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**Immigrant Entrepreneurship:  
Indian Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Poland**

**Doctoral dissertation (summary)**

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# Introduction

## **Background of the Study Problem – An Overview**

Over the last decades, the number of immigrants entering most European societies, including Poland, has notably increased primarily due to sustainable economic development, liberal democracies, and social and immigration policies (pull factors) of a majority of Western European countries (Fertala, 2006). However, The economic and social integration and recognition of migrants in host societies is often perceived as problematic both by the migrants themselves and also by the native population of the new society (Zubikova, 2020). It happens due to discrimination in the labor market; skill, education, and work experience shortcomings; and cultural, language and networking barriers (Lin and Tao, 2012; Bird and Wennberg, 2016). Consequently, immigrants encounter several difficulties in their host societies, one being, obtaining a decent and well-paid job, among others. (Brzozowska and Postuła, 2014). Therefore, setting up their own business and self-employment, as an effective form of entrepreneurship, can provide a way out of economic uncertainty and social exclusion (Kloosterman, 2003;). It also acts as an avenue of upward economic and social mobility (Mustafa and Chen, 2010).

Immigrant entrepreneurship as a process of new business creation (Glinka and Brzozowska, 2015) not only offers a path to self-employment and business ownership to solve structural labor market imbalances (Ims *et al.*, 2021), but it also offers a sense of independence, higher self-worth and life satisfaction to immigrants. It brings substantial earnings, socio-economic standing (Fertala, 2006), and provides role models for immigrants (Glinka and Hensel, 2020). Consequently, promotion of immigrants' entrepreneurial activities lead to better integration and recognition of migrants in the new society and the formal economy can be aided, which in turn boosts entrepreneurship in general. (García-Cabrera *et al.*, 2020). However, immigrant entrepreneurship brings some serious challenges for a host country which include different values, social, institutional and cultural orientations and their experience to a very different regulatory environment and socio-economic context. To make it even more complicated, there is also a distinction between immigrants whose cultural background, education, ethnic and network resources, life experience, etc. may significantly differ from each other (Bird and Wennberg, 2016). Accordingly, an understanding of these opportunities and challenges that shape immigrant entrepreneurs' behaviour receives noticeable attention among academicians, practitioners and policy-makers as it may have crucial implications for further development of immigrants' entrepreneurial activities in a host country.

## ***Immigration Flows of Indian Nationals into Poland***

In comparison with other EU countries, the number of immigrants in Poland is still relatively small and constitutes less than 2% of the resident population (Kosz-Goryszewska

and Pawlak, 2018). Therefore, Poland can be perceived as one of the less popular destinations among migrants. According to the Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców (in English: Office for Foreigners) website ([www.migracje.gov.pl](http://www.migracje.gov.pl))<sup>1</sup>, the number of foreigners who reside legally in Poland was 941,747 by the end of 2020, with 257,392 out of this number, living in Warsaw metropolitan. With a population of more than 38 million, Poland is one of the most homogeneous countries in the EU. However, the transformation of the political-economic system and an increase in general prosperity in Poland in the last decade has made it an attractive destination for immigrants and foreign workers, especially those outside of the EU (Kosz-Goryszewska and Pawlak, 2018). That is why, nowadays, there has been a significant increase in the number of foreigners arriving in Poland. Apart from this, Indians are the fastest-growing immigrants from outside of Europe who found their way to Poland. According to the Office for Foreigners website ([www.migracje.gov.pl](http://www.migracje.gov.pl)), the number of people who self-identify as Indians, including those who already submitted applications to legalize their stay, was 23,076 by the end of 2020, making Indians the largest non-European migrant group in Poland. This explains the statistically significant increase in their numbers has recently been observed in the context of Indian economic activities and movement in Poland (Kloc-Nowak, 2013). According to the above-mentioned data, there are an estimated 23,076 Indians legally living in Poland by the end of 2020, 11,340 out of this number (49%) living in Warsaw metropolitan area. This accounts for an increase of 542% since 2010 in comparison to other major Asian immigrant ethnic groups including Chinese and Vietnamese nationals migrating into Poland. Polish-EU accession in 2004, high economic growth in Poland, (Kugiel and Pędziwiatr, 2014) strong migration pressures in India, high demand for workers in Poland, more foreign direct investments, including those from India, several bilateral treaties and agreements, as well as strengthening of Poland–India relations (see Kugiel and Pędziwiatr, 2014), are most likely to contribute towards further enlargement of the Indian diaspora in Poland.

### ***Warsaw – The Main Destination for Immigrants***

Warsaw, as the capital and the largest city of Poland always held a leading position not only in terms of political life but also because of the economic activity. Higher education and research, modern transportation, infrastructure and other parameters of general development also make it a sought-after destination for quality living (European Commission, 2021). Ever since the fall of Communism in 1989 and country openness, in particular, after Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, the Warsaw metropolitan has become the main focus for both domestic and foreign investment. The most important key indicators that have dominated the capital region economy are the highest share in foreign direct investment (FDI),

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<sup>1</sup> Website was implemented by the Office for Foreigners within the project “Increasing the effectiveness of migration management in Poland”, supported by a grant from Switzerland through the Swiss Contribution to the enlarged European Union.

a large pool of highly qualified workforce, the highest number of universities of all Polish cities<sup>2</sup>, the highest R&D expenditures and concentration of innovative companies, the lowest unemployment rates (1.9%), and the highest national and international service industries, mainly financial services and associated professional services. (European Commission, 2021; Statistical Office in Warsaw, 2021). As of 2018, the GDP of the capital region was €86.5 billion (€45,700 per capita)<sup>3</sup>, which generated approximately 17.4% of the national GDP (Eurostat, 2020). Apart from economic and labor market factors, there are some other important parameters as well that have a significant impact on increasing foreigner inflows to Poland and Warsaw metropolitan area in particular. For example, Poland has been ranked as the 20<sup>th</sup> best country for expats in 2020. The survey evaluated countries on various criteria, including quality of life, ease of settling in, personal finance, working abroad, and family life<sup>4</sup>. The following factors also have a positive impact on foreigners inflows into Warsaw metropolitan. These factors include but are not limited to:

- Multicultural and foreign-friendly character of the city;
- High standard of living;
- Dynamic labor and trade policies;
- Economic stability and a large domestic market
- Excellent accessibility to the EU market;
- Located in trans-European transport corridors;
- Significant cultural, political and economic hub;
- High Green City Index<sup>5</sup>; and
- High EF English Proficiency Index (Poland is ranked 16<sup>th</sup> globally)<sup>6</sup>.

### **Problem Statement and Justification of the Research**

While Indians are the largest non-European migrant community in Poland, relatively little is known about their entrepreneurial activities (Kugiel and Pędziwiatr, 2014). Many studies have focused on various aspects of immigrant entrepreneurship worldwide (e.g. Collins and Low, 2010; Singh *et al.*, 2020), but not much has been written about Indian immigrant enterprises and established businesses in Poland. Also, most Polish research on Asian migrants focuses on other major ethnic groups that constitute the Vietnamese and Chinese communities in Poland (Glinka and Brzozowska, 2015; Kardaszewicz and Wrotek, 2020). Therefore, the present research addresses the knowledge gap and contributes to the debate about immigrants in general and immigrant entrepreneurs in particular. The study

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<sup>2</sup> Study Guide 2018/2019 - University of Warsaw. Retrieved December 06, 2019, from [http://www.rekrutacja.uw.edu.pl/files/pdf/Study\\_Guide\\_18-19.pdf](http://www.rekrutacja.uw.edu.pl/files/pdf/Study_Guide_18-19.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> 218.2% vis-à-vis the national average and almost twice as much as the second-placed region, Dolnośląskie (€23,100).

<sup>4</sup> Expat 2020 Global Report. Retrieved February 22, 2021, from <https://www.expatorplorer.hsbc.com/survey/>

<sup>5</sup> European Green City Index 2009. Retrieved on June 06, 2019 from [https://www.siemens.com/entry/cc/features/greencityindex\\_international/all/en/pdf/report\\_en.pdf](https://www.siemens.com/entry/cc/features/greencityindex_international/all/en/pdf/report_en.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> EF English Proficiency Index 2020. Retrieved on May 29, 2021 from <https://www.ef.com/ca/epi/regions/europe/poland/>

examines the trajectories of the Indian immigrant entrepreneurs' experiences of establishing and operating their businesses in Poland in general, and Warsaw metropolitan area, in particular as the main center of the Indian diaspora in Poland.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objectives of this research are:

- To find out new insights about the entrepreneurial activities of Indian immigrants in Poland.
- To fill the existing gap in the immigrant entrepreneurship literature in the Indian context, and to set out a basis for future studies.

The specific objective of this research is:

- To develop a conceptual framework that better interprets the entrepreneurial activities of Indian immigrants in Poland, and to identify the main dynamics of the establishment and development of their business ventures.

### **Research Questions**

The research aims to address one of the major immigrant entrepreneurship research questions: “What reasons, values, and incentives guide Indian immigrants to enter entrepreneurial path in Poland?”, and specifically: “What is important to them, how they perceive running a business, and what do they think about being an immigrant entrepreneur in Poland?”

Accordingly, the research sub-questions are as follows:

- What are the driving forces that motivate behind Indians motivation to immigrate into Poland?
- What are the pull and push factors behind Indian immigrants' intention to enter entrepreneurship path in Poland?
- What is the role of Indian immigrants' individual characteristics and cultural backgrounds in pursuing entrepreneurship path in Poland?
- What are the key factors because of which Indian entrepreneurs choose Poland in general and Warsaw metropolitan area in particular for business set-up and operations?
- How do Indian immigrants identify, recognize, and discover business and entrepreneurial opportunities in Poland?
- What are the business practices of Indian immigrants prior to start-up and during operation in Poland?
- What are the role of Indian immigrants' ethnic network and resources and supporting institutions prior to business start-up and during operation in Poland?
- What difficulties and challenges do Indian immigrants encounter along their entrepreneurial journey in Poland?

Answers to the issue of tangible and intangible incentives, values and other reasons by Indian immigrants to become entrepreneurs are understood in this study as answers to the question of entrepreneurial intentions (Litzky *et al.*, 2020).

## **Research Methodology**

Using the post-positivism paradigm (Gamlen and McIntyre, 2018), the researcher attempted to find answers to the subject under study. Reviewing different methods offered by this paradigm showed that the qualitative approach is most coherent with the social phenomenon tackled by this research. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted for data collection, while the grounded theory principles, stages, and guidelines were adopted as a methodological framework for data analysis and to discover an emergent grounded theory. Relying snowball sampling and theoretical sampling methods, a primary list of over a hundred Indian entrepreneurs operating businesses in Warsaw metropolitan was prepared. The listed entrepreneurs were contacted by fieldwork visit, email, or phone, in which 15 entrepreneurs agreed to be interviewed who are the subjects of this research. These entrepreneurs were initially approached through the networks of the researcher and then the connections of some of the participants were utilized. The Indian immigrant entrepreneurs in this research were also selected based on the principles of criterion sample (Patton, 2014). The criteria (conditions) set for the selection process was: (1) first-generation (foreign-born) immigrants; (2) legally registered to stay and work in Poland; (3) established and operating a legal business in Warsaw metropolitan area; and (4) command over spoken English. The researcher conducted 15 extended interviews with Indian immigrant entrepreneurs between November 2020 and February 2021 of about 50 minutes on an average. The participants were entrepreneurs mainly operating in food and services sectors with different sizes of businesses (mostly micro and small businesses), representing different waves of migration flows of Indian nationals into Poland (the migration dates of interviewees range from 1991 to 2019). The average age of the participants was 38, with the two oldest participants being 57 years old and the youngest 25 years old. Except for four persons, all were married, living in family relationships. Finally, all interviewees were also highly educated and had a university degree, a common characteristic among Indian immigrant entrepreneurs in many host countries.

### **Data Collection**

In this research, interviewing is selected as the sole method of collecting data since the interview style is conversational, flexible, fluid and easily intelligible for interviewees and, more importantly, capable of disclosing important and often hidden facets of human behavior (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Therefore, the semi-structured, in-depth personal interview is used in this research to explore a deep understanding of the respondents' experiences, feelings, opinion, and their perception of the subject phenomenon. One top of that, the in-

depth interview is also appropriate when one wants to explore a new subject in detail that has never been studied before, like in the present study where, Indian immigrant entrepreneurs in Poland. For conducting interviews, the researcher followed the seven stages procedure recommended by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) for an interview inquiry on a general level. These seven recommended steps for an interview investigation are: thematizing the inquiry, designing the study, conducting the interview, transcribing interviews, analyzing interviews, verifying interview knowledge, and finally, reporting. In the following sub-sections, the researcher explains the first 4 phases, while the remaining 3 phases are explained in the data analysis section of this chapter. However, one should bear in mind that the whole data collection and analysis process is integrated, and therefore nothing prevents the researcher from moving back to the previous phase if needed while developing a grounded theory (Hensel and Glinka, 2018).

### **Data Analysis**

A key feature of grounded theory is the simultaneous, comparative and interactive process of data collection and analysis, which allows the researcher to move back and forth between data collection and conceptualization of their collected data. In this thesis, the researcher customized the data analysis procedure relying on a variety of methods available within grounded theory while considering principles denoted by Corbin and Strauss (1990) that researchers need to follow during different data collection and analysis stages. These principles allowed the researcher to remain focused on the different but interrelated procedures during data analysis.

The data analysis starts with giving conceptual labels (codes) to incidents that form the phenomenon under study. Later, those concepts were adjusted and abstracted continuously as the analysis preceded. Next, categories emerge by comparing concepts against similarities or differences. The data should be examined for regularities that lead ordering and integrating the data in a process that breaks down the phenomenon into a sequence of stages. Comparison is an important process as it assists in avoiding bias by inspecting concepts through collecting new data. Hypotheses have to be developed concerning the connection between different categories. These hypotheses also require inspection by going back to the field when necessary. A theory is likely to be generated when the emergent categories relate to one another. Lastly, a wider environmental structure, including various conditions, such as economics, culture, or politics, should be considered in the analysis as well.

To facilitate the analysis process, QSR-NVivo content analysis software is used to construct code, themes, and categories that result in a grounded theory generation (Alam, 2020). QSR-NVivo provides many advantages such as more flexibility in coding, themes and categories; reducing the time and effort in data analysis process; improving identification process of trends and relevant themes; ability to analyze, classify and categorize massive data

derived from interview transcripts; and producing stunning graphs and models that can be used to present and explore the relationships between concepts (Alam, 2020).

## **Research Findings**

Using the coding and data analysis results, 8 main categories and their subcategories linked with the research sub-questions were identified within the data, are presented here as the foundational elements upon which the emerging theory is constructed. Additionally, a series of 20 emergent propositions that interrelate the emergent concepts and explain the underlying core phenomenon are presented in the following sub-sections.

### **The Core Category**

As a result of constant comparative analysis, 8 main categories emerged, and these were grouped to form 4 major categories. These major categories were

- 1) “motives and drives”,
- 2) “opportunity recognition process”,
- 3) “conducting business activities”, and
- 4) “experienced obstacles”.

However, this did not assist the researcher in selecting the final core category as the researcher felt that while all 4 categories were equally important as they emerged from data but none of them alone captured the essence of the whole study; hence, the necessity of developing a more abstract category which includes all other categories was felt (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Therefore, “conducting business activities to address entrepreneurial intention in response to perceived and experienced pull and push factors” emerged as a dominant and relevant category within the data that accounted for data variations and helped explain the occurring social phenomenon. The emerged core category comprised all the issues, concepts, and subcategories that emerged during the data analysis processes, and linked and related all four major categories. In other words, it encapsulated the core of the discovered theory describing Indian immigrants entering entrepreneurship path based on a series of variables and factors that directly and indirectly affect their perception and career choice toward self-employment and business ownership, representing the occurring social phenomenon. Participants’ quotes also showed that the developed core category better captured and demonstrated various aspects of the Indian immigrants’ entrepreneurship phenomenon in Poland. It is important to mention that the development of core and major categories was a gradual process, which took place over an extended period of time (from November 2020 to September 2021).



### **Major Category (1): Motives and Drives**

Initially, when the researcher was immersed with the data during data analysis processes, he viewed a substantial part of the data, representing the motives and drives behind Indians migration and choosing an entrepreneurial path in Poland, where many concepts and categories conceptualized this meaning. The emerged categories namely, “initial reasons for migration of Indians”, “socio-economic development of Poland”, and “pull and push factors toward entrepreneurship” were seen as the most prominent categories that reflected the meaning of the above conceptualizations. However, with further analysis and re-reading the interview transcripts, the researcher started to question himself about the data “does this means all motives and drives of Indian immigrants for conducting business and entrepreneurial activities in Poland?”. Looking again at the outcomes of the coding procedure as a whole (generated categories, subcategories, supporting codes, and quotes), made the researcher’s decision different. Identified relationships between categories and sub-categories revealed that the emerged categories “Indian characteristics” and “cultural background” also, directly and indirectly, affect these motives and drives. To better capture the role of Indian immigrants’ individual characteristics and cultural background as motives and drives, the researcher merged these two categories in a more abstract category named “Indian characteristics and cultural background”. All these emerged categories and their subcategories were developed and saturated until the last interviews as no new concepts developed that reflect Indian entrepreneurs’ motives and drives other than the earlier emerged categories and concepts.

Looking at the emerged categories and concepts gave the essence that it is all about the meaning of motives and drives as a whole, which are reasons behind Indian migration and their decision to enter entrepreneurship path in Poland, affected directly and indirectly by their individual characteristics and cultural background. Given this explanation, the researcher merged four main developed categories “Initial reasons for migration of Indians”, “socio-economic development of Poland”, “pull and push factors toward entrepreneurship”, and “Indian characteristics and cultural background” together under a more abstract category (major category) named “motives and drives” representing a snapshot of motives and drives of Indian entrepreneurs and how they contributed to Indian immigrants entrepreneurial journey. It is important to mention that we theorize that since the sole category of intention does not seem to be rich enough to capture characteristics and cultural aspects of Indian immigrants, the researcher did not include “intentions” as a new category (embracing motives and drives). In addition, the concept of the initial reason identified in this study helps capture intentions since knowing one’s reasons always helps one understand their intentions.

The following propositions summarize research findings regarding motives and drives toward entrepreneurship derived from the interviews’ transcripts as a result of constant comparative analysis.

**Proposition 1:** Initial economic reasons for migration of Indians, such as possibility of working in Poland due to a set of skills and career experience/ or perspective, less competition among Indian businesses, and Poland's fast-growing economy, influence the development of entrepreneurial intention of Indian immigrants in Poland.

**Proposition 2:** The general prosperity and socio-economic development of Poland and particularly Warsaw directly and positively influence the decision of migrated Indians in Poland toward conducting entrepreneurial and business activities.

**Proposition 3:** The perceived and experienced pull and push factors positively influence and shape the perception and career choice of Indian immigrants' toward entrepreneurship in Poland.

*Proposition 3a:* The perceived and experienced pull factors (motivational factors) are predominant reasoning among Indian immigrants to enter entrepreneurship in Poland.

**Proposition 4:** Indian immigrants' individual characteristics and cultural background play a key role in their intention toward self-employment and firms' creation in Poland.

*Proposition 4a:* Indian immigrants' with individual characteristics such as having a role model, being married, family-oriented, having higher education, relevant past work experience, and being a male are most likely to enter entrepreneurship path in Poland.

*Proposition 4b:* Indian immigrants' local and national culture values to a large extent determine their perception and career choice toward self-employment and firms' creation in Poland.

## **Major Category (2): Opportunity Recognition Process**

While the researcher was performing the steps of coding, he observed a significant part of the emerged data representing the ways Indian immigrants recognized entrepreneurial and business opportunities in Poland, where many concepts and categories embraced this meaning. The emerged categories "past experiences and knowledge", "home country's learning", "personality traits", "social capital", "surrounding business environment opportunities" and "entrepreneurial alertness" were seen as the prominent categories and concepts where they reflect this meaning. However, with further analysis and after the researcher re-read the interview transcripts, continued questioning himself about the data and looked again at the outcomes of the coding procedure (generated categories, subcategories, supporting codes, and quotes), he realized that merging these developed categories and concepts in a more abstract category could capture better the essence of Indian immigrants' entrepreneurial and business opportunities recognition process in Poland as a whole. Given this explanation, the researcher merged the aforesaid 6 developed categories and concepts together under a more abstract category named "recognition of business and entrepreneurial opportunities" where this category further formed the major category of "opportunity recognition process". These emerged category, subcategories, and concepts were developed and saturated until the late interviews as no new concepts developed that reflect the ways Indian entrepreneurs

recognized entrepreneurial and business opportunities in Poland other than the earlier emerged categories and concepts. Identified relationships between emerged categories and concepts also revealed that the major category reflects clearly what it means to be opportunity recognition processes among Indian entrepreneurs in Poland by offering an overview of ways Indian immigrants used to identify, recognize, and discover potential entrepreneurial and business opportunities in Poland.

The following propositions summarize research findings regarding the processes used by Indian immigrants to identify, recognize, and discover business and entrepreneurial opportunities in Poland.

**Proposition 5:** The level and the way Indian immigrants use their career experience and past knowledge, learning activities outcomes in Poland, network and entrepreneurial alertness combined with their unique personality traits and the influence of environmental factors define how they establish, operate and develop their businesses in Poland.

*Proposition 5a:* Indian immigrants' career experience and past knowledge, in terms of education, business, management, and industry-specific experience, are positively associated with the recognition of business and entrepreneurial opportunities in Poland.

*Proposition 5b:* Indian immigrants' learning activities in Poland, such as taking Polish language classes, using the internet and conducting research, taking university courses or degree programmes, and attending exhibitions and events, are positively related to capturing business and entrepreneurial opportunities.

*Proposition 5c:* Indian immigrants' psychological attributes (personality traits), such as self-efficacy, risk propensity, self-confidence, optimism, and creativity, influence the ways they identify, recognize, and discover business and entrepreneurial opportunities in Poland to a large extent

*Proposition 5d:* Indian immigrants' social capital (network), such as family members, relatives, friends, colleagues, associates, ethnic peers, customers, suppliers, and entrepreneurs, are positively associated with the recognition of business and entrepreneurial opportunities in Poland.

*Proposition 5e:* Environmental factors influence Indian immigrants' ability to identify, recognize, and discover business and entrepreneurial opportunities in Poland.

*Proposition 5f:* Indian immigrants' entrepreneurial alertness plays an important role in the recognition of business and entrepreneurial opportunities in Poland.

### **Major Category (3): Conducting Business Activities**

Initially and during the data analysis processes, besides motives and drives of Indian entrepreneurs as well as the ways they used to identify, recognize, and discover business and entrepreneurial opportunities in Poland, the researcher viewed a substantial part of the data representing Indians' preparatory steps prior to business set-up as well as their practices during business operation in Poland, where many concepts and categories emerged from the

churning of this data. The most prominent ones are: “planning”, “financing”, “obtaining official licenses and necessary permissions”, “reliance on the assistance of professionals”, “business planning and expansion”, “staffing practices”, “marketing and sales practices” and “business-related domestic and overseas traveling”. After a thorough study of these categories and to capture the essence of Indian immigrants’ business practices in a better way, the researcher merged these categories and concepts into two more abstract categories representing Indian immigrants’ practices “prior to business start-up” and “during business operation”. These sub-categories together further formed the main category of “Indian immigrants business practices”.

However, with further analysis and re-reading the interview transcripts, the researcher started to question himself about the data “does this mean all practices of Indian immigrants for converting their business and entrepreneurial ideas into businesses in Poland?”. A detailed revisit at the outcomes of the coding procedure as a whole (generated categories, subcategories, supporting codes, and quotes), brought about a change in the decision making related to categories and sub-categories. The relationships identified between categories and sub-categories revealed that the emerged categories “access to transnational networks and resources”, e.g. family and friends and co-ethnicity, and “availability of supporting institutions in Poland”, had a direct association with type, direction, and the quality of Indian immigrants’ entrepreneurial activities in Poland. For the better understanding of the meaning of access to /availability of ethnic networks and resources and supporting institutions in Poland, the researcher merged these categories together into a more abstract category named “ethnic resources and supporting institutions”. The earlier mentioned emerged categories, subcategories, and concepts were developed, iterated and saturated until the last interview to ensure that no new concepts emerged or developed that reflected the Indian practices related to business activities in Poland other than the earlier emerged categories and concepts.

The above-mentioned categories, subcategories, and concepts allowed the researcher to infer that practical steps taken towards setting up a business and ethnic resources are important determinants of successful entrepreneurship by Indian immigrants in Poland. On the basis of this conclusion, the researcher merged two main categories, “Indian immigrants business practices” and “ethnic resources and supporting institutions” together under a more abstract category (major category) named “conducting business activities”. It represents a snapshot of practices, ethnic networks and resources, and supporting institutions, that contribute in converting business and entrepreneurial ideas of Indian immigrants in Poland into actual entrepreneurial ventures.

The following propositions summarize research findings regarding the practical steps that are taken/ ethnic resources and support that are received by Indian immigrants. These results are derived from the interviews’ transcripts after administering constant comparative analysis on the data received.

**Proposition 6:** The type and features of Indian immigrants’ practices prior to start-up and during business operation, to a large extent, influence their business formation and operation in Poland.

**Proposition 7:** Indian immigrants’ access to ethnic networks and resources and supporting institutions influence positively their business formation, operation, and further development in Poland.

*Proposition 7a:* Indian immigrants’ transnational networks and ethnic resources, to a large extent, determine the type and features of their businesses and its operation in Poland.

*Proposition 7b:* The existing supporting institutions and schemes related to immigrants in Poland influence the way Indian immigrants establish, operate, and develop businesses in Poland.

#### **Major Category (4): Experienced Obstacles**

During the constant comparative analysis, the researcher observed an important part of the data representing the concepts related to difficulties and challenges that Indian entrepreneurs encounter along their entrepreneurial journey in Poland. The prominent categories that emerged were: “language barriers”, “financial restraints”, “business’ operational issues”, “business organizational challenges”, “dealing with formal procedures”, “COVID-19 pandemic”, “business environment challenges” and “personal challenges”. However, with further analysis, re-reading the interview transcripts, and observing the outcomes of the coding procedure (generated categories, subcategories, supporting codes, and quotes), it was realized that merging these developed categories and concepts in a more abstract category could better capture the essence of experienced difficulties and challenges by Indian immigrants’ as a whole. Given this explanation, the researcher merged the aforesaid eight developed categories and concepts together under a more abstract category named “difficulties and challenges along the entrepreneurial journey in Poland” where this category further formed the major category of “experienced obstacles”. These emerged category, subcategories, and concepts were developed and saturated until the last interview as no new concepts developed that reflected the difficulties and challenges of Indian immigrants along the entrepreneurial journey in Poland other than the earlier emerged categories and concepts. Identified relationships between emerged categories and concepts also revealed that the major category of “experienced obstacles” reflects clearly what it means to experience obstacles among Indian entrepreneurs in Poland, representing a set of difficulties and challenges they encountered, describing the Indian immigrants’ life before and during the phenomenon. It is important to mention that in this research, one specific factor (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic) acted both as an obstacle as well as an opportunity, given the multi-aspect and multilevel nature of the entrepreneurship phenomenon and distinct individual characteristics and backgrounds of Indian immigrants.

The following proposition summarizes research findings regarding the difficulties and challenges experienced by Indian immigrants along their entrepreneurial journey in Poland.

**Proposition 8:** Experienced difficulties and challenges encountered by Indian immigrants in Poland, such as language barrier (Polish language proficiency), financial restraints, difficulties during business operation, business organizational challenges, dealing with formal procedures, COVID-19 pandemic, surrounding business environment, and personal challenges, directly and indirectly, influence the way they are conducting entrepreneurial and business activities in Poland.

### **Interrelationship between Major Categories**

The previous four sections presented the relationships between the major categories and the central phenomenon of this study. The 4 major categories, namely, “motives and drives”, “opportunity recognition process”, “conducting entrepreneurial activities”, and “experienced obstacles” describe Indian immigrant entrepreneurship phenomenon in Poland. This section presents the interrelation between these 4 major concepts as discovered in the empirical data as a result of constant comparative analysis. These interrelations further strengthen the theoretical framework and allow for a greater understanding of the overall emergent theory. A series of propositions relating to these interrelations are presented in this section.

- Relationship between “motives and drives” and “opportunity recognition process”

**Proposition 9:** The socio-economic development of Poland, in terms of business environment, domestic market potential and modern infrastructure; being part of the EU and European Economic Area (EEA), multinational and multicultural character of Warsaw metropolitan area, and the Polish lifestyle, assists Indian immigrants to identify, recognize, and discover business and entrepreneurial opportunities in Poland.

**Proposition 10:** Indian immigrants’ individual characteristics, such as having a role model, relevant past work experience, and having higher education, positively influence the way they identify, recognize, and discover business and entrepreneurial opportunities in Poland.

- Relationship between “motives and drives” and “conducting business activities”

**Proposition 11:** The socio-economic development of Poland, in terms of business environment, business running costs, market access, domestic market potential, access to workforces, location, logistics and transport, modern infrastructure, Poland being a part of the EU and European Economic Area (EEA), multinational and multicultural character of Warsaw metropolitan area, and the Polish lifestyle, influence Indian immigrants’ business practices prior to start-up and during operations in Poland.

**Proposition 12:** Indian immigrants' individual characteristics and cultural background play a key role in their practices prior to start-up and during business operation in Poland.

**Proposition 13:** The perceived and experienced pull and push factors, such as having relevant skills, desire for business travel, the opportunity to serve the Indian community, language barrier, and legalization of stay, influence Indian immigrants' business practices prior to start-up and during business operations in Poland.

**Proposition 14:** Indian immigrants with better access to ethnic networks and resources and supporting institutions are more likely to establish and develop businesses in Poland.

- Relationship between “motives and drives” and “experienced obstacles”

**Proposition 15:** Indian immigrants' individual characteristics and cultural backgrounds influence the level and how they perceive and experience difficulties and challenges along the entrepreneurial journey.

- Relationship between “conducting business activities” and “opportunity recognition process”

**Proposition 16:** Indian immigrants' transnational networks and ethnic resources influence the way they perceive and recognize entrepreneurial and business opportunities in Poland.

**Proposition 17:** The way Indian immigrants recognize entrepreneurial and business opportunities, to a large extent, determines how they establish and operate businesses in Poland.

- Relationship between “experienced obstacles” and “opportunity recognition process”

**Proposition 18:** The COVID-19 pandemic assisted Indian immigrants to recognize entrepreneurial opportunities relevant to emerging needs and demands in the Polish market.

- Relationship between “experienced obstacles” and “conducting business activities”

**Proposition 19:** Difficulties and challenges experienced by Indian immigrants along the entrepreneurial journey adjust their practices prior to start-up and during business operations in Poland.

**Proposition 20:** The type and features of Indian immigrants' practices prior to start-up and during business operation directly influence the level and type of difficulties and challenges they experience.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This section presents the process of theory generation based on McCaslin and Scott's (2002) work which consists of three aspects: examining the consequences of the emerging theory, explaining its meaning, and presenting it as a formal statement.

## **The Storyline**

To explain the influence of the core category affecting the Indian immigrants' perception and career choice toward self-employment and business ownership as well as their entrepreneurial activities, the researcher, in this section, explains how each individual concept forms and shapes the Indian immigrants' entrepreneurship phenomena in Poland. In this research, we theorize in light of data that there was no single category that could capture the essence of the whole study. Hence, the core category of "conducting business activities to address entrepreneurial intention in response to perceived and experienced pull and push factors" emerged due to its ability to pull the other categories together explaining the occurring social phenomenon. It comprised and connected all four main concepts, namely "motives and drives", "opportunity recognition process", "conducting business activities", and "experienced obstacles".

As explained in this study, there are strong reasons to assume that Indian immigrants' motives and drives form and shape their perception and career choice toward entrepreneurship in Poland. These motives and drives are considered within this thesis as the combination of initial reasons for their migration, socio-economic development of Poland, a set of push and pull factors, and individual characteristics and cultural background, that directly and indirectly influence many Indians to choose the path of self-employment and business ownership in Poland. It is important to mention that we theorize that since the sole category of intention does not seem to be rich enough to capture characteristics and cultural aspects of Indian immigrants, the researcher did not include "intentions" as a new category (embracing motives and drives). In addition, the concept of the initial reason identified in this study helps capture intentions since knowing one's reasons always helps one understand their intentions. Nevertheless, this research is also a contribution to currently popular study on "entrepreneurial intentions".

In the light of data, we theorize that apart from the initial reasons of migration, motives such as skills/career experience in a particular sector, less competition among Indian businesses in Poland due to small size of Indian diaspora, and life circumstances due to family situation, influence Indian immigrants perception toward conducting business activities in Poland. The general prosperity and socio-economic development of Poland in terms of business environment, business running costs, market access, domestic market potential, access to workforces, location, logistics and transport, modern infrastructure, the country being part of the EU and European Economic Area (EEA), multinational and multicultural character of Warsaw city, and Polish lifestyle directly fueled this process. A set of push (seven items) and pull factors (fifteen items) were also identified in this research, where perceived and experienced pull factors focused on the positive aspects of self-employment and business ownership were predominant reasoning among Indian entrepreneurs largely shaped by Indian's own choice and agency. There are strong reasons to assume that the greater effect of pull factors compared to push factors in this research may be attributed to the profile of



interviewees, which includes past work experiences, being highly educated, and having a family business background. Finally, we also theorize that Indian immigrants' individual characteristics such as having a role model, marital status, family-orientation, higher education, relevant past work experience, and being a male, increased the likelihood of entering the entrepreneurial path. Similarly, cultural background (local and national culture values) also, to a large extent, determined their perception toward entrepreneurial activities in Poland. In addition to the direct influence of above-mentioned motives and drives on Indian immigrants' perception and choice toward entrepreneurship, they also assist and positively influence the way Indians identify, recognize, and discover business opportunities in Poland. Besides, they also play a positive role in Indian immigrants' business practices prior to start-up and during operation. Further, the individual characteristics and cultural backgrounds of Indians also influence the level and perception towards difficult experiences and challenges along the entrepreneurial journey in Poland. One should bear in mind, the multi-effect nature of Indian motives and drives in this study, as described above, have resulted from the multifaceted and multilevel nature of the entrepreneurship phenomenon, distinct individual characteristics and backgrounds, and different cultural values of Indian immigrants, particularly micro cultural ones. To conclude, despite the importance, extent, and frequency of motives and drives in this thesis, the distinct individual characteristics, backgrounds, and cultural values of Indian immigrants contributed significantly to their entrepreneurship phenomenon in Poland.

Moving ahead, the researcher theorize that for converting entrepreneurship intention into action, Indian immigrants generate business ideas for development of products or services with particular focus on ethnic products to meet customers' needs and demands and earn profits. While taking this decision, they also consider Poland's unique environment, consisting of customers, rules, customs, and culture. To identify, recognize, and discover entrepreneurial and business opportunities, they often capitalize on their career experience and past knowledge, learning activities outcomes in Poland, personality traits, social capital combined with their unique personality traits, and environmental factors influence. There are strong reasons to assume that the level and the way Indian immigrants use these aspects define how they establish, operate and develop their businesses in Poland. To be specific, Indian immigrants' career experience and past knowledge, specifically in terms of education, business, management, and industry-specific experience, their personality traits, such as self-efficacy, risk propensity, self-confidence, optimism, and creativity, and social network, including family members, relatives, friends, colleagues, associates, ethnic peers, customers, suppliers, and entrepreneurs, contribute to capture business and entrepreneurial opportunities to a large extent. Entrepreneurial alertness also played an important role in recognition of business opportunities among Indian immigrants within this research. Indian immigrants' learning activities and surrounding business environment also, to some extent, influence their ability to identify, recognize, and discover business and entrepreneurial opportunities in the

host country. An interesting finding of this study is that distinct Indian immigrants in Poland from other immigrants is a majority of Indian entrepreneurs emphasized they recognize opportunities in Poland by capitalizing on previous experiences they obtained through involvement in family businesses in India. Additionally, we theorize that before starting their own ventures, some Indian immigrants were involved in routine jobs in Poland and gathered experiences and knowledge that was later applied in recognizing opportunities in similar or dissimilar sectors.

Next, to convert generated business and entrepreneurial ideas into practice and to conduct business activities, the researcher theorizes in the light of data that Indian immigrants follow a series of typical preparatory steps prior to business set-up, some common among immigrant entrepreneurs despite their nationality/ethnic and countries of destination (Shinnar and Young, 2008). These steps include activities such as planning, financing, and obtaining official licenses and necessary permissions by taking assistance from professionals prior to business set-up. The ongoing process of decision-making such as marketing, sales strategy, customer service, business-related domestic and overseas traveling, staffing practices (recruiting and hiring new staff), and reliance on the assistance of professionals were also highlighted as such steps during business operation in the results of the current research.

A unique finding of this study that distinguishes Indian immigrants in Poland from other immigrants is the reliance of Indian entrepreneurs on the recommendations and advice of native professionals (e.g. accountants and lawyers) rather than co-ethnic professionals to deal with formalities associated with translation, bureaucracy, preparation of legal documents, and business registration prior to business set-up. There are also strong reasons to assume that Indian entrepreneurs prefer to use Polish professional services during the business operations stage, e.g. legal services (e.g. tax department) and accountancy. This preference stems from the low Polish language command of Indian professionals compared to natives that make communication with government institutions less effective, reluctant of some Indian business owners to get any services from co-ethnic professionals due to business secret issue, as well as higher competencies of native professionals over Indian peers when it comes to such services. This thesis also theorizes that Indian entrepreneurs only tend to use co-ethnic professionals' assistance in matters related to business and supply chains.

Data derived from the interviews' transcripts also show that Indian immigrants rely heavily on their ethnic networks and resources, e.g. family and friends, co-ethnic, and, to some extent, on supporting institutions initiatives, programs, and schemes in Poland for conducting business activities, like business formation, operation, and further development. This is quite evident in terms of providing capital, business information, supplying inventory (ethnic products) running the business, and matching and referral services. Given the data derived from interviews' transcripts, we therefore theorize that ethnic networks and resources, to a large extent, determine the type, features, and quality of Indian immigrants' entrepreneurial activities in Poland. On the other hand, the availability of supporting

institutions also influences the way Indian immigrants establish, operate, and develop their businesses. The thesis also brought out the multi-faceted and multi-level nature of Indian immigrants business activities and their interrelations. For instance, there are strong reasons to assume that Indian immigrants' transnational networks and ethnic resources influence the way they perceive and recognize entrepreneurial and business opportunities in Poland. Given the fact that Indian immigrants are ethnic-oriented, and, consequently, most of them operate in traditional main street businesses in Poland.

Lastly, all along the entrepreneurship path, right from forming and shaping Indian immigrants' perception and career choice toward entrepreneurship (e.g. language barrier) to generating business and entrepreneurial ideas to address this intention (e.g. COVID-19 Pandemic), and converting these ideas into action through various practices prior to start-up and during business operation, all Indian entrepreneurs faced a set of difficulties and challenges in Poland (some continuing), describing the Indian immigrants' life before and during the phenomenon in question. These obstacles experienced by Indian immigrants, among others, were language barrier (Polish language proficiency), financial restraints, difficulties during business operation, business organizational challenges, dealing with formal procedures, COVID-19 pandemic, surrounding business environment, and personal challenges that influence their business formation, operation, and further development. The most prominent challenge faced by Indian immigrants in Poland was language barrier. Given the data derived from interviews' transcripts, we theorize that the experiences of these obstacles vary from one entrepreneur to another due to distinct individual characteristics and backgrounds and cultural values of Indian immigrants, their ethnic networks and resources, and the type and features of their business practices. Additionally, data show that a substantial part of obstacles arise during Indian immigrant business practices where some difficulties and challenges toward entrepreneurship, such as Polish language proficiency, financial restraints, dealing with formal procedures, and COVID-19 pandemic, affect the type and features of Indian immigrants business practices prior to, and during business operation. There are strong reasons to assume that Indian immigrants' also faced difficulties and challenges related to business organization, operations and personal preferences in their entrepreneurial journey. It can be concluded that hindrances and obstacles resulted mainly from lack of facilities provided by the state to learn Polish language. These state-run institutions or centers should provide free of cost language classes to foreigners on a large scale. Some other major reasons of difficulties faced are insufficiency of formal financing system for immigrants, particularly for newcomers and fresh entrepreneurs, and insufficiency of supporting programs in Poland such as business training, business services, supporting financial scheme (e.g. tax exemption).

### **The Emergent Theory Impact**

The uniqueness of the current study findings is represented by the use of principles, stages and guidelines of grounded theory to understand the Indian immigrants' entrepreneurial

activities in the Poland. The grounded theory allows a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon under study rather than merely identifying individual variables traditionally collected using the survey method.

The results of this study infer that economic incentives, perceived and experienced pull factors, individual characteristics, cultural background (particularly micro cultures such as Gujarati and Punjabi), language, the access to ethnic networks and resources and supporting institutions/schemes are the most influential factors that form and shape perception and career choice of Indian immigrants' toward entrepreneurship in Poland. Thus, the emergent theory suggests that it is essential for the government and immigrant-related institutions in Poland to consider the role of these factors in their policies, regulations, schemes, and initiatives to assist the economic and social integration process of Indian immigrants in Poland. Besides these factors, they also need to consider other factors as well that are listed by the interviewees regardless of the low importance explained by the extent and frequently. These factors are frequently reported by similar studies within other social settings.

Further, the current theory concludes that many variables and factors within the study are multi-effect, given the multi-aspect and multilevel nature of the entrepreneurship phenomenon and distinct individual characteristics and backgrounds of Indian immigrants in Poland. A combination of these variables and factors explains the Indian immigrants' entrepreneurial activities phenomenon in Poland. The current theory highlights the dynamics of all these variables and factors on Indian immigrants' entrepreneurial activities rather than the influence of just one or a few variables individually. These variables and factors are presented in chapter four, specifically through 20 theoretical propositions .

Finally, compared with similar studies, the core category's concept focuses on the essential theoretical concept that comprises and explains all other emergent concepts. Such a tool facilitates a clear understanding of the underlying phenomenon because understanding by the core category implies an understanding of all other categories identified by the research. Consequently, suggesting more foreign/business-friendly policies and relevant regulations, schemes, and initiatives in Poland (e.g. simplifying procedures, providing information in/adopting English language as an additional language for documentation concerning business formation and operation by foreigners, supporting schemes) is essential to build an entrepreneurial ecosystem and attract other resident Indians in Poland to enter the entrepreneurship path and contribute more to Poland's economy. This statement is supported by the observed low rate of entrepreneurial activities among Indian immigrants in Poland. The fact that a majority of Indian immigrants in Poland are highly educated (mostly STEM and management graduates), Indian entrepreneurs are mainly operating traditional main street businesses in Poland (e.g. neighborhood stores, restaurants, professional services, and other local businesses) rather than high-tech or innovation-orientated businesses, relying significantly on their ethnic networks and resources. This fact explains the insufficiency of dedicated efforts by the government and immigrant-related institutions in Poland to motivate

and encourage foreigners, particularly Indians, to enter and develop entrepreneurial activities similar to their counterparts in western European countries and the U.S.

### **The Emergent Theory Statement**

Initial reasons for migration of Indians, particularly economic reasons, as well as a series of “pull” and “push” factors that act as drivers influenced by individual characteristics and local and national culture values, led to Indian immigrants’ intention toward entrepreneurship in Poland. General prosperity and socio-economic development of Poland, particularly Warsaw, as well as access to/availability of ethnic networks and resources and supporting institutions in Poland, intensified this intention toward entrepreneurship. To address this intention, Indian immigrants came up with strategies formulated on the basis of their career experience and past knowledge, learning activities in Poland, personality traits, social capital, surrounding business environment opportunities, and entrepreneurial alertness to identify, recognize, and discover entrepreneurial and business opportunities in Poland. Once Indian immigrants identified existing and new opportunities, they took a series of actions to exploit these opportunities and fulfill their intention toward entrepreneurship, both prior to start-up and during business operation and development in Poland. The set of difficulties faced and challenges encountered also form an integral part of the entrepreneurial journey of Indian immigrant entrepreneurs.

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