresee how an individual sense, interpret and act on the information and stimuli which he/she receives from the environment and through social learning process (Lim, Lean-Ee Lee & Ramasamy, 2015). This notion postulates that certainly there is a link between social networks and entrepreneurial alertness. The emotional, cognitive and behavioural reactions are interconnected and are influence by the past and current learning environments of the individual (Chan & Lu, 2004; Bandura, 2001). Thus, prior knowledge from past experience and knowledge of information are being observed and processed to make sense of the environment. This implies that individuals are connected through their social networks which provide assistance, support and information to each other, which tends to serve as an antenna that enables the first dimension of alertness (Tang, Kacmar & Busenitz, 2012).

2.3 Social Networks

Social networks are areas of a social structure composed of firms or individuals that are connected in specific patterns and are interdependent. A social system that has a limited set of organisations directly or indirectly connected to each other by various social relationships such as strategic alliances, interlocking, personal relations, affiliation and whose structural pattern will constrain or facilitate member organisation behaviour through various mechanisms like information flow, knowledge sharing, resource complementary (Galaskiewicz & Marsden, 1978).

A social network comprises of a set of actors or nodes which are people within the group along with a set of ties, a connection between the individuals of a specific type of friendship that link them (Granovetter, 1983). These ties include strong ties and weak ties. Strong ties are believe to be usual acquaintances such as family and friends, while weak ties are casual acquaintances and these ties function differently in information transmission (Granovetter, 1983). The weak ties provide unique information than strong ties (Nelson, 1989; Granovetter, 1983). An individual's participation and attachment in a network of relationship enable exposure to diverse information based on advice and support from within the network circle (Granovetter, 1973), supportive assets (Greve, 1995), and knowledge (Brown & Butler, 1995). Actually, networks are essential sources of social capital and an excessive amount of new information (Baggio and Cooper, 2010; Granovetter, 1973).

One recent aspect of networks is the current digitalisation that is precipitating a new paradigm shift of networks towards the cyberspace (Park, Sung & Im, 2017). This social change (Greenfield, 2016; de la Sabloniere, 2017), transforms networks to include technology. Nonetheless, social networks are an amalgamation of mentors, family relatives and friends, information industry network and professional forum both offline and online (Ozgen and Baron, 2007).

2.3.1 Offline Networks

Informal industry network: Close friends often serve as a starting point for information for entrepreneurial opportunity recognition (Sharma, 2016). Family relatives and close friends are an individual's strong ties network which gives emotional concern, understanding and even financial assistance at different stages (Ozgen & Baron, 2007). Such networks are weak ties and usually lack specific industry expertise and experience (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003; Ren, Shu, Bao, & Chen, 2014). Thus, industry friends and relatives will be less helpful to recognise entrepreneurial opportunities (Park, Sung & Im, 2017; Granovetter, 1973). Actually, information from friends and relatives are homogeneous (Barney and Lawrence, 1989), and often redundant (Ruef, 2002). Although these ties are trustworthy (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003), and interrelated, they are generally perceive as less effective (Moody, 2002; Marin, 2012).

Family and Friends: Previous studies suggest that family and friends are significant sources of information. It is said that family background factors impact an individual's entrepreneurial intention because their impacts on entrepreneurial actions are mainly from role moulding perspective and belief of parents' major role in children's entrepreneurial career (Marin, 2012; Moody, 2002). Some scholars argue that parent behaviours would not set an example to influence individuals' entrepreneurial intentions (Churchill et al, 1987). Other studies suggest that family social and cultural norms may lead to entrepreneurial desirability (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). Even so, it is obvious that an individual

entrepreneur's children will proportionally become entrepreneurs (Krueger and Dickson, 1993). However, family relatives and friends usually provide trustworthy information even though they usually lack industry experience (Ozgen & Baron, 2007).

Mentorship: Mentorship is a structure and series of processes designed to create effective coaching relationships; guide the desired behaviour change for those involved; and evaluate the results for the protégés, the mentors and the organisation (Murray, 2001). Being a mentor means acting as a coach, advisor, peer support or a role model (Rigg & O'Dwyer, 2012). A mentor engages in knowledge transfer to the mentee. Generally speaking, mentors' relationship requires participation, commitment and time (Jack, Dodd & Anderson, 2004; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Bosma et al, 2012; Mishra & Jain, 2014; Trivedi, 2014). It can be a formal or informal and often intense and long-lasting relationship (Ragins, 1997; Cohen, 1999). Undoubtedly, mentorship plays a pivotal role for novice entrepreneurs. It assists and guides entrepreneurs to grab an entrepreneurial opportunity. Although entrepreneurs may still benefit significantly from other social sources of information such as informal network within their industry, their mentors serves as an information bank (Ozgen & Baron, 2007; Johansson, 2000).

Professional Forums: While mentorship expertise and experience may support and guide novice entrepreneurs towards information search for new firm development (Hill 1995; Davidsson & Honig, 2003); it is evident that professional forums also provide information for entrepreneurial opportunity recognition giving that entrepreneurial opportunity is a developable competence just as other different competencies, through entrepreneurship education (DeTienne & Chandler, 2004). For this reason, professional forums are the basis to recognize the entrepreneurial opportunity (Ozgen & Baron, 2007). Such professional forum, conferences, seminars and workshops assist entrepreneurs to access information relating to current developments within the field and the environment (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003; Ikoja-Odongo & Ocholla, 2004; Ozgen & Sanderson, 2006; Quan-Haase & Wellman, 2004).

2.3.2 Online Networks

The recent discussion in networking research is the social change of network which exceeds conventional space and uses the internet to create social networks (Arenius & De Clercq, 2005). An online network is a personal online connection with peers that influences learning and consumption decisions (Aleti, Ilicic, & Harrigan, 2017); based on computer or device connected to a network such as an internet. Online networks are built on social platforms or network sites, web-based service that enables individuals to build a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, view and traverse their connections and those other within the system (Mohebi & Rabie, 2014). Nonetheless, the overlapping and interacting territorial and online communities are a concern. To address this concern, Norris (2002) explores if online groups serve a bridging or bonding function for an entire society and found that pure bonding groups are most likely to materialise online where social and ideological homogeneity overlaps, intensifying networks among people sharing similar backgrounds and beliefs. Nonetheless, demarcating boundaries in the digital world remains a significant challenge (Preece, 2001; Talai, 2018). In this paper, online networks concentrate on the online presence, online network content and online communities' activities.

Online Presence: The emergence of social network sites has changed the way individuals connect and interact with one another (Neuhofer & Ladkin, 2017). Currently, there exist hundreds of social network sites and platforms with numerous services surrounding users with plentiful interests and desires (Naseri, 2017). Because of that, social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Flickr, and Twitter have heavily gained global attention with millions of users (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Naseri, 2017). Networking sites are operated by individual corporations and accessible through the web users, who of course, are required to absolutely register in a site, with a unique pseudonym and entering personal data which is added to the user's profile (see Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Some networking sites do not require any form of consent to link with any other user. Contrary, other sites require the consent from both the creator of the site and target prior to connecting the users (Mislove, Gummadi & Druschel, 2006; Wang & Wellman, 2010; Caers et al, 2013). The nodes tied by a link can, of course, be online acquaintances, business contacts or real-world acquaintances, sharing the same interest, or be interested in each other's online generated content. Indeed, individuals usually own multiple social network accounts across different social network sites or platforms (Charnigo & Barnett-Ellis, 2007).

Network Content: The interaction that emerges from pairs of a network generates content (Broese Van Groenou & Tilburg, 1996). Unlike conventional offline social networks, several interest groups, organisation, and associations exist on the internet. Hence, it is exceptionally easy to find the niche website or specific group of like-minded souls. Accordingly, a cornucopia of online discussion groups' spans amalgamation of issues (Norris, 2002). Even though online networks tend to solidify offline connections more than to meet new people (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). This is observed from endeavours to retain the previously established social networks, as opposed to getting new connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). We see substantial evidence that social network sites usage culture varies considerably. Most of them are built in diverse languages and they harbour several activities connecting the nodes and the ties (Cassidy, 2006; Wang & Wellman, 2010; Caers et al, 2013). Users visit and explore social network by browsing profile information and any contributed content (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Thus, a reciprocal interaction emerges immediately they find mutual interest or activities with the contemporary members (Resnick, 2001). This action transforms users to "prosumers"; that is producing and consuming content simultaneously (Andersson, 2007); by publishing, organising or locating videos, text messages, and photo images, commenting, liking, tagging images as well as videos (Cassidy, 2006). Verily, online participation reflects varying levels and takes two forms; the complementary aspects and civic engagement (see Brandtzaeg & Heim, 2011).

Online Communities activities: The internet in current times is part and parcel of humans' life (Gaines & Shaw, 2001; Naseri, 2017). The internet is a medium of almost unlimited choices and minimal constraints about where to go and what to do, for online users. It empowers users with online communities and offers unique means of interaction and socialisation (Neuhofer & Ladkin, 2017; Putnam, 2000). Extensive literature reveals different forms of online communities (Kozinets, Hemetsberger, & Schau, 2008). These platforms are characterised as anchor for virtual social space interaction, where both corporate and individuals foster knowledge communities between relatives, friends, and even strangers (see Norris, 2002; Kim, 2000; Norris, 2001; Gaines and Shaw, 2001; Preece, 2001; Hafner, 2001; Hill & Hughes, 1998). There exist four classifications of online communities; the Crowds,

Hives, Mobs and Swarms (see Kozinets, Hemetsberger, & Schau, 2008). Online communities suggest intriguing possibilities of social capital through interaction and exchange within social groups sharing similar belief and values (Norris, 2002; Resnick, 2001; Naseri, 2017; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Williams, 2006; Adler & Kwon, 2002). Norris (2002) coined two forms of online social capitals the bridging social capital which refers to social networks that bring together people of different sorts, and “bonding social capital which brings together people of a similar sort. This is an important distinction since the externalities of groups that are bridging are likely to be positive, while networks that are bonding are at greater risk of producing negative externalities (Norris, 2002).

3. Tourism Networks

Social networks occupy a pivotal role in tourism destination development and management (Viken & Aarsaether, 2013; Van der Zee & Vanneste, 2015); due to the quest for alternative governance approach (Hall, 1999; Waray, 2009). This can only be achieved through some form of organised networks involving various actors of different tourism stakeholders. Building on this notion, Tremblay (1998) suggest that private local stakeholders should self manage their destinations thereby restricting the government’s role to coordinate economic and social agents (Melian-Gonzalez & Garcia-Falcon, 2003). Networks are used both from policy makers and local supplier side in a tourism destination. Within the policy framework, networks are used in destination governance (Cooper, Scott & Baggio, 2009). Truly, participating in a collaborative network yields profit for tourism enterprises (Morrison, Lynch, & Johns, 2004; Novelli et al, 2006); and also strengthen the entrepreneurial reputation in a destination (Strobl & Peters, 2013). It is observed that tourism destinations competitiveness develops on the successful alignment of intra-destination linkage and interdependencies (Zehrer & Raich, 2010; Saxena, 2005). This is because social capital is obtained through increasing intra-organisational learning and knowledge sharing which provide access to the appropriate resources required for the entrepreneurial activities from network partners (Strobl, Peters & Raich, 2014). In fact, tourism networks are very essential because such collaborations reduce transaction costs for networks firms thus increased their competitive positions (Sorensen, 2007; Halme, 2001; Morrison et al., 2004); and creates added value and tourists’ experience enhancement (Fuglsang & Eide, 2013). Above all, collaboration is required to cope with the complexity of the tourism industry (Jamal & Getz, 1995).

4. Research Design

4.1 Method

This research explores the role of networks on tourism entrepreneurial opportunity recognition. Specifically, the study focuses on the experiences of restaurateurs in Austria. Giving that the study is exploratory in nature, a qualitative approach is applied. The qualitative method is associated with the exploration of an inexplicit phenomenon (Yin, 2003). Indeed, qualitative research is an inductive approach of enquiry that concerns assessment of reactions, attitudes, idea, feelings, thinking, opinion and behaviour of the participants of research (Connaway & Powell, 2010). It tries to find out answers to questions, generates evidence and provides findings that were not determined beforehand, which is applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study (Flick, 2009; Creswell, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011). For this reason, applying qualitative research approach was deemed appropriate to understand how the changing networks affect tourism entrepreneurial opportunity recognition.

To address this phenomenon, qualitative interviews with entrepreneurs were employed. The empirical examination took place in the Mozart Sounds of music city of Salzburg in Austria. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select participants. Because purposive sampling enable researchers to opt for participants that are well informed about the phenomenon being researched and are willing to distil the information based on their experiences or knowledge.

4.2 Data & Sampling

All participants were immigrant entrepreneurs based in Salzburg. Immigrants' tourism entrepreneurs were chosen for this research due to the unprecedented amount of new tourism firms emanated in Salzburg over the last five years by immigrants (Bristol-Faulhammer, 2017). Indeed, about 84, 350 amounting to (13.3%) of Austrian's foreign workforce in 2015 were self-employed (Biffl, 2016; Austrian Employment Service, 2017). Actually, immigrants in Austria are mostly setting up firms in the service sector including restaurants or food production as well as manufacturing and retail like textile production, leather etc.

In addition, there is constant debate on immigration economics (Peri, 2012; David & Peri, 2016), due to the growing number of immigrant entrepreneurs resulting from large immigrant influxes (Borjas, 1994). And there is reasonable economic contribution of the entrepreneurial immigrants to the receiving countries (Peri, 2012; David & Peri, 2016; Goldin, 2016). This actually spiced immigrant entrepreneurship progressively as a field of research (Evans, 2012; Knight, 2015). Immigrant entrepreneurship is a mechanism for enabling individuals towards economic stability and social recognition (Ram & Smallbone, 2003; Van den Yillaart, 2001). Evidence indicates that immigrants and expatriates exhibit a higher level of entrepreneurial activity as opposed to people without cross-cultural experience (Vandor, & Franke, 2016). This of course explains the reason behind selective immigration policies such as entrepreneurial characteristics, business experience and high level of education, employ by most countries (Mahroum, 2001, Wadhwa et al, 2007; Vandor, & Franke, 2016). While cross cultural experiences increase individual capabilities to identify entrepreneurial opportunities, United Nations immigration report 2017 depicts that most immigrants are often faced with the challenge of finding decent jobs. Immigrants have or limited access to the job market (Biffl, 2016; Austrian Employment Service, 2016a), and often experience cultural and language barrier in the receiving country. As a result, they turn to rely on their social ties for integration. Therefore, it was necessary to explore the effects of social network on opportunity recognition.

The definition of immigrant entrepreneurs was based on the distinction between the European Union (EU) and none EU citizen (see Foster, 2017, p. 25). Implicitly, entrepreneurs from EU member states were considered citizens based on EU law and therefore were excluded in the sample. Accordingly, purposive sampling was intended to specifically select only immigrant tourism entrepreneurs.

The interviews concluded at 15 responses due to saturation. That is, when the interviews were no longer producing any new codes (Gust, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Galvin, 2015; Saunders, Sim, Kingstone, Baker, Waterfield, Bartlam, Burroughs & Jinks, 2018).

They were different speciality restaurants. The entire participants were restaurateurs classified as small and medium-sized enterprises based on EU classification (European Commission, 2005). That is, enterprises operating with headcount annual work unit of not more than 250 and an annual turnover of 50 million Euros. The respondents were first-generation immigrants and founding owners of the enterprises.

The Role of Networks in Opportunity Recognition in Tourism: Insights from Restaurateurs in Austria

No	Gender	Type of Restaurant	Staff	Restaurant Speciality
01	Female	Cafe/Bistro	4	Latin American cuisines
02	Male	Casual Dining	4	Indian Cuisines
03	Male	Casual Dining	5	Sri Lanka Cuisines
04	Female	Cafe/Bistro	5	Mozambique Cuisines
05	Male	Fine Dining	12	Thailand Cuisines
06	Male	Casual	8	Vietnamese Cuisines
07	Male	Buffet Style	12	Chinese Cuisines
08	Male	Casual	6	Nepalese Cuisines
09	Female	Fast Casual	10	Chinese Cuisines
10	Male	Fine Dining	8	Gambian Cuisines
11	Female	Casual Dining	6	Cuban cuisines
12	Male	Fine Dining	7	Pakistani cuisines
13	Female	Fine Dining	8	Indian cuisines
14	Male	Casual Dining	6	Chinese cuisines
15	Male	Fast Casual	6	Brazilian cuisines

Table 1: Sample profiles
Source: Author's depiction (2018).

The empirical research is structured based on the general consensus of qualitative research (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2003). Contents were analysed to shed light on the observed phenomenon. Prior to conducting the interviews, the contacts of immigrant tourism entrepreneurs in Salzburg were extracted from the Salzburg Chamber of Commerce in which a random sampling was used to select participants. Pre-contact letters were issued out to the participants inviting the participants to partake in the study. The interview guideline was developed with semi-structured questions. Table two (2) depicts the summary of measures. The interview guide starts with more general questions about the enterprise, then funnelling down to networks and subsequently online network. The reason for conceiving networks as separate sections in the interview guide is because these forms of networks emerge differently. Taking into account that online networks have no geographical boundaries (European Parliament, 2016); examination was based on online presence, network content, online activities and online communities. The inquiry narrative guide provided the interviewer with a sequential structure of the formulated questions (Flick, 2009). The interviewer thus steers the conversation between the lines of the subject matter being discussed.

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THEMES	LEADING QUESTIONS	INTERVIEWER'S FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS
<p>Profile & General How did your business develop since its creation? Which stakeholders do you have to address in particular at startup phase?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you try to address them? • How long did it take you to address them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you contact the stakeholders? • So for how long have you been in this business?
<p>OFFLINE NETWORK Informal industry network How many social groups and or clubs do you know?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which of these social groups and or clubs are you a member? • Why did you become a member of these groups? • How do you make use of these contacts for your business? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For how long have you been a member of these social groups? • Why are these groups important to you and your business? • How does a discussion with friends and relatives help you to discover business opportunities?
<p>Family and Friends How many of your friends and relatives are business people?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of business do they operate? • How often do you have business related discussions with them? • How do you benefit from these discussions with them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you make use of these contacts for your business? • How helpful are these contacts to your business?
<p>Professional Forums Which education do you have? Do they still have contacts with your former colleagues from education or training? Which seminars workshops or training programmes do you attend?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does information or feedback from instructional seminars, workshops or training programs help you for business? • What role do seminars workshops or training programmes play towards your business opportunities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which seminars and workshops are important for your business? • What is the reason for this? • How often do you attend these seminars and training workshops?
<p>Mentorship How will you describe your mentorship experience and your business?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many mentors do you have? • For how long have you used a mentor? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often do you meet with your mentors? • What extend have mentorship helped you in recognizing a business opportunity?
<p>ONLINE NETWORKS Online presence Do you use online sources and online social networks? How often do you go online?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many social networks accounts do you have and on which social network sites? • Why are these social networks important for your business? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which online social networking site is important for your business? • How do you make use of these contacts for your business? • How are these social networks important for your business?
<p>Online Network Content& activities Which online interest groups, organisation, and associations have you created account or profile?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which discussion group reflects your particular beliefs and interests? • In what ways do you use online networks? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does interaction between differences online groups impact on your business? • How is the sharing of content online important for your business and why?
<p>Online Communities How many online communities are you a member? How often do you visit these online communities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you select your online community and why? • What belief & values do you share in these groups? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are these groups important to your business and why? • How do you make use of talking with people online for your business?

Table 2: Summary of Measures
 Source: Anthor's depiction (2019).

These questions were formulated to capture how the changing patterns of social networks affect opportunity recognition to create a new venture. The interviews were held at the respective restaurants during the periods between 9.am and 11.am. For those restaurants that close in the afternoon to re-open in the evening, the interviews took place between 2: 30 pm to 4: 30 pm prior to re-opening in the evening. The interviews were conducted in English at the request of the participants. Averagely, the interviews lasted 35 minutes since there was no restricted timing for respondents' narratives. Each interview was recorded respectively and was transcribed accordingly after completion. Subsequently, the transcribed data was organised for analysis.

4.2. Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is the act of processing naturalistically obtained data in substantial details (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is a multi-layer interrelated process that begins from transcription, making sense out of the text for analysis and further interpretation of the data (Crewell, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Data analysis in the study was grounded on inductive approach and framework analysis of six generally accepted phases; familiarization, identifying thematic framework, indexing, charting and mapping as well as interpretation (Ritchie & Spencer, Flick, 2009). The data iterative reviewing process (Stakes, 2005); was the listening of the audio recording of the interview, reading the transcribed text and making reflective remarks with the aim of using respondents own words in order to capture the key elements of what the participants described (Crewell, 2009). The next step was the thematic categorisation. At this stage, participants were grouped into categories then a thematic data analysis was applied to analyse the data. Written texts were broken down into units prior to analysis (Neuendorf, 2002). The related themes were informal industry networks, family & friends, professional forums and mentorship. While online networks thematized presence, network content as well as online communities' activities.

5. Findings

This section conveys the findings of social networks effects on business improvement or new venture creation. First, it examined how offline networks navigate or trigger opportunity and how online networks support these entrepreneurial opportunities.

Informal Industry Networks

Informal industry networks are a vital springboard for information for an entrepreneurial opportunity. The participants mentioned that the inspiration for their venture creation, roots from the informal industry networks. These include, for instance, interaction with work colleagues, school friends. Some entrepreneurs noted shared experiences and curiosity of their peers about different culture; as being the main trigger of their entrepreneurial opportunity identification. Some restaurateurs remarked that constant discussion with persons they knew in the course of living in Austria such as workmates and school friends i.e., weak ties networks exposed them to connect with many people who were interested in knowing much about other countries. The acquaintance with informal social networks assists relations between immediate contacts and third parties. As a respondent describe,

“Whoever was in Sri Lanka that is, Austrians or other foreigners; and lots of my friends said they really like the foods. So I wanted to bring that flavour to Austria. Not typically. Because for example, we cook very hot spicy foods but the spiciness or chicken with bones these are things people here don't like. So the same flavours to the Austrian, palate or parent with the

minimum changes; so yeah there is.....a kind of innovation". Some entrepreneurs find informal social networks as being naturally reciprocal, interdependent and reinforced mutually. They got relevant information from sources they often interact with such as customers, during work experience. Informal networks were also used to address stakeholders during the setting up of the firm.

Family and Friends -The entrepreneurs' relative and friends play a pivotal role in recognising entrepreneurial opportunities. The respondents engage in knowledge and ideas exchanged with relatives and friends. Some entrepreneurs engage in business discussions with other entrepreneurs who are relatives and or friends. The conversation is usually centred on the health of the business. Entrepreneurs' gain from the interactive conversation which is intended to provide an exchange update regarding the season, performances and to strategize for the days ahead. Family and friends, of course, would provide every possible support. Some entrepreneurs got venture capital from their family. Some entrepreneurs were aware of entrepreneurial opportunity before they even move to settle in Austria. This was information gain from their family relatives who were already living in Austria. It is observed that family, relatives and friends tend to share their experiences and about opportunities in Austria, encouraging their peers to migrate to Austria. Additionally, family relatives are a significant source of information for talent search. Nevertheless, they can lack industry-specific information which could spark opportunity recognition.

"If some friends have some kind of concerts in their restaurants and then they call, we just go there socialise and talk about things. You know what is happening and what the future is, what to do next, and so on..... but it's just a small input really. Yeah in such situations sometimes you give some inputs, they also give us so..... yeah like I said, it's not like really great things like a really cool idea or coolest idea that we have ever found. It's some tips you know.....that's the thing"

Family and friends are considered as a platform for discussing business challenges and probing solutions. The alliance formed by the restaurateurs provides a forum for mitigating problems. The entrepreneurs within an area or district get together through the alliance to study their market-place, list all issues and challenges on the desk and map out constructive solutions. This helps the entrepreneurs to evaluate their position in the past, present and the future. A nascent entrepreneur delineates the significance of these meetings as it helps to plan for five to six years.

Professional forums - In terms of professional forums, entrepreneurs said attending training programmes was an enriching experience. Entrepreneurs actually make use of training courses and seminars to gather information. The Salzburg chamber of commerce is the key actor of professional forums. Some entrepreneurs attended courses at the chamber of commerce at the beginning of their venture and do not attend regularly any more due to a busy schedule.

"Chamber of commerce is handling lots of programs for the gastronomy. That's for the restaurant owners or the restaurateurs' [...] what do you call this? the employees; employers and employees or so. But [yeah] at the beginning I found it really stupid but this time "No" ... I gain a lot since they are updating every time almost every month about what is happening"

The organisation of programmes such as wine seminars and internet marketing seminars also play a supreme role in providing valuable information which helps entrepreneurs shape or re-shape their enterprise accordingly. A continues offering of these workshops and seminars

inspires and effect opportunity recognition. Some entrepreneurs look monthly programme list. The chamber of commerce Salzburg is the leading actor providing professional forums. There are hundreds of courses offered by them for instance, the hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP) for foods safety. Professional forums were found as a significant factor for information gathering. Some entrepreneurs completely develop their business ideas based on the professional programmes offered by the chambers of commerce.

Mentorship - The strength of coaching is a subtle source of information for entrepreneurial opportunity. In addition to prior knowledge, some entrepreneurs seek to take up a mentorship session with an experienced restaurateur, to master the tenets of running a restaurant pragmatically. This is due to fact that prior knowledge from the working experience was not based on managing a firm. The entrepreneurs noted that running entire operations of a firm requires some additional skills. The mentor's guidance enhanced the purchasing, receiving, quality and cost control skills that were missing. In general, the mentorship relationship was crucial to consolidate the prior knowledge and experience from either work or education. Entrepreneurial mentorship is found to be an essential factor for strategy implementation. Therefore mentorship acts as an alert for information for new business opportunities between two alternatives. Some high experience mentors or entrepreneurs must be integrated to play the role of a support mechanism for novice entrepreneurs.

"Yeah for example what you learn in hotel school or other institutes and how to write a business plan is only the basic... that is the elementary or primary level to say. That is not in real life. If somebody wants to take it like that in real life, then big or so many big surprises awaits him. Because that is not all that people are doing out there [yeah], so much is missing and these are all costs"

Online presence -The emergence social network sites and platforms facilitate connectivity between individuals through the establishment of a presence in the digital world. The entrepreneurs showed strong online presences. Multiple accounts are managed across the social media platforms and sites. The most popular platforms and sites used are Facebook, Instagram, Google recommendations and Tripadvisor. The restaurateurs' active presence on social networking sites enables the connections between direct contacts and third parties. One respondent reported that he goes online at least four times every two hours in a day to check what customers are talking about his firm, and also to respond to emails and comments from clients.

Network content - The online platforms host several different types of content. The online platforms allow entrepreneurs to deliver business related videos, text, and images. The active presence online creates two-way traffic for entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs find online sources as a lucrative way to disseminate their brand and to reach out to their clients. Because people are addicted to online networking sites there are always online posting, sharing and commenting of contents. Facebook, for instance, allows the possibility to select and categorise the target market. It is the cheapest form of advertising for the firm.

"Let's say you take a photo of your cake and say okay this is a gluten-free wonderful cake. Tag this photo online and see..... you will achieve thousand and one hundred people within ten minutes [Yeah]"

Online sources are regarded as a very important channel of information for new ideas. The respondents use online platforms to communicate with other restaurateurs. In their business

network online page the restaurant owners ask questions about managing negative comments and reaction. Then, other members of the online communities provide suggestion and support. The respondents also share experiences about their online engagement with consumers. In this way, nascent entrepreneurs are able to gain access to vast amount of knowledge. Essentially, it serves as a measuring scale to evaluate the business performance. The content retrieves from online give an opportunity to upgrade business operations and its quality. Entrepreneurs' analysis the online content especially negative comments to know why the comment was negative, and when. Then a follow up to rekindle the situation is initiated which is usually an innovation. Unlike the traditional interaction, the entrepreneurs find the need to improve their services by extracting information from online.

Online communities' activities - The familiarity with communities online provides social capital gains that can lead to new business development. The entrepreneurs tend to engage in specific large organised groups which they are already affiliated to, offline. These online communities were generally low in concentration for ideas to develop a venture. The online communities were most important to exchange information among existing entrepreneurs within their business circle, which therefore helps to plan and manage their businesses.

"People rely more on Tripadvisor reviews, so we also try to get as much as possible to Tripadvisor reviews but it's not that easy, because Tripadvisor users are ... they check always what are the reviews but they don't contribute, basically". The online communities' activities were mostly built on acquaintance. That is, participants in their forums were also member of their offline business networks. The restaurant owners discuss business challenges as well as out sourcing for talents. It was also observed that participants have a common platform to connect with peers separate from other forums of social networks that connect with customers.

6. Discussion

This research makes several contributions to recent discussions concerning entrepreneurship in the tourism sector. Firstly, the study integrates social network and social change (Granovetter, 1985; de la Sablonniere, 2017) to explore the entrepreneurial opportunity, analysing how connectivity and interaction found in networks trigger tourism entrepreneurial opportunity recognition. The study takes the form of exploring and making use of information gathered from within networks to establish new tourism-related venture or significantly improving the position of an existing enterprise. Previous studies on networks in tourism (Hall, 1999; Waray, 2009; Cooper, Scott & Baggio, 2009; Melian-Gonzalez & Garcia-Falcon, 2003; Strobl & Peters, 2013; Morrison et al., 2004; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Van der Zee & Vanneste, 2015) have over sighted the importance of social change and its effects on networks. Likewise, most studies on networks in tourism research have predominately focused on destination governance, stakeholders' relationship (Cooper, Scott & Baggio, 2009), competition and destination reputation (Strobl & Peters, 2013). By focusing on opportunity identification, specifically in restaurateurs the study cogently articulates the complementary links between networks and new venture development in the food service segment.

The findings suggest that informal networks and mentors are essential for opportunity recognition. As informal industry networks, these are weak ties (Granovetter, 1985), that tend to generate more useful information for the entrepreneurs (Ozgen & Baron, 2007; Arenius & De Clercq, 2005). The mobilisation and use of social capital increase the potentials to spot an

entrepreneurial opportunity. This analysis re-affirms previous empirical findings. Social networks are resource based for entrepreneurs (Strobl, Peters & Raich, 2014). Therefore, having extended networks increases the amount of acquired social capital which is the basis of ideas generation.

Several scholars, for instance (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003s (Perry-Smith and Shalley, 2003; Ren, Shu, Bao, & Chen, 2014) have subscribed to believe that family relatives and friends do not provide rich social capital as opposed to others because they are considered strong ties (Granovetter, 1985). For this reason, they are not good sources of innovative ideas even though they tend to provide very reliable and trustworthy information to entrepreneurs. This study reveals a counter outcome. Entrepreneurs heavily rely on family relatives and friends to extract valuable information for entrepreneurial activities. There are several possible explanations for these results. One possible reason could be as a result of the entrepreneurs being foreigners or having a foreign background. As an immigrant, entrepreneurs often face the challenges of cultural differences and way of life. Hence, they would definitely depend on their previous friends and relative or schoolmates who had already settled in, and have a profound knowledge about the respective country, for information that could help them in their entrepreneurial endeavours. There are, however, other possible explanations. Previous studies found that networks facilitate entrepreneurial resources (Strobl, Peters & Raich, 2014). The current study supports these findings. Immigrant tourism entrepreneurs use the relationships of family and friends who are either school friends or members of their immigrant communities to secure entrepreneurial resources.

It seems possible that these results are due to immigration clusters. This factor may explain the relatively good relationship between the old and new immigrants in the destination. Findings reveal that some entrepreneurs actually migrate to Austria because their relatives and friends were already there and had encouraged them to immigrate to the country.

Extensive literature posits the essential of mentorship in recognising entrepreneurial opportunities (Rigg & O'Dwyer, 2012). Mentors are advisors or coaches who share their expertise and relevant information with the mentees and assist them in various ways depending on their long-lasting professionalism, accumulated and varied experiences as well as scenarios (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Bosma et al, 2012; Mishra & Jain, 2014; Trivedi, 2014). The current study indicates that immigrant entrepreneurs exhibit trust in mentors to support and guide them in developing their entrepreneurial ventures (Ozgen & Baron, 2007). Mentorship can also be observed as a key action for an interpersonal relationship for entrepreneurial skills development.

Further, it is observed that the entrepreneurs' participation in seminars, training workshop conferences increases the possibilities of opportunity recognition. These findings further support earlier empirical evidence (Ozgen & Sanders, 2006; Hoang & Antoncic, 2003; Ikoja Odongo & Ocholla, 2004). Similar to mentorship, professional forums stimulate the business environment. Tourism and entrepreneurship is a vital tool for ensuring economic stability. Because of that government intervention through the organisation of workshops, seminars and training session is of great importance. Of course, there is a relationship between education and opportunity recognition (DeTienne & Chandler, 2004). The participants conceive these professional forums as especially beneficial for novice entrepreneurs as sources of inspiration for their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Similarly, social network shift to the cyberspace differs in its form of social capital generated (Norris, 2002; Williams, 2006). The bridging and bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000; Norris, 2002), is associated with the outreach of individuals on social networking platforms.

The current study observed that there is an online presence of all the entrepreneurs. The attitude of individuals affiliating to multiple social network sites or platforms enriches the potential of opportunities. With such affiliations, actors are producing and consuming social capital, generating interpersonal trust and reinforcing community ties.

This study makes a contribution to online social capital debates and the role of networks in entrepreneurial opportunities in the field of tourism. Online networks have been scrutinised in terms of whether it is a valued source of information for entrepreneurial opportunity recognition. These concerns stem from previous investigation suggesting that the internet tends to be entertaining and engaging and therefore disengage offline networks. Thus, the internet transforms decreases and supplement social capital (Quan-Haase & Wellman, 2004). The study reveals that online networks pave the way for entrepreneurial success. It is evident that most online networks are secondary networks. That is, networks are simply shifted from offline to the no-boundaries digital world; even though some researchers argue that online friends are not necessarily offline friends (Wang & Wellman, 2010; Caers et al, 2013). Digitalisation is probing entrepreneurs to extend their tentacles within both online and offline. Online networks are serving as “information basket”. A typical example is the use of Facebook and trip advisor. Restaurateurs rely on these two networks outlets for harvesting information that helps to improve their product and services as well as product positioning.

As the importance of online networks in entrepreneurship increases, long-standing entrepreneurial alertness in the changing social networks becomes more significant. Individual’s personality affects the way his/her attitudes and values are developed such that it can predict the manner in which individual make sense on the information which he/she acquire from his/her social environment (Robbins & Judge, 2013; Lim, Lean-Ee Lee & Ramasamy, 2015). This study indicates that online networks are helpful to understand the market. It tends to be fruitful for consumers feedback as compared to decision making on entrepreneurial opportunities for new enterprise development. This result is consistent with previous empirical findings by (Park, Sung & Im, 2017). The entrepreneurs did not perceive online networks as an information source for new venture creation. Perhaps, this is because most online networks are built from offline acquaintances and then are carried to the cyberspace (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). For this reason, entrepreneurs tend to oversight the rich insight into opportunities these online networks can provide. However, the finding cans the views that ability to process information connecting the dots leads to opportunity identification (Tang, et al, 2012). Entrepreneurs literary prefer multi-layer online networks because of diverse information potentials. This study suggests that online networks diversity is revolutionising social capital. Implicitly, entrepreneurs who possess higher entrepreneurial alertness are likely to take absolute advantage of online networks in scanning, searching, and connecting information for opportunity recognition. Figure 1, illustrates a proposed framework depicting the connection between networks and opportunity recognition.

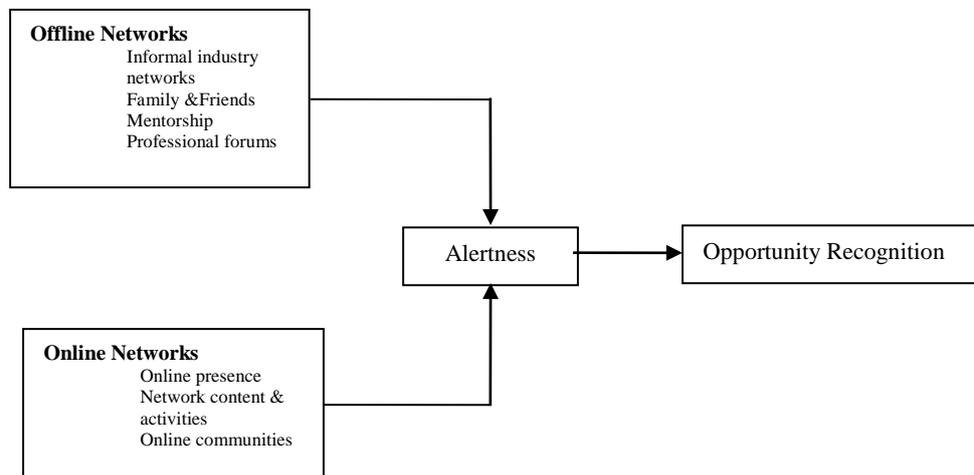


Fig. 1 Conceptual framework Networks and Opportunity Recognition
Author's depiction: (2019)

Both the offline and online networks generate overwhelmed social capital that affects opportunity recognition. Nonetheless, alertness is a major factor of the entrepreneurial process. Alertness should be seen as a double face factor of entrepreneurship. It mediates the relationship between social networks and opportunity recognition. Of course, alertness is also an antecedent of opportunity recognition (Wang, Ellinger, & Wu, 2013; Shane, 2000).

7. Conclusion

To uncover the role of networks in tourism entrepreneurial opportunity recognition, the research incorporates social network and social change as core concepts and employing immigrant entrepreneurs as a case. The study argues that alertness is the mediating factor found in social capital that enables tourism entrepreneurs to recognise an opportunity for their entrepreneurial endeavours. The study contributes to the persistent debate on immigration economics; suggesting that immigrants promote efficient task specialisation (Peri, 2012). A significant lesson of the research is that immigration has an economy not only from the host country where immigrants benefit, but also immigrants sought to contribute to job creation. Thus, this result provides important policy implications for measures aimed at encouraging entrepreneurship. It also provides a framework for looking at entrepreneurial networks as a pictorial. However, more investigation is required to enhance the applicability of this finding in other geographical locations. Entrepreneurial opportunity recognition is described as “perceiving a possibility to create a new enterprise; or significantly ameliorating the position of an existing business in both situations resulting in new profit potential” (Christensen, Madsen & Peterson, 1989). The current research reveals a two-dimensional effect of networks on opportunity recognition. That is, social networks generate ideas for new venture creation on one hand and also provide ideas for business innovation on the other hand. Nevertheless, opportunity recognition is a three phase process (Ardichvili & Cardozo, 2000).

The current study shows that networks effect opportunity recognition at ideation phase when the business is conceived and further reinforce the entrepreneurs confidence in the evaluating the idea for venture creation. The use of purposive sampling regulates the selection of only immigrant tourism entrepreneurs. The aim has been to highlight the relevance of social networks for tourism entrepreneurship. Future research should employ a larger sample size and possibly employ a different method of enquiry to comprehend these findings. The current study only examined the first generation of immigrants' entrepreneurs. Thus, a follow-up study should examine generational immigrants. That is, individuals who were born in Austria as they may have different approaches to social networks usage. In addition, the proposed model of networks and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition should be statistically tested so as to consolidate this research finding. It would also be beneficiary to entrepreneurship literature to explore the entrepreneurial orientation patterns in the immigrant cluster.

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