

VENI, VIDI, VICI: IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT THE HISTORICAL TOWN OF MELAKA AND VENICE

*Nur Suhaili Binti Ramli**

Department of Management, Ca' Foscari University of Venice
Visiting scholar at the Centre for Civil Dialogue, University of Malaysia, Malaysia

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the strategies and influences of immigrant entrepreneurship at the World Heritage Site of Melaka and Venice. It focuses only on immigrant entrepreneurs who are directly involved in the tourism industry in both cities. The study followed a qualitative theoretical approach. This paper gathered the data by conducting twelve semi-structured interviews at the historic sites of Venice and Melaka. Thematic analysis was adopted to analyze the transcript interview data stored in NVivo. In a comparative view, we presented both cases. The original contributions showed that immigrant entrepreneurs: (1) applied market segmentation and niche products, (2) applied pricing strategies, and (3) promoted their businesses through strong immigrant-network ties in the host country. There are some similarities and differences in their strategic approach to local entrepreneurs. This paper helps to better understand the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship in both Venice and Melaka. It discusses some limitations and recommendations for future research.

* Corresponding author: nursuhaili.ramli@unive.it or n.s.b.ramli@gmail.com

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Introduction

The tourism industry is a vital source of income for many countries around the world. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018), global tourism remains active in the first quarter of 2018 and shows that Asia-Pacific growth is 8 percent, followed by Europe 7 percent, Africa 6 percent, the Middle East 4 percent and the Americas 3 percent. However, the World Heritage Site is the most popular destination for international tourists. Ahmad (2006) summarizes that both the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and ICOMOS have agreed in principle that heritage should cover both cultural and natural heritage, including monuments and groups of buildings and sites. Following this definition, Venice and Melaka are most appropriate for further investigation. These historic cities are famous for their uniqueness in seaports, history, and historic buildings in their countries, creating value for their tourism products and gaining a competitive advantage. Both Melaka and Venice are also one of the major destinations visited by both domestic and foreign visitors in Malaysia and Italy. Besides, the tourism industry not only produces revenue for the nation but also provides jobs for the local population by creating job opportunities in a variety of industries, such as accommodation, food and drinks, transport services, tourism goods, and other services. However, the number of entrepreneurs has grown over the last few years, including both native and immigrant entrepreneurs.

The term 'immigrant' does not have a clear definition recognized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM); there is no legal recognition of the term and, as a result, there are several different definitions and interpretations (Ndubisi, 2013). It is therefore not surprising that the meanings used to differ and generate criticism, particularly because diaspora is a phenomenon studied in a variety of disciplines (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013). It is, however, important to define the definitions of 'immigrant' and

'immigrant entrepreneur' in this research context by referring to existing studies. For example, in many studies, immigrant entrepreneurs refer to a group of (1) first-generation migrants born in a foreign country and relocated either permanently or temporarily to the host country, and (2) those second-generation migrants who are children with at least one foreign-born parent, and conduct entrepreneurial activities in the host country (Beckers and Blumberg, 2013). In this paper, an immigrant entrepreneur refers to a person who moves (temporarily or permanently) from his home country to a new host country and begins ventures there (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013; Ramli, 2015; Saxenian, 1999). This definition is very practical and makes more sense for this study and fits its research objective. That is why this paper uses the term *'immigrant entrepreneur'* with this definition throughout the discussion.

This paper describes Melaka as the first case study for two important reasons. First of all, the beauty of the World Heritage City of Melaka is its heritage features such as ancient buildings and temples, indigenous settlements, architectural styles and arts, and people from various cultures like Malay, Chinese, Indians, Baba and Nyonya, Chettis, and Portuguese (Melaka Historic City Council, 2007). Second, the rise in the number of registered visitors reached 16.7 million in 2017. For the same purposes, this analysis selected Venice as a comparative example. Venice is a World Heritage City because of its beauty through its art and architecture, its buildings and monuments, its hub for human growth, its empires, the birthplace of well-known artists like Titian and Bellini, and helped develop merchant routes that expanded the world (Annuario del Turismo, 2016). Mass tourism in Venice has also drawn between 23 and 25 million registered tourists in 2017. These two World Heritage Cities have similarities, such as the close seaport and rich in history, but a different area and cultural background. Many studies focus on the economic contribution of these cities to the country's tourism industry (Kemeny, 2017; Paoli et al., 2017; Mulok et al., 2017; Montanari and Muscara, 1995). Several studies critically examine tourism marketing, such as tourism products and market research, using the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis, which

examined various improvements in the products and services that have been studied (Ismail et al., 2018; Kolb, 2017).

Apart from these crucial factors and issues, we must not ignore the phenomenon of entrepreneurship in Venice and Melaka such as social entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship in ethnic and immigrants. In these niches, however, a few studies are available, especially in the tourism industry (Peeters, and Ateljevic, 2017; Hillmann, 2016; Laeis and Lemke, 2016; Lardiés, 1999). This research is therefore intended to carry out the analysis and present the results on the positions and marketing strategies of immigrant entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. The importance of this study is because it offers evidence of the contribution of immigrant entrepreneurs to the local economy and job development. Herman et al. (2017) supported the fact that tourism's economic importance stems from its role in creating new jobs, in diversifying the economic structure of a region and in increasing living standards. Nevertheless, this work does not associate ethnicity and belief with the interpretation of the cultural context. It explains their marketing strategies, whose actions the immigrant entrepreneurs interpret as a business strategy. However, because of different perspectives, sources, languages, and understanding of demands, local entrepreneurs consider it a good strategy (Baklanov et al. 2014). This study, therefore, examines immigrant entrepreneurs in Melaka and Venice who acquire and operate small tourism businesses with foreign nationality.

This study aims to examine the marketing strategies and influences of immigrant entrepreneurship at the Melaka and Venice World Heritage Sites. To the best of the author's knowledge, this study is the first case study comparing immigrant entrepreneurs in Melaka and Venice on their marketing strategy. The following questions, therefore, guide the presentation of this study: First: What are the differences and similarities between immigrant entrepreneurs in Melaka and Venice in their marketing strategies? Second: How do immigrant entrepreneurs in Melaka and Venice understand these strategies for their businesses?

This study uses the essential marketing mix (4Ps – Product, Price, Promotion, and Place) to explain the phenomenon and to answer the questions posed (McCarthy, 1964). 4Ps remain a central part of the marketing mix over time, although there are expanded elements of the marketing mix such as 7Ps-Product, Price, Promotion, Place, People, Physical Evidence and Process (Ivy, 2008; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1995) and criticized for the basic 4Ps in several studies (Goi, 2009; Popovic, 2006). As this is an exploratory study, it is, therefore, appropriate to apply the basic 4Ps theory to the understanding of the phenomenon using a comparative-case approach.

The paper is structured as follows. It provides first a historical picture and patterns of migration in Malaysia and Italy, the Melaka and Venice World Heritage, the driving force behind migration, the role of immigrant entrepreneurs, and the evaluation of marketing strategies in the tourism industry. Second, the theoretical framework of the study is established. Thirdly, the method used in this study is briefly described. Fourthly, the results are presented and the case studies are compared. This concludes with a conclusion, limitations, contribution, implication, and future recommendations.

Literature Review

The pattern of immigrant business and related issues is complex and subtle (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013). While studies on immigrant entrepreneurship focus on large immigrant communities, such as the United States of Europe, Canada, Australia, and the United States of America, the trend has reached other countries globally, including developing and emerging economies such as China, Russia, Brazil, and others. According to Rahmandoust, Ahmadian, and Shah (2011), Malaysia is also no exception to hosting many immigrants who have contributed to local economic development through tax contributions and job creation. While in Italy, an increasing number of immigrant entrepreneurship and a positive causal impact of immigrant entrepreneurship over the last 10 years has been beneficial to the strategy for internationalization and job creation, they have contributed to economic growth and

supported local governments during the financial crisis (CENSIS and Roma Tre University, 2019). This evidence shows that immigrant entrepreneurship is becoming a new agenda for a national debate in these countries. The focus of this study is on a comparison of immigrant entrepreneurship marketing strategies in Melaka and Venice. Therefore, the following discussion discusses the history of immigrant entrepreneurship in both locations only.

Historical overview and trends of migration movement in Melaka and Venice

Epistemologically, a long history of international trade in both Melaka and Venice has shown that both places are well-known for their seaport, strategically located, and have both tangible and intangible resources. It showed that Melaka and Venice attracted traders and entrepreneurs from all over the world to enterprising activities. The important role played by Melaka and Venice back in the period described by Tom Pires as 'Whoever is Lord of Melaka has his hand on the throat of Venice,' a viewpoint on the interest of these places and their significance in the trading of valuable products such as spices and silk, translated by Cortesao (1944, p.287). It shows that the strategic location of both cities played a key socio-economic role during that time. At present, the two cities share similarities in geographical and physical characteristics, particularly in socio-economic development. Such seaport cities are popular for their commercial ports and tourist destinations. Another similarity shared by both cities is that UNESCO has recognized them as a World Heritage Site. The picture portrayed by both cities from time to time draws many people around the world, either for business, tourism, or educational purposes. Historical impressions may be a factor in this shift (Gunn, 1989), but innovation that relies on marketing activities could also cause it (Lopes, 2007). For this reason, an in-depth study needs to explain the change in the present.

The history of immigration over Malaysia came back in the 13th century when Arabs and Indian Muslim merchants arrived for the trade and propagation of Islam in Malaysia (formerly known as the Malay peninsula) (Bosworth, 2007). In the meantime, the Ming

Dynasty of China had sent fleets of ships to expand trade with Melaka at the time of its establishment by Parameswara in 1402 (Wade 1997). The historic evidence shows clearly that Melaka is geographically strategic and has a global socio-economic and entrepreneurial connection. Malaysia has seen the migration wave steadily increase in the last two decades. Since then self-employment among immigrants has become a trend in Malaysia. However, the legal status, country of origin, ethnicity, and culture of these immigrants engaged in entrepreneurship in Malaysia depends on their distance from Malaysia and their home county (Mosbah, Debili, and Merazga, 2018). Taking into account a long history of migration in Malaysia, immigrant entrepreneurship is difficult to observe because of its ethnic or cultural background. Since this is just exploratory research using the case study method, it is sufficient for some cases to carry out an in-depth investigation of the general groundwork (Yin, 2013).

The European and Chinese have historically traveled the Silk Road for trading since Marco Polo, a Venetian trader, reached China (Li et al., 2015). Venice is the birthplace of capitalism and essential to a semi-Marxist scheme that has long been a global market leader in the 16th and 17th centuries (Lane, 1963). Although Italy and Europe have noted the strong presence of migration in recent years, the immigration situation has lagged in comparison to the US (CENSIS and Universita ' Roma Tre, 2019). Despite the economic and financial crisis, high unemployment, and market uncertainty, entrepreneurial activities undertaken by immigrants are steadily increasing during this period. Recently, there are around 35,521 legal immigrant entrepreneurs in the Veneto region (the main city is Venice) dominated by 15.6% of the Chinese followed by 12.7% of the Romanians and 10.5% of Moroccans (CENSIS and Universita ' Roma Tre 2019).

In summary, the historical overview of both Melaka and Venice shared some similarities, such as the socio-economic position of the nation, the place, rich in history, even though there were differences such as location size, culture, number of population and number of tourists. This study seeks to understand the trend of immigrant entrepreneurship in both cities in terms of their current tourism marketing strategies. It, therefore, focuses

only on the tourism sector, although there are other commercials, industries, and roles played by these cities which have already been listed. The gradual shift and diversification of industries in these cities over time motivate this study to examine the tourism industry because it highlights the fastest-growing segment of the modern service economy while offering opportunities for both genders (Hall and Rath, 2006). Nonetheless, Lardiés (1999) noted that there is little research on tourism entrepreneurship that focuses on immigrant entrepreneurs working in the tourism sector. In the earlier study, it was identified that the social and cultural aspects of tourism, including social routes to tourism entrepreneurship, concentrate in Cornwall, for example, on immigrants from the United Kingdom (Williams, Shaw, and Greenwood, 1989). On the other hand, the case of Melaka and Venice may be otherwise, as Gunn (1989) points out, it could arise from conscious marketing activities such as product creation, pricing strategy, promotion and advertising, distribution, and advertising.

World Heritage Site: Melaka and Venice

Melaka is situated on the southwest coast of the Peninsula of Malaysia, opposite Sumatra, and is separated by the Melaka Straits. It covers an area of 1,664 square kilometers and is one of the 14 states in Malaysia (Laporan Kiraan Permulaan, 2010). It is strategically located between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. It is popular for its historic city and tourist destination, both domestic and international. In this way, the tourism industry is booming in Melaka. Tourist arrivals increased from 2.57 million in 2001 to 16.79 million in 2017 (Tourism Malaysia Statistics, 2018). Although the statistics describe the total visitors to Melaka, this study focuses only on the historical center of Melaka. UNESCO officially recognized the historic center of Melaka as one of the World Heritage Sites (WHS) on 7 July 2008 (Teo, Khan and Rahim, 2014).

Venice is situated in the Veneto region of northeastern Italy. It is an ancient crossroads of cultures and a link between many civilizations and old traditions for a strategic commercial position (Rizzi and Dioli, 2010). In comparison to Melaka, the estimation

of the total number of tourists in Venice is one of the most difficult studies. Many sources provided different statistics on the arrival of tourists. Venice received approximately 24 million tourists a year (Venice Commune, 2017, p. 15). Nevertheless, this study focuses only on the historic site of Venice, as suggested by Manente and Rizzi (1993) and Manente and Montaguti (2004) for better access to data. It does not however include the island of Venice. Venice and its lagoon were also listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987 (UNESCO, 2019).

This study compares two small geographic areas in the historic city of both Melaka and Venice. There are three important reasons for choosing such historic cities. First, there are similarities in heritage elements, like tangible sites, such as groups of buildings, monuments, and archaeological and historical sites, and intangible cultural values that these tourism products target clients (Harun, 2011; Ahmad, 2006). Second, visitors participating in heritage and cultural events in tourist destinations spend more time and stay longer, offering businesses the opportunity to reach their potential clients (McGeown, 2003). There is convincing evidence to further explore the trend of immigrant entrepreneurship in both countries. Third, both cities are strategically located to promote diversity in their cultures, which explains the need for companies to meet the needs of international tourists (Hillmann, 2016). Such reasons, therefore, are similar to the pull factors that give rise to immigrant entrepreneurship in both the historic cities of Venice and Melaka, other than economic reasons and policies.

The robust development of tourism in the historic sites of Venice and Melaka has also skyrocketed since the 1980s. According to Marzuki (2010), several strategies have been implemented in Malaysia, from the First Malaysian Plan (1966-1970) to the Ninth Malaysian Plan (2006 - 2010), such as the International Infrastructure and Tourism Programme. Other practical strategies have also been developed, such as diversification of tourism goods and services, the involvement of the private sector through investment in tourism products, and the development of communication networks for local and foreign tourist arrivals (Venice Commune, 2017; Melaka Historic City Council, 2007; Langkawi Municipal Council, 2005). Similar

strategies have been implemented by governments and policymakers to attract investors, private companies, business people, and foreign businessmen to their entrepreneurial activities in both Melaka and Venice. Rahmandoust, Ahmadian, and Shah (2011) pointed out that the Malaysian government has used appropriate incentive policies to attract foreign investors and entrepreneurs' expertise and wealth. In the same way, the contribution of foreign investors and entrepreneurs has also revived Venice as a cosmopolitan cultural environment and increased economic activity (Zanon, 2004). Although these two historic cities have been recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, they have different immigration histories and different structures for the development of tourism that is interesting to explore.

Factors to migration

There are always push-and-pull factors that motivate immigrants to migrate to a better destination. Among them, those who have migrated to countries with a combination of economic, socio-cultural and political stability, expansion of business activities (Everett, O'Kane, and Hamid, 2015) and recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities (Ardichvili, Cardozo, and Ray, 2003). Such observed spatial imbalances in the distribution of the production factor are likely to force them to leave their home country for a relatively high predicted socio-economic outcome in the host country (Abdullah et al. 2016). This study aims to narrow the studies available on immigrant entrepreneurship by comparing both the historical cities of Melaka and Venice. The overview of the push-and-pull migration factors among immigrant entrepreneurs in Melaka and Venice is therefore helpful in the development of a conceptual framework.

According to Nifo and Vecchione (2014), the driving force behind migration in Italy is no longer strongly influenced by better job opportunities and the promise of a higher 'quality of life.' It is based on a decision on a geographical area capable of confirming not only higher income and employment opportunities but also a positive socio-economic background, a sense of belonging to

society and social capital. It supports the view of Ambrosini (2001) that the North - East region of Italy excels immigrants with measurable growth in employment, especially in Venice. On the other hand, the driving forces of immigration to Malaysia caused by economic, political, social and cultural and entrepreneurial problems in their home countries, such as Iran, Indonesia, Nepal and Bangladesh, and attracting factors in Malaysia, such as higher incomes, open access to the global market and independence, are the main reasons for this (Mosbah, Debili, and Merazga, 2018; Rahmandoust, Ahmadian, and Shah, 2011). Also, a certain cultural connection between the immigrant and the Malaysian created a business opportunity. For example, Ajuntha Textiles, an Indian immigrant business in Melaka from India, generated approximately RM2 million in 2012, which was targeted by the first immigrant generation of Indians and offered saris from India, and later non - Malaysian generations offered product diversification of a variety of Indian fabrics and saris, utensils and imitation jewelry to both Indians and non-Malaysians.

In sum, the driving force behind migration in Italy and Malaysia is based on many factors, depending on the motivation of immigrants. Nevertheless, the Melaka and Venice immigrant entrepreneurs shared a similar motivation to gain higher income and a sense of community. Fuad (2013) also stresses that immigrant entrepreneurs have higher social cohesion than in the broader community, which leads to the host country's main business success. Chinese entrepreneurship in Venice, for instance, was dominated over other immigrant entrepreneurs by a higher level of social stability.

The role of immigrant entrepreneurs

The immigrant entrepreneurs in Malaysia stress that integration and assimilation in Malaysia are most important, especially on the Peninsular, as they share common cultural characteristics with some Malaysians who historically came to Malaysia during the colonial era (Butler, Khoo-Lattimore and Mura, 2014). It is a sharp contrast with Italy because the growing number of immigrant entrepreneurs in jobs privileges their families, family, and ethnic network, which are not typically residents, such as the Chinese and

Philippines incorporated into their ethnic networks rather than local employment and business (Ambrosini 2001). Therefore, the distinction between immigrant entrepreneurs in Malaysia and Italy is based on the course of social and migration history. The concern for integration and assimilation highlighted by those two studies has shown that the immigrant entrepreneurs have received assistance from their coethnic history, whether or not they are residents in the host country.

The role of immigrant entrepreneurs in both Malaysia and Italy has been observed through market competition and business survival. However, it has become a key issue for locals that immigrant businesses increase competition, and some thought that 'steal jobs' were available in the host country, which is not supported evidence (Niyimbanira and Madzivhandila, 2016). This study is therefore crucial to understand from an immigrant perspective their inspiration for entrepreneurship. It is also a struggle for immigrants to get a job or take a very long time to get one in those two countries that forced them into small businesses (Mustafa and Chen, 2010; Sultana and Brahmmanbaria, 2008; Ambrosini, 2001). They, therefore, engage in entrepreneurship activities not only to survive but also to create jobs for the community, particularly for their co-ethnic network (Schuch and Wang, 2015). Thus, this study provides some case studies to discuss both the positive and negative results of immigrant entrepreneurship on their position in the host country. It shows that the active co-ethnic network is very important, which helps them to thrive and adapt in a foreign environment when they have encountered financial difficulties in particular (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013), results which contradicted another study (Kushnirovich and Heilbrunn, 2008).

Vissak and Zhang (2014) pointed out that immigrant entrepreneurs are contributing to creative activities, economic development, job creation, and creating opportunities for the host country. It also shows that immigrant entrepreneurs started their small businesses and at the beginning used many co-ethnics but recruited more workers, regardless of background, to follow immigrant entrepreneurship policies in host countries (Mustafa and

Chen, 2010; Sultana and Brahmmanbaria, 2008; Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990).

Besides, immigrant entrepreneurship also plays a crucial role in the host country as a 'development agent', especially in the economies of scale in production, open system approach, market growth, growing demand for goods and services, and strengthening the transnational network of co-ethnics between the host country and the home country to reduce the problems that have arisen, in particular the barriers to business entry for both countries (Rasiah, 2019; Schumpeter, 1976). The position of immigrant entrepreneurs in Melaka and Venice will demonstrate the attempt to integrate with other local businesses, exploit market niches and invest in business development than the indigenous counterparts proposed in this study (Liu and Cheung, 2016; Bosworth and Farrell, 2011).

Evaluation of marketing strategies in the tourism industry

There is little understanding of Southern European migration, particularly in Italy and South East Asia, particularly in Malaysia, and its impact on the development of tourism, for two main reasons. First, from a migration point of view, mass migration to Italy is relatively recent, although it started in the late 1960s (Fasani, 2016), and Malaysia earned a sharp increase from 0.49% of the 13 million population in 1980 to 2.3 million in 2010 (Kassim, 2017). Second, from an entrepreneurial point of view, we know little about the role of immigrant entrepreneurs in the tourism industry, in this case, Melaka and Venice. It is due to several immigrant entrepreneurship studies focused on the industry in capital cities, global cities, and well-known commercial cities (Kemeny, 2017; Kloosterman and Rath, 2003).

Entrepreneurship tourism research related to heritage sites focused mainly on selected aspects of tourism, such as heritage products and marketing mix strategies (Ismail et al. , 2018; Sadiki, 2012; Russo, 2002). These studies emphasize that there has been little research on business management, particularly in the marketing strategy aspects of foreign tourism entrepreneurship, or on its links to international migration between Italy and EU countries, and between Malaysia and ASEAN countries, while there is a strong reason to examine the marketing strategy of

immigrant entrepreneurs. Ramli (2015) has revealed that immigrant entrepreneurs have survived the crisis to help the local economy government of the host country through new marketing strategies in their businesses. This is another recent example of not neglecting the role of immigrant entrepreneurship in a country.

Motivated by the results, this study aims to understand the marketing strategies implemented by immigrant entrepreneurs in a different geographical context through a comparative approach in the tourism industry, such as Venice and Melaka. In the same way, immigrant entrepreneurs who have become part of local society and have a strong sense of place that leads to an active role in promoting the development of tourism (Liu and Cheung, 2016). On the other hand, several government agencies, both private and local businesses, and entrepreneurs, including immigrant entrepreneurs, have applied only part of the marketing mix (4Ps) to the tourism industry, particularly in terms of promotion and little attention being paid to other components (Ryan, 1991). It is therefore important to carry out this study to further analyze it.

Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework

This section briefly elaborates on the previous and similar theoretical framework and the proposed conceptual framework for this study. It is crucial to discuss the theoretical framework as it offers a philosophical, epistemological, methodological, and empirical structure for this research (Grant and Osanloo, 2014). It is also beneficial to contextualize related study hypotheses as a reference and to assist in the proposed conceptual framework (Ravitch and Carl, 2015).

Immigrant entrepreneurship is an emerging area of research at present. Several studies examine various aspects of immigrant entrepreneurship, including the theory of increasing the trend, the value of immigrant entrepreneurship in developing countries, socio-economic impact, and competitive advantage in international business (Brzozowski, Cucculelli and Surdej, 2019; Ramli, 2019; Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013). Immigrant entrepreneurship theories that relate migration to opportunities outside their home countries

have clear evidence from previous studies (Ambrosini, 2001; Saxenian, 1999; Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990). A systematic review of the Immigrant Entrepreneurship Study revealed that the contribution of immigrant entrepreneurs in the host country is not only in particular to industries such as retail and grocery, food, ethnic businesses, and certain services, but also to more than these commonly related industries such as fashion, information technology, tourism, cosmetics, beverages, and telecommunications. All of these studies have shown that entrepreneurial theories about immigrant entrepreneurship, such as driving and pulling factors and motivations, have an impact on their venture performance and have chosen a different strategy for their businesses. This opens up an opportunity to further investigate the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship in some exciting areas such as marketing strategy, business philosophy, the ethnic supply chain, and many more. This paper aims to contribute new knowledge to immigrant entrepreneurship by looking at the tourism industry and observing the marketing strategy.

As this paper focuses on the marketing strategy, it is crucial to identify the research unit. It thus shows the marketing mix strategy as the unit of testing to be evaluated and replicates it in all situations. This research is based on the basic marketing mix theory (McCarthy, 1964) and the option of the tourism industry as its starting point. It examines the factors that influence the strategy implemented by immigrant entrepreneurs in these 4Ps – the product, price, promotion, and place within the tourism context in Melaka and Venice, which provide a comprehensive understanding (Cavusgil and Zou, 1994). It is appropriate to use the hybrid coupling view on the marketing mix component and factors influenced to study the marketing strategy implemented by immigrant entrepreneurs in Venice and Melaka. Tung and Chung (2010) show that considering these two theories will help to understand how immigrants can distinguish their goods and services from local competitors to gain a greater competitive advantage. Another best practice approach in the tourism industry is to analyze the basic marketing mix, together with other

viewpoints such as advanced econometrics and marketing science (Wolfe Sr and Crotts, 2011).

On the other hand, the use of basic marketing mix components to clarify the connection between components is not very clear, as demonstrated in a study on the Egyptian tourism industry after the Arab Spring (Salman et al., 2017). Critics provided the basic marketing mix of 4Ps from several studies (Goi, 2009). For example, Möller (2006) discussed the use of marketing mix components in areas such as customer marketing, service marketing, retail and industrial marketing, relationship marketing, and emerging e-commerce marketing. Goi (2009) emphasized that the basic marketing mix components should pay attention to 'customer-focused management' and that there is no mention in the mix of relationship - building. The versatility of the marketing mix has made it easy to submit and to note that it has made a continuous debate for scholars (Constantinides, 2006).

In sum, this paper recognizes both the advantages and disadvantages of adopting the basic marketing mix before the study is carried out. Consequently, this paper disagrees with the arguments and criticisms on basic marketing for the study of tourism marketing, since each P may adopt industrial products and services derived from the original P, and the empirical research conducted found that some respondents thought that extra Ps could be incorporated into the existing 4Ps (Rafiq and Ahmed, 1995, p.13). This study proposes the following conceptual framework, which derives from the hybrid link between the basic marketing mix and the factor influenced by each component, to carry out this study based on the literature review discussed earlier on the subject and related theoretical arguments.

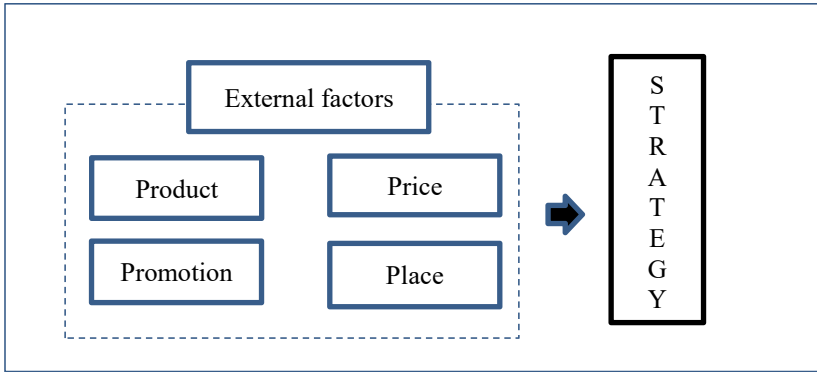


Figure 1. Conceptual framework as a guide to examine the phenomenon.

Sources: Figure developed by the author but the components derived from a combination of McCarthy’s work (1964) and Cavusgil and Zou’s work (1994).

Although the conceptual framework has been partly adapted from previous studies, the approach of using a mixture of views to study this topic is new to the field of analysis. Figure 1 shows the critical components to be examined in each case study. Each element in the marketing mix, such as product, price, promotion, and place, generates a delicate strategy. For example, immigrant entrepreneurs develop a new product that can be sold by competitors (including local entrepreneurs), lower prices to beat competitors, or use prestige rates to provide quality or use promotional pricing, distribute products to locations and networks for the target market segment, encourage ads or appropriate methods and media – or combine strategies of all sorts.

Also, these strategies for each marketing mix aspect are influenced by external factors such as the open system approach to sustainable development, local laws and policies, demand and supply, government intervention, market competition, labor market, perceived environment, social networks, economy, technology and innovation, and many other factors (Rasiah 2019; Mosbah, Debili, and Merazga, 2018). This study, therefore, uses this conceptual framework to understand the link between marketing mix strategies and immigrant entrepreneurs in both Melaka and Venice,

which may offer a different approach than the native one. Nevertheless, the appropriate method and logic of replication required to continue with this research with the proposed conceptual framework. More information on this study process is provided in the following section.

Methodology

This study uses two cases to present the findings and to present them in a comparative perspective. This adopts semi-structured interviews with selected immigrant entrepreneurs on specific criteria relating to their entrepreneurial experience in the host countries. The study also interviewed 12 selected interviewees between August 2018 and February 2019. Interviewees shared their personal views on the elements of their decision on entrepreneurship. It is acceptable to use the case study approach in tourism research, especially when a comparative approach is adopted (Yin, 2013). It also relies on the topic or themes, specificity concerns within the research stream, clear goals, objectives and questions, the scope of the study, and the generalization or argument in the context of literature (Xiao and Smith, 2006).

The case study, on the other hand, has two frequent critical critiques. First, poor generalizability, because only a few examples have been used for analysis (Yin, 2013; Mills, Durepos and Wiebe, 2009; Vershuren, 2003). Second, there is a critique of how knowledge gained through the case study is usually descriptive, provided that the data collected is descriptive (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2010). Nonetheless, this study aims to understand the marketing strategies implemented by immigrant entrepreneurs in Venice and Melaka. It is therefore most fitting to conduct in-depth interviews and submit data using case studies, as it contributes to the perception of a specific phenomenon in both ways (Yin, 2013; Eisenhardt, 1989). However, case studies are sometimes criticized, especially in the field of tourism research-as area-specific, theoretical, historical, and methodological issues (Xiao and Smith, 2006). It is doubtful whether it is appropriate to adopt case studies

in this study because it is not only commonly used in this field of research, but a very useful and much-needed method in a comparative study like this. We would also suggest that future research further extend this paper to examine the relation between the interest of entrepreneurs in their chosen businesses and the resources or actions of their home countries that make them pursue the same strategy in their host countries. It's fascinating because some entrepreneurs have a particular industry that focuses on, for example, Chinese with grocery stores, Turkish with kebab stalls, Indian with computer shops, and some others. However, this paper excludes the investigation from this exciting area of study because it includes cultural studies and the aim is not compatible with this paper.

This study identifies specific criteria for the selection of appropriate immigrant entrepreneurs operating in Venice and Melaka. Collected data from registered immigrant entrepreneurs in Melaka and Venice is obtained from the semi-structured face - to - face interviews. It was performed in three languages, such as English, Malay, and Italian. The interviewees must understand the questions to get the data. There are 12 interviewees chosen. The interview session ended with 60 minutes for each interviewee. Subsequently, however, follow - up emails were sent when needed for clarification of a particular question. Both interviewees remained anonymous and decided to use their initials for this study only. The findings were presented using thematic analysis and applied to the identified cases. While semi-structured interviews, case studies, and thematic analysis have limitations and significance, we have recognized them before fieldwork. Therefore, the data collected was adequate, relevant, and appropriate for this study and consistent with the aim of this study.

Finding and Discussion

This section presents the results of the interview sessions, followed by further discussion. We transcribed and stored the interview data collected from twelve interviewees in NVivo. First, we grouped the emerging words derived from the interviewees. Second, we classify these emerging words as themes. In NVivo, we used a

simple Word Frequency query to define these emerging themes. The analysis in this study uses thematic analysis to explain this phenomenon. Finally, we identified four main themes that emerged from the data collected with many supporting points¹. Table 1 summarizes the keywords for each theme.

Interviewee details	Product	Price	Promotion	Place/Distribution
AB, 40, Bangladeshi in Venice, Since 2011	souvenirs only	between reasonable standard and cheap (negotiable)	word-of-mouth, face-to-face, network ties	shop (rent) at a small street
LNW, 36, Chinese in Venice, Since 2008	leather handbags only	above reasonable standard (not negotiable)	tourism brochures, posters, flyers, word-of-mouth, network ties	shop (rent) in front of Gran Canal
AR, 28, Bangladeshi in Venice, Since 2014	souvenirs only	between reasonable standard and cheap (negotiable)	word-of-mouth, face-to-face, network ties	small stall (rent)
MS, 51,	Mediterrane	above	tourism	restaurant

¹ Referring to the interview privacy and confidentiality forms signed by the interviewees and researchers, all information regarding details of premises and personal data will not be disclosed. However, the specific date, time and place for all interviewees summarized as: between August 2018 and February 2019, circa~ 14:00pm and 15:30pm, strictly within Melaka Historical site like Bandar Hilir, Taman Kota Laksamana and Taman Melaka Raya; and within 'floating' Venice Historical site like San Marco, San Polo, and Dorsoduro, excluding Mestre.

Lebanese in Venice, Since 2010	an food only	reasonable standard (not negotiable)	brochures , tourism blogs & website, social media, word-of-mouth, network ties	(rent)
RT, 27, Indian in Venice, Since 2015	souvenirs only	between reasonable standard and cheap (negotiable)	word-of-mouth, face-to-face, network ties	small stall (rent)
LKY, 45, Chinese in Venice, Since 2006,	Asian food only	reasonable standard (not negotiable)	flyers, posters, social media, word-of-mouth, network ties	restaurant (rent)
AH, 45, Indonesian in Melaka, Since 2004	Minangkabau food only	below than reasonable standard (not negotiable)	word-of-mouth, social media, network ties	restaurant (rent)
ST, 47, Thai in Melaka, Since 2011	massage service only	above reasonable standard (not negotiable)	poster, tourism brochures , social media, website, network	a premise within the city center

			ties	
NB, 48, Pakistani in Melaka, Since 2008	Pakistani food only	reasonable standard (not negotiable)	word-of- mouth, face-to- face, social media, network ties	restaurant (rent)
TR, 47, Indian (India) in Melaka, Since 2012	Indian food only	below than reasonable standard (not negotiable)	word-of- mouth, face-to- face, network ties	small shop (rent)
AD, 52, Indonesian in Melaka, Since 2005	Javanese food only	below than reasonable standard (not negotiable)	word-of- mouth, face-to- face, network ties	restaurant (rent)
WT, 49, Indonesian in Melaka, Since 2007	Range of Indonesian food and groceries	below than reasonable standard (not negotiable)	word-of- mouth, face-to- face, network ties	restaurant (rent)

Source: Table developed by the author from the interview data.

Note: Price is in comparison with the average selling in Melaka and Venice.

Table 1 presents twelve immigrant entrepreneurs living in Venice and Melaka. They started their businesses in the country-of-residence between 2004 and 2015. These interviewees hold legal permits either through a renewable work visa, *permission di soggiorno* (long period and renewable every two years), or family visa. The themes that emerged from the interviews were the product, price, promotion, and place. Besides, other supportive

points that sustenance the main issues are reason migrated, the reason for business, difficulties, and changes expected. The case study in Venice and Melaka shows that immigrant entrepreneurs shared a similar interest in doing business and motivation. The most visible motivation from the interviewees summarizes that better economic opportunity and self-belonging to the place are the top two factors. It aligns with the discussion in the literature review section. For example, one interviewee mentioned about integration and belonging to the local community:

“[...] my friend invited me to come here because there is a limited shop that offers authentic Indian food. [...] the local welcome me, and they support my business [...] also tourists like the taste [...] sometimes, I feel so attached with this place and the community [...] the feeling is different [...] although my English and Bahasa has a thick Indian accent, no problem [...] government also nice to me although I have to wait a long time to get my visa approved...”–TR, India

With Venice, it supported by the other interviewee that better opportunity is the motivation:

“I was unemployed for such a long time back in Bangladesh. It is impossible to get a job [...], so I joined my brother selling souvenirs in Venice while improving my Italian language. [...] this small business helps me a lot, mixing with people around the world and establishing a local network. [...] it is hard but not as hard as in Bangladesh. I am not interested in local politics, but the local economy here is very positive, many people come, good for my business.”–AR, Bangladesh.

The case of Venice and Melaka thus shows clear evidence of motivation among the immigrants who run their business in these historic cities: (1) economic opportunity and (2) local integration. Most interviewees have argued that stable politics, positive economic growth, and diversity in the city have boosted

their faith in entrepreneurship and influenced their strategy. To further understand their interest in entrepreneurship in both cities, looking at their business strategies is one of the ways to observe the effort. Therefore, using the basic marketing mix, Table 1 compares the themes that emerged from the cases of immigrant entrepreneurship in Venice and Melaka.

First, this study explores products offered by immigrant entrepreneurs in both cities. This reveals that most immigrant entrepreneurs are selling a particular product at their premises, except for one interviewee from Indonesia. The interviewee pointed out the reason:

“My business targets Indonesian workers at the beginning [...] after some years; many people come to my restaurant, including tourists and local, because I sell a range of Indonesia food and groceries. [...].. it brings Indonesia closer to Indonesian here through food and our special groceries.”.–WT, Indonesia.

Many studies show that immigrant entrepreneurs run their businesses that link to their culture (Dheer and Lenartowicz, 2018; Aliaga-Isla, and Rialp, 2013; Piperopoulos, 2010). In the same way, most of their food industry businesses are run by the interviewees in the case study. After a critical investigation, the food they sell is all related to their country of origin. It, therefore, indicates that they are leveraging tourism offers in the host country to turn the original foreign origin liability into an advantage on which to develop their businesses (Pechlaner, Dal Bò, and Volgger, 2012). The interviewees believe that their unique offerings such as Asian cuisine in Venice, or culturally based food such as Pakistani food in Melaka, Mediterranean variety in Venice, Indonesian flavor and Indian original taste in Melaka, and Thai massages are the strength of their business. These immigrant entrepreneurs, provided by the minority, are likely to play a role. For example, they indirectly add their businesses as part of tourism products to their target customers in the core tourism industry in Venice and Melaka. It means that they are trying to integrate their culture or belief and

their presence into the local culture. One interviewee has shown that his business has a specific objective in the tourism sector in Venice:

“I sell only halal food-related to Mediterranean cuisine [...] this is including a range of pizza and pasta. Many Muslim tourists come to Venice to enjoy the scenery, and their holidays [...]... they have problems for eating. Few halal selections here in Venice, so I found this is a good opportunity [...] they can enjoy the halal Italian food here.”.–MS, Lebanon.

Second, it compares the price proposition of the immigrant business in Venice and Melaka. Immigrant entrepreneurs are not directly in favor of pricing strategy in both historic cities. Table 1 shows a mix of pricing strategies among immigrant entrepreneurs. Some of them make it possible to negotiate the price of their products with customers, and some do not. Although not all immigrant entrepreneurs in Melaka are interested in negotiating prices, they give their prices below the average selling price, particularly those selling their culture-based food. Interviewees also clarified that they are adopting this strategy because there are rivals from local businesses and American fast-food chains such as McDonald's, Pizza Hut, and Kentucky Fried Chicken nearby.

On the other hand, immigrant entrepreneurs in Venice sell their products, especially souvenirs, at an average standard price and are negotiable when customers buy in bulk. However, immigrant entrepreneurs who engage in scarce businesses, such as selling leather handbags and massage services, usually increase their prices because of less competition. It, therefore, suggests that the pricing strategy is significant, but not straightforward, among immigrant entrepreneurs in Venice and Melaka. We also observed and considered this as an important strategy for a particular industry, such as food and souvenirs.

Third, the immigrant entrepreneurs relied heavily on their network ties to promote their products. This is a sharp contrast to local entrepreneurs who are not immigrants (Ramli, 2016a). The data collected indicates that the network link is visible in all the

records of the interviewees. The discussion stressed that groups of friends, relatives, and family members are important drivers to publicize their businesses through word-of-mouth, face-to-face, and social media platforms. Two of the interviewees supports this:

“... I came here few Indonesian people... [...] when many arrived here, we all like brothers, sisters, and family. [...] the connection is strong among Indonesian community here [...] some supply stocks, some find contact and introduce to me, some help me [...] we all help each other,”—AD, Indonesia.

“.. for example, I have a shop here, then my friends who own a hawker stall come to ask a few stocks... [...] I help my fellow countrymen while he is waiting for his supplier. [...] also promote my shop to other tourists if the souvenirs not available at his stall”—AB, Bangladesh.

These two examples provide evidence of the importance of network links between immigrants. This means that immigrant entrepreneurship is collective in the tourism industry because it requires less capital and know-how and labor-intensive work, which can be helped by their network ties (Phizacklea and Ram, 1995). Many interviewees set up their websites, feature on travel blogs like TripAdvisor and invest in flyers. On the other hand, only those who sell their products above the average selling price use strong promotional strategies, such as the publication of their products in tourist brochures and pamphlets, some of which are available at the airport, in-flight, tourist information center and travel agencies. It also suggests that immigrant entrepreneurs use different promotional strategies than local entrepreneurs. As a result, we have ruled out generalizing their actions using similar strategies in this field. This is in contrast with local entrepreneurs, many of whom depend on tourist brochures and advertised with travel agencies and existing agents. The interview data justify the significance of the difference because of the local network link, access to advertising information, and the financial constraint

required to invest in this method. To investigate the difference in this strategy, whether it relies on competition within the industry or immigrants network, further study is recommended (Vinogradov and Jørgensen, 2017).

Fourthly, immigrant entrepreneurs in Venice and Melaka have similar strategies in position/distribution. Both interviewees say that they sell their goods across premises, either in restaurants, shops, hawker stalls, or in the city center. This indicates that immigrant entrepreneurs are following a similar distribution strategy with other entrepreneurs in the study area. This evidence also excludes the possibility that immigrant entrepreneurs run their businesses illegally in both cases. It also claims that immigrant entrepreneurs in this study are legal and always comfortable and prominent in society. Also, they both dedicated themselves to paying their taxes and leases by looking at the year in which they started the business at both locations. The understanding of immigrant entrepreneurs in both Venice and Melaka will therefore be fair and transparent. One interviewee emphasized the fact that he belongs to the place that makes him stay longer for business:

“[...] because of my father like this place and ran our small family business back in time. [...] it was reasonable as far as I can recall, but taxes and rents increase annually. [...] tried to move, but we came back here [...] the feeling and self-attach to this place... [...] so, we don't mind paying a higher price...”—LKY, China.

Although the distribution strategy of immigrant entrepreneurs is likely to be similar to that of local entrepreneurs, other considerations, such as the sector in which they are most involved, are another exciting concern. For example, in various sectors such as information technology (Brzozowski, Cucculelli and Surdej, 2019), cosmetics (Ramli, 2015) and processed food (Koehn, 1999), these immigrant entrepreneurs have developed a strategy for their products, costs, promotion and distribution within the industry that differs from local entrepreneurs and continues to apply strategies to the present day.

The discussion of four important themes also links to other supporting points that emerged from the interview data. It argues that destination brands such as Venice and Melaka have influenced the strategies put in place in these four main themes. For example, the similarity between all the interviewees for their opinions on both historical sites lies in their answers: do you think the historic site like (Venice / Melaka) is the right place for your business? Their response to this question is very optimistic with 'yes.' They further expanded on the justification for doing business in their country of residence. The positive evidence from the transcripts of the interview are as follows:

“It is very famous and historical. [...] so many tourists here.”—AB, Bangladesh.

“[...] because there are many tourists [...] they buy something meaningful as a gift.”—LNW, China.

“[...] because here full of tourists. It is easy to get customers every day”. - AR, Bangladesh.

“This is a well-known city in the world. Many Muslim tourists look for halal food [...]”—MS, Lebanon.

“[...] there are many tourists every day, and I don't have to worry.”.—RT, India.

“[...] there is less restriction compared to our country — also, demand from tourists.”.—LKY, China.

“[...] every day tourists come [...] currency also bigger than in my home country.”.—AH, Indonesia.

“It is one of the most visited a city, and everyday tourists come [...] and tired walking.”.—ST, Thailand.

“It is a Muslim country but very liberal and everyone free to express themselves. [...] the economic performance also good here. [...] tourists and locals also stop here.”—NB, Pakistan.

“[...] because there is a high demand from tourists and support from local people.”.—TR, India.

“I feel welcome here [...] not many problems [...] good demand from tourists and local.”.—AD, Indonesia.

“[...] it is good to make money [...] access to tourists [...] it is a very famous place.”.—WT, Indonesia.

From the chunks of each twelve transcripts, their decision to do business in both Venice and Melaka was linked to 'tourists.' According to the interviews, we referred to tourists as customers who link to demands in both positions. Also, the interviewees described both Venice and Melaka as 'famous, ' 'well-known, ' 'historical, ' and 'most visited city ' when they expressed their opinion on these two places. This demonstrates that the historic site has created a destination brand that connects feelings, beliefs, and perceptions of the public, including entrepreneurs (Kolb, 2017). It, therefore, suggests that immigrant entrepreneurs have come to historic places to do business based on high expectations and exploit destination brands to promote their products. Although they pay high taxes, council taxes, and expensive rents, they still keep their decision to run businesses in these two locations. Two of the interviewees from both places will explain the following:

“I would say Malaysia is a multiracial country and very open. So, I don't have any fear. The country welcomes many visitors, especially investors and business people like me. Just follow the rules, regulations, and pay taxes though it is high... then everything is just fine... money comes easily.”. - NB, Pakistan.

“The rent at my shop is costly. We also pay high taxes here in Italy, especially Venice. So, considering this, the price of my products never be below average selling. We sell genuine leather, so we are not afraid of the price we set.”.- LNW, China.

These two pieces of evidence show that it is difficult to run a business as an immigrant in both Venice and Melaka. Immigrant entrepreneurs pay high taxes and rents in both host countries. It also requires a lot of money and strict documentation to get the correct work permit (visa). Besides, when dealing with domestic visitors, they are struggling with the local language. Although most interviewees have difficulties with the local language, they can at

least speak English on a satisfactory level. The challenges of doing business in both Venice and Melaka are set out in Table 2.

Interviewee details	Are there any difficulties in doing business here?
AB, 40, Bangladeshi in Venice, Since 2011	“A long wait for my visa. Language problem because I don’t speak Italian much, but I speak limited English.”
LNW, 36, Chinese in Venice, Since 2008	“Yes. Dealing with customers with various backgrounds. So, communication is a problem sometimes.”
AR, 28, Bangladeshi in Venice, Since 2014	“I think so. The language problem is always common among us. However, I speak a broken foreign language that makes me survive like Italian, English, Spanish, and German. Also, bureaucracy is a nightmare here.”
MS, 51, Lebanese in Venice, Since 2010	“Yes. I would say bureaucracy and the language barrier.”
RT, 27, Indian in Venice, Since 2015	“My problems are to communicate well with my customers. However, I speak English well. I have to wait so long for my visa to get approved. The process was so long and complicated.”
LKY, 45, Chinese in Venice, Since 2006,	“I think the problems are to understand the customers want, especially when they cannot speak in Italian or English. So, it’s challenging, but they still buy my products here.”
AH, 45, Indonesian in Melaka, Since 2004	“I think the problems here are to get the work permit. So much paperwork to do and expensive.”
ST, 47, Thai in Melaka, Since 2011	“Yes. I struggle to communicate with some customers as they don’t speak English. Also, I don’t speak Malay. The work visa is also another

	problem.”
NB, 48, Pakistani in Melaka, Since 2008	“I found that the only problem was bureaucracy when I applied for the visa. It’s rigorous with the document needed.”
TR, 47, Indian (India) in Melaka, Since 2012	“Yes. To get the work permit in Malaysia is very difficult. I have to prepare all the documents, and I provided them with supporting paperwork too.”
AD, 52, Indonesian in Melaka, Since 2005	“There are problems. I can say some Malay words I can get either confuse or don’t understand the meaning. The work permit also very fussy, and at one time, I almost give up applying.”
WT, 49, Indonesian in Melaka, Since 2007	“I think the problems are to get the work visa quickly and to understand the rules and regulations of the country.”

Source: Interview transcripts.

Note: Table developed by the author.

Table 2 shows the growing challenges faced by immigrant entrepreneurs in Venice and Melaka. Their similarities are related to language barriers and bureaucracy problems. In addition to financial constraints, interviewees agreed that soft skills, such as interpersonal skills, language skills, and cultural knowledge of the host country, could be learned and developed as a prerequisite for tourism (Pechlaner, Dal Bò, and Volgger, 2012). They concluded that developing local language skills and being both creative and innovative in the four marketing elements (product, price, promotion, and place) are crucial and will help them succeed in the tourism business of the host country. Possibly, while immigrant entrepreneurs are struggling and faced with the common problems listed above, one of the most striking reasons for their business decisions is the prevalence of factors linked to the local environment, network ties, including family and friends, experience and prior knowledge of the region, such as Venice and

Melaka. Such factors are similar in many studies that investigate the trend of immigrant entrepreneurs; however, the variations are as significant as the effect on the subject of each of these factors (Lardiés, 1999).

In summary, the different approach to marketing strategies among immigrant entrepreneurs shows that immigrant entrepreneurs who are developing a new strategy in product, price, promotion, and distribution have a stronger capacity to enhance innovation capacity and entrepreneurial performance (Ramli, 2016b) and it evidenced the egalitarian balancing of society between immigrant and non-immigrant in a country (Rasiah, 2019). It also suggests that a similar strategy among immigrant entrepreneurs influenced by the destination's brand and its association with the perception that encourages inventive activity (Schumpeter, 1976).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the case studies have helped to understand the reasons and decisions for the trend of immigrant entrepreneurship in Venice and Melaka. The interview approach with hybrid coupling fundamental understanding of marketing mix and factors influenced help to discover the findings. Overall, the point of view of selected immigrant entrepreneurs in Venice and Melaka concluded that the business environment in both locations is friendly and is part of local culture and society. In terms of business strategies, there are similarities and differences between immigrant entrepreneurs and local entrepreneurs.

This paper outlines three key findings. First, immigrant entrepreneurs are very cautious about their products. Market segmentation is their product strategy, which allows their businesses to meet their target customers with specific needs and needs. Although some local entrepreneurs follow a similar strategy, immigrant entrepreneurs concentrate on their niche, for example, selling food related to their country of origin. This evidence is consistent with innovation entrepreneurship scholars who deliberately seek to focus on a specific business or industry and

most likely on an inventive activity (Rasiah, 2019; Schumpeter, 1976). This shows confidence in their products, in particular in the taste of particular food, which is part of the services that tourists need while traveling (Kolb, 2017).

Second, the approach of immigrant entrepreneurs to the pricing strategy is slightly different. They're not directly involved in lowering the price strategy, but they've exploited the strategy in their way. Some of them, for example, set the price of their products at an average selling price but negotiable when consumers buy in bulk, while some priced their prices slightly lower than their nearby competitors (which usually use the first strategy) and not negotiable. This indicates their concern about the pricing strategy, but it's not straightforward. It also shows that maintaining a high number of customers using a pricing strategy like this has consequences for direct business impacts (Garrod and Fyall, 2000).

Third, immigrant entrepreneurs point out that network ties are important to the operation and promotion of their companies in the host country. This means that their fellow citizens in Venice and Melaka support their companies as customers, suppliers, and colleagues. It is supported by several studies that have been extensively reviewed in a systematic review paper on immigrant entrepreneurship (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013). Nevertheless, there is no distribution strategy between immigrant entrepreneurs in either case study. This is not important and it has an impact on their businesses. The patterns in immigrant entrepreneurship in both Venice and Melaka are similar and different in some respects.

The originality of this paper is based on two points of view. First, it contributes to a better understanding of the trend of immigrant entrepreneurship in Venice and Melaka, including the reasons why immigrant entrepreneurs have chosen these historic sites to run their businesses, and the strategy implemented within the destination brand to attract customers. Second, this paper adds to the previous literature by showing that tourism is not only attractive because of its destination brand but also because of its suggestive success factors in the role of immigrant entrepreneurs, who are always overlooked by scholars.

There are two main limitations to this study. First, a qualitative study enriches the findings in the research area (Yin, 2013), but needs numerical evidence to support the claims. Therefore, the small number of interviews in this study is a problematic issue compared to what quantitative research can bring. Second, the study found immigrant entrepreneurs only at present, and not over a long period. The findings may be different when conducting longitudinal research that benefits and changes in factors over time discussed in the literature review section may influence the subject matter of the study in both historic cities.

There are three recommendations in this study. First, it recommends that quantitative research can be carried out using the variables that emerged from this study. It includes an exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis of variables, the association of variables and the impact of each variable on the tourism industry, and how it explains the role of immigrant entrepreneurs in the context. We hope that quantitative research will support this. Second, it encourages the use of the SWOT analysis framework to understand the strategy of each of the 4Ps discussed in this study. The most appropriate strategy is to recognize the approach of immigrant entrepreneurs to each product, price, promotion, and distribution to achieve the goal of attracting tourists (Kolb, 2017). It shows that the use of a marketing mix approach is fundamental and extends its relevance to other approaches. Third, a similar research setting is remarkable to be seen from a longitudinal study, as data collected from immigrant entrepreneurs in Venice and Melaka have repeatedly been collected over a while. It may add some points on their decision to a specific strategy, whether there are changes in their approach over a long period or otherwise, if so, why they change or remain so. In conclusion, further research is vital in this research setting, as it is a pioneer in the niche research field.

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