

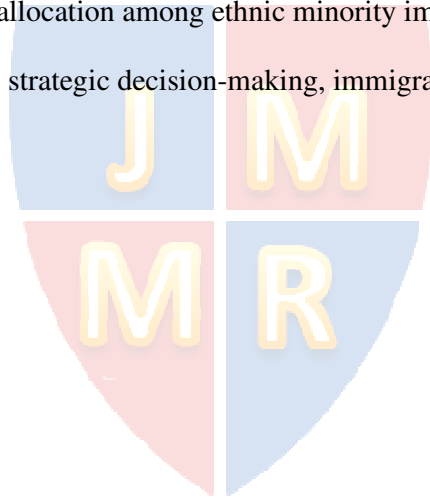
Phenomenological Study of Ethnic Minority Immigrant Entrepreneurs' Lived Experiences

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The purpose of this research is to phenomenologically explore the lived experiences of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs as they strived to employ crisis leadership when making strategic decisions to allocate resources during and after the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. The central research topic of this research is entrepreneurship in the American economy. The central research question for the study is: How do ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs experience crisis leadership in the strategic decision-making process of resource allocation during a business crisis? The transcendental phenomenological method will be used to explore the lived experiences during crisis leadership in the strategic decision-making process of resource allocation among ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs.

Keywords: crisis leadership, strategic decision-making, immigrant entrepreneurs



INTRODUCTION

Despite the increasing awareness of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs' economic contributions, research remains insufficient (Sequeira & Rasheed, 2006). Additionally, more research is needed on the topic of crisis leadership (Schoenberg, 2004). Therefore, this transcendental phenomenological study's significance lies in filling the gap in research on ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, crisis leadership, and strategic resource allocation during crises by employing. Small businesses owned by immigrants contributed \$4.4 billion in earnings to the state of Texas' economy in 2011 and accounted for almost a fifth of total small-business revenues in Texas (Beeson et al., 2014). Therefore, contributing to research on ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs can help understand a valuable demographic group within Texas (where US immigrants often live and work) (Wadhwa et al., 2012).

This research can (a) provide valuable information about the factors that support entrepreneurial success such as decision-making and resource allocation, (b) address the gap in research by exploring factors that shape ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs in terms of their crisis leadership, and (c) provide research results on a group within U.S society that has been understudied in past decades. Ethnic minority workers have a high propensity toward business enterprise and contribute significantly to economic development (Basu, 2011). By exploring ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, this study gives other researchers insights into the essence of crisis leadership during a time of a business crisis, which will add to the existing body of literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2005) and provide an understanding of factors and lived experiences that affect their success after a business crisis.

According to Kumar and Krueger (2013), research on entrepreneurs should focus on factors that support their entrepreneurial success, which remains undiscovered. With proper empirical validation of entrepreneurial research, new theoretical models can be developed for use as guides for researchers and policymakers interested in immigrant entrepreneurs' role in the U.S. economy. This study can provide an understanding of the situational elements that foster the crisis leadership of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs in times of a business crisis and can inform a framework for policy development and practice or guide future research. The information can be used to bolster the successful growth of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, which can be valuable to the U.S economy.

The knowledge gathered from the study can be crucial to minority entrepreneurship, immigration policy, and global businesses in creating programs to create entrepreneurship across the United States and the world. The knowledge is essential due to ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs' role in the U.S society and economy. According to Yallapragada and Bhuiyan (2011), "there are nearly 27 million small business firms in the United States, and these are the strength of our economy. They account for 39 percent of the United States' gross national product, create two out of every three new jobs and produce two and a half times as many innovations per employee as do large business firms" (p.117). Additionally, according to Ghina, Simatupang, and Gustomo (2015), countries develop faster if they have high quality, creative, and innovative entrepreneurs that put new ideas into practical action; therefore, it is necessary to foster the creation of entrepreneurship both in the U.S and the world to benefit from the economic contribution of entrepreneurship creation and success.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to phenomenologically explore the lived experiences of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs as they strived to employ crisis leadership when making

strategic decisions to allocate resources during and after the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. Specifically, the current research seeks to answer the following two central questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs as they employ crisis leadership in the strategic decision-making process during the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis?
2. How do ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs describe crisis leadership during the strategic decisions process to allocate resources during the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis?

Finally, this qualitative study was guided by the following research objectives (tasks the researcher completes to obtain data to answer the research question):

1. To conduct semi-structured interviews with a sample of foreign-born ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs living in the Austin Texas region who led their business through the 2017 Hurricane Harvey,
2. To analyze the transcribed interview data to discern the essence of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs' lived experiences with crisis leadership when making strategic decisions to allocate resources pursuant to the 2017 Hurricane Harvey in Austin, Texas.

Literature Review

The theoretical framework helps to lead the inquiry, define characteristics, influence data analysis, and is fundamental to the quest for ongoing knowledge development (Fox, Gardner, & Osborne, 2015). Theoretical frameworks provide a perspective to examine a topic and explore specific theories about aspects of existence (Fox, Gardner, & Osborne, 2015). In framing the theoretical perspective for crisis leadership's role in the strategic decision-making process of resource allocation among ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, several theories, models, and concepts were applicable. Each establishes contextual boundaries for the study methods and assumptions. The theories and constructs most applicable for this study were Schoenberg's (2004) crisis leadership model and Vroom and Yetton's (1973) decision-making theory of leadership.

The current study is grounded in two theories: crisis leadership and the other to strategic decision making. Schoenberg's (2004) model focuses on leadership during a business crisis, and the Vroom-Yetton model (1973) handles different situations or contingencies (in this study, crises). Situational leadership theories are very applicable to the study of crisis incident management (Schoenberg, 2005a). These two theories accommodate the assumption that quickly changing local conditions require theories that relate both to leaders fulfilling specific roles and having the traits and decision-making process knowledge necessary to lead in a business crisis event (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2006; Livingston, 2016). The experiences of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs call for closer scrutiny using theoretical approaches that accommodate strategic resource allocation decisions during a business crisis.

Crisis Leadership

The crisis leadership model created by Allan Schoenberg will be used in this study. In the model, Schoenberg (2004) identified the characteristics required for a leader to be effective during a business crisis. The characteristics identified included the ability to react, communication skills, organizational values, and flexibility (Beronich, 2016; Schoenberg, 2004). Schoenberg (2004) suggested that organizations should develop leadership skills and identify highly effective communicators to lead during a business crisis and focus on the skills and expertise to succeed as a crisis leader. Baldoni (2003) theorized that

communications are the core competency in leadership and dealing with a business crisis. Additionally, Baldoni (2004) further expanded his research in which he suggested that successful leaders must adapt their behaviors to manage change and conflict.

Schoenberg's (2004) crisis leadership model comprises four fundamental components: external influences, pillars, foundation, and personal attributes. The external influences include the following: information, external conscience, preparation, and experience. According to Schoenberg, the four external influences are essential to a leader's ability to lead a business during a business crisis. Concerning information, Schoenberg (2004) stated that information relates to the leader having ongoing two-way access to information, such as data related to the business crisis and media stories. External conscience is an individual outside of the organization, which the crisis leader uses as a neutral advisor. The external conscience provides the crisis leader with two-way communication and acts as a sounding board for the crisis leader. Experience and preparation are what the crisis leader brings to the organization concerning previous leadership experience and training in dealing with crises (Beronich, 2016; Schoenberg, 2004).

The pillars are authenticity and influence. These are crisis leader actions and behaviors in which authenticity is described as making sure that the crisis leader's actions are aligned with their words and making sure the actions are meaningful (Beronich, 2016; Schoenberg, 2004). Influence is an attempt by the crisis leader to control messages to evoke desired outcomes positively. Schoenberg's model's foundation includes communications from the leader, and the leader must possess the skill to deliver both bad and good news and continuously update all target audiences. Additionally, Schoenberg's model includes personal attributes and values, which are key value sets that the crisis leader should possess (Beronich, 2016; Schoenberg, 2004).

Finally, the model includes trust, which the crisis leader earned and must be sustained by the crisis leader to effectively lead during a business crisis. Schoenberg (2004) believed that the crisis leader's ability to use the pillars of authenticity and influence adequately could be critical concerning earning people's trust in and outside the organization. The next concept in the study is strategic decision-making.

Strategic Decision-Making

Strategic decision-making theory is also paramount in this study, as the study explores strategic decision-making, the process of resource allocation concerning crisis leadership. The Vroom-Yetton (1973) normative model of leadership behavior was selected due to the existing validity of the model which has been gathered in the field using self-reports (Vroom & Yetton, 1973; Vroom & Jago, 1978; Margenson & Glube, 1979) and, in a more rigorous manner, in the laboratory setting (Field, 1982). Field (1982) conducted research using four-person groups (one leader, two subordinates, and an observer) solving five decision-making problems. The leader was given a randomly selected order of five decision styles to emulate in solving five separate decision problems. The observer was used to validate the utilization of the appropriate style. Field found that leaders could demonstrate the range of decision behaviors observed by Vroom and Yetton. Additionally, by using a decision style within the available set predicted by Vroom and Yetton (1973), leaders arrived at more favorable decisions (49%) than when using a style outside the possible set (36%).

In more recent times, in the study conducted by Gupta and Sangeeta (2013), researchers found that according to Vroom-Yetton's (1973) normative model of leadership behavior, the number of elements within a situation influences the effectiveness of the decision procedure based on the significance of the decision quality and acceptance; the volume of relevant information possessed by the leader and subordinates; the probability that

followers will accept an autocratic decision or work together in trying to make an adequate decision if allowed to take part; the amount of disagreement among subordinates concerning their preferred alternatives (2013).

The Vroom-Yetton (1973) model provides an optimal decision process for different types of problem situations, with the range of decision-making procedures extending from autocratic to participative in the degree to which decision-making power is shared with subordinates (Heilman, Cage, Hornstein, & Herschlag, 1984; Duffy, 1985). The Vroom-Yetton (1973) model was selected for the study for various reasons. First, the Vroom-Yetton (1973) model is explicitly prescriptive; therefore, no extrapolation from theory to prescription is necessary. In other words, the model provides a decision outcome that does not require interpretation.

Secondly, evidence for the validity of the model has been gathered both in the field using self-reports (Vroom & Yetton, 1973; Vroom & Jago, 1978; and Margenson & Glube, 1979; Meyer, 2013) and, in a more rigorous manner, in the laboratory (Field, 1982; Auer-Rizzi & Reber, 2013). Additionally, resource allocation is a critical phase of the decision-making process, especially on entrepreneurs, where performance strongly depends on resource capabilities (Certa, Enea, Galante, & Manuela La Fata, 2009). Scholars have explored how critical resources, such as financial capital by Stein (1997) and managerial attention by Ocasio (1997), are allocated within firms; however, we still know surprisingly little about the allocation of resources (Keller, 2015).

Studying resource allocations can contribute valuable insights to ongoing conversations about the changing nature of internal resource allocation and its importance within the organization, leading to improvements in strategic decision-making about resource allocation (Keller, 2015). The quality and suitability of resource management significantly impact organizations' triumph or failure (Yoshimura, Fujimi, Izui & Nishiwaki, 2006). For example, Koshijima and Umeda (2001) formulated a method to allocate resources to minimize project execution costs. The authors highlight how the traditional approach of project management does not consider resource factors.

Schoenberg's (2004) crisis leadership model and Vroom and Yetton's (1973) decision-making theory of leadership focus the study. The success of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs calls for closer scrutiny using research approaches that consider the multiple cultural contexts in which they are embedded. The phenomenological approach employed in the study accomplishes this by exploring, through the lived experiences of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, the role of crisis leadership relative to the strategic decision-making process. By using the lived experiences, the study captures the multiple cultural contexts among ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs. Further discussion of these areas is included in Chapter 2.

For clarification, employing theory to interpret transcendental phenomenological findings is an accepted convention (Waters, 2017), but she cautioned researchers not to "over-interpret from a pre-conceived theory [because this] might seriously alter the meaning of the experience." The researcher will remain cognizant of this caveat, which is akin to not going beyond the participants' words, a fundamental convention of any qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2013).

Research Method

There is a lack of recent studies on contemporary ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurship, which also extends to a lack of qualitative research on this topic. Instead, researchers have examined the issue of ethnic minority business from a different methodological perspective. Specifically, Ma et al. (2013) found that large-sample

quantitative studies dominated previous academic research about ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs. These empirical studies revealed much about the broad structure of ethnic minority sub-economies. However, they did not include insights into the lived experiences of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs. The lived experiences are critical to the current study since this research aims to phenomenologically explore how ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs employ and describe crisis leadership in the strategic decision-making to allocate resources during the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis.

Research Design

The research design refers to the overall strategy that the researcher chooses to clearly and logically assimilate the study's different components, thereby ensuring that the study adequately addresses the research problem (Creswell, 2013). The researcher used the four philosophical assumptions that underlie all research, including qualitative research, which are ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology. Additionally, the researcher showed how these elements were implemented in the study. The first element addressed is ontology.

The ontological issue relates to the nature of reality and its characteristics. When qualitative research is conducted, researchers embrace the idea of multiple realities. Different researchers embrace different realities, as do the individuals being studied and the readers of a qualitative study. When studying individuals, researchers conduct a study to report these multiple realities (Creswell, 2013). The current study embraced the ontological assumption by providing evidence of multiple realities of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs. It highlighted the themes generated using different individuals' actual words to present their different perspectives of the phenomenon being explored.

The second philosophical assumption is the epistemological assumption (Creswell, 2013). When conducting a qualitative study, "the researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied" (Creswell, 2013, p.20). Essentially, "this is how knowledge is known through the subjective experiences of people. In short, the researcher tries to minimize the distance or object of separateness between himself or herself and those being researched" (Creswell, 2013, p.20). During the current study, the researcher established a relationship with all participants in the study, listened attentively during the interview process, and provided an environment that allowed them to feel comfortable and fostered trust throughout the interview process. Each step of the study was designed to develop a rapport with the study participants.

Thirdly, according to Creswell (2013), within qualitative research, the researcher brings their values into the study and makes them known, which is the axiological assumption that characterizes qualitative studies. In a qualitative study, "the inquirers admit the value-laden nature of the study and actively report their values and biases as well as the value-laden nature of information gathered from the field" (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). As a result, in the current qualitative study, the researcher served as the primary instrument device. An advantage of this strategy, which is known as confirmability (addressed below under Trustworthiness: Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability), is that the researcher responded and adapted immediately, understood the nonverbal communication, processed data immediately, clarified questions with participants to ensure accuracy, and followed up on unexpected responses.

While the researcher had biases that could impact the study, the researcher used the process of epoche as described by Moustakas (1994) consistently throughout the research process to articulate and reflected upon biases and mitigated the impact on data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2002). The step by step process used for epoche is explained in the Data Analysis section of Chapter 3.

The final philosophical assumption identified by Creswell (2013) is methodology. The methodology is “characterized as inductive, emerging, and shaped the researcher’s experience in collecting and analyzing the data” (Creswell, 2013, p.21). As a result, the study information was collected through in-depth, open-ended interviews that utilized prompt questions, when necessary, to elicit descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). This process was inductive and emerging since it allowed the researcher to capture rich and in-depth information from and about the participant's reality, which moved the researcher towards identifying the experience's meanings and essences. Further discussion about how the research design was incorporated into the study is addressed in the Data Collection section of Chapter 3.

Transcendental Phenomenology Design

For clarification, there are multiple types of phenomenology, ranging from naturalistic, generative, existential, and generative to genetic, hermeneutical, and realistic (Smith, 2013). Van Manen (2011) added ethical, experimental, and linguistic phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology was chosen for this study because of its unique perspective on the research question. The phenomenological approach is best suited for research where it is crucial to understand numerous individuals’ shared experiences to develop practices or policies or develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon's features (Creswell, 2013). The specific focus of phenomenological research is the explication, narrative presentation, and interpretation of lived experiences' meaning (DePoy & Gitlin, 2011). Because phenomenology is focused on meaning and the meaning of the experience expressed from first-person accounts of those living the phenomenon, the research design for such studies is often entirely different from the more traditional qualitative methodology and attendant methods (Waters, 2017). Such is the case for this research.

Utilizing the phenomenological qualitative design allowed the researcher to obtain insights into the lived reality and perceptions of the ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs leading during a business crisis, especially as this leadership pertained to the strategic decision-making process of resource allocation. The study specifically used Clark Moustakas’ (1994) transcendental phenomenology design.

Theoretical Aspects of Transcendental Phenomenology

Four primary theoretical constructs underpinned transcendental phenomenology: epoche, noesis, noema, and noetic-noematic (Moustakas, 1994) and taken together; they informed the research design of this study.

Epoche. As noted, epoche entails suspending judgment about the existence or not of the external world. Researchers consciously identify and then set aside current beliefs, thoughts, and judgments about the phenomenon. Epoche is Greek, to stay away from or abstain (Moustakas, 1994). Blum (2012) described epoche as “the suspension of this natural attitude” (p. 1032), “allowing things, events and people to enter into consciousness, and to look and see them again, as if for the first time” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). Through this process, researchers can view the phenomenon being studied with new eyes “in a naïve and completely open manner, [suspending] everything that interferes with a fresh vision” (p.86).

Repeatedly and continually viewing the phenomenon through new eyes lets researchers “perceive and receive that which is being communicated without tainting its purity with preconceived beliefs, thoughts, and judgments” (Sheehan, 2014, p. 11). Said another way, using a tree as an example, upon perceiving a tree, a person will describe it exactly as seen during that act of seeing it from that point of view. Change views, and one

changes what one sees. When a researcher does this repeatedly while analyzing a data set, they exercise eidetic reduction, made possible due to epoche (Moustakas, 1994).

Noema, noesis, and noetic-noematic. Noema is the observable phenomenon and is textually rich (e.g., the tree). It is that which is thought about, perceived, or judged by someone. Noema ascribes meaning to what is seen, felt, or thought. Each person experiences a noema differently. Indeed, noesis is the internal structure/structuring that drives a person's interpretation of the noema. It is 'how a person experiences the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Sheehan, 2014). The "noetic-noematic schema represents the connection between the individual and the world" (Sheehan, 2014, p. 12). This noetic framework produces noematic meaning (Sheehan, 2014). Fundamentally, phenomenology is concerned with descriptions of experiences, not explanations or analysis. The phenomenologist is interested in the meaning of what is being described by people living the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

The current study incorporated epoche, noema, noesis, and noetic-noematic through the process of bracketing. "Bracketing is a methodological device of phenomenological inquiry that requires deliberate putting aside one's own belief about the phenomenon under investigation or what one already knows about the subject before and throughout the phenomenological investigation" (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013, p.1). As a result, bracketing was incorporated into the current study via the semi-structured interview technique. The semi-structured interview technique allowed the researcher to use an interview schedule but only as a guide for the interview, allowing the researcher to probe interesting areas that arose from participants' interests or concerns (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). To ensure that the freedom was maintained, the interview schedule comprised open-ended questions that do not lead the participants about their situation and only asked questions for clarification or elaboration of what the participants were saying.

The process provided thick and rich descriptions of participants' authentic lived experiences of the phenomenon. The approach was less interpretive than other qualitative methods because researchers consider descriptions of the phenomenon as more critical than their analytical interpretations of the data (Moustakas, 1994). The next section of the study discusses the major transcendental phenomenology processes and how they are incorporated into the study.

Major Processes of Transcendental Phenomenology

Transcendental phenomenology is different in that it has a specific, stepped strategy that helps researchers identify and set aside biases, stereotypes, and preconceived notions of both the phenomenon and the participants (Coy, Lambert, & Miller, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). The research design employed the four major transcendental phenomenology processes: epoche (already described), phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. The following section introduces each of the three remaining major transcendental phenomenology processes since epoche was introduced under the study's Theoretical Aspects of Transcendental Phenomenology.

Phenomenological reduction. Phenomenological researchers seek to find the essence of a lived experience recounted by those living it. Researchers can take in narrative form, oral reports, observations, aesthetic and artistic expressions, and artifacts (Waters, 2017). As they work with these data and put away their prejudices, judgments, and biases, they move through a process of reduction, so-called because it leads back to the source of the meaning and existence of the experience. "Because it is a never-ending process, the approach of this unlimited possibility for discovery [of meaning and essence] is called horizontalization [emphasis added]" (King, 2017, p. 3).

Imaginative variation. Grounded in the concept of epoche (i.e., suspending judgment), researchers vary their approaches to working with the data. They can change frames of reference, change perspectives, shift moods, or employ polarities and reversals, all to ensure a fresh vision of and lens on the data. This process is called imaginative variation, by which researchers vary the ways they imagine what the data mean (King, 2017; Moustakas, 1994). In effect, the transcendental reduction is the moment when the researcher withdraws from “the natural attitude and from the everyday world [and] the constitution of [what the data mean] is the moment of returning to the world of consciousness [via reflection and intuition]” (van Manen, 2011). Doing this repeatedly from different stances constitutes imaginative variation.

To incorporate the processes of phenomenological reduction and imaginative variation, the researcher repeatedly looked at the phenomenon from different perspectives, frames of references, and so on (when using epoche), which reduced the information about the experience to its essence (King, 2017; Martirano, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). Using Moustakas’ (1994) suggestion of horizontalization, the transcripts were read and re-read to obtain a more in-depth understanding. After multiple readings of each transcript, the notes and post-interview thoughts became the thematic coding foundation.

Synthesis. Once significant statements or quotes from the data set were identified through the reduction process (to be discussed in more detail under Data Analysis), the researcher carefully examined the identified statements (deleting those irrelevant to the topic) and combined them to create themes, a process called clustering. The researcher mainly took the implicit meanings and made them explicit with thematic analysis (Moustakas, 1994; Waters, 2017).

From clustering, the researcher developed textual descriptions (what was experienced) and structural descriptions (how it was experienced, in what context) of the phenomenon, both for individuals and the entire sample (Creswell, 2007; Martirano, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). After the textual descriptions were considered, and additional meanings were sought from different perspectives (i.e., imaginative variation), the researcher developed the structural textures (i.e., the contexts), resulting in the essential structures of the phenomenon (Moerer-Urdahl-Creswell, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). The individual textual descriptions and structural descriptions were combined, and composite textual descriptions and structural descriptions were also combined in Chapter 4 of the study.

In effect, the researcher “intuitively-reflectively integrated [these two types of] descriptions to develop a synthesis of the meanings and essences of the experiences” of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, all the while suspending judgments (King, 2017, p. 5). The analysis’s focus was “a deep understanding of the meaning of the description” (Waters, 2017).

SAMPLE

Population

Within the United States, the number of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs has increased rapidly over the last 20 years (Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 2016). According to the American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau, 13 percent of the US population is foreign-born, totaling 43,738,901 people. The foreign-born population includes anyone who is not a U.S. citizen or a U.S. national at birth. This includes individuals who indicated they were a U.S. citizen by naturalization or not a U.S. citizen. The data also estimates that 84.4% of the foreign-born population falls within the 18 to 65 age range. In the United States, immigrants from Latin America make up the most significant segment (51%) of

the population with 22 million foreign-born people, followed by Asia with 13 million (30.8%), Europe with 5 million (10.9%), Africa with 2 million (4.9%), North America with 800,000 (1.8%), and Oceania with 200,000 (0.6%) people (United States Census Bureau, 2017; Wadhwa et al., 2012).

According to U.S. Census Bureau, as of 2016, 166,877 foreign-born individuals were living in Austin, Texas. Closely matching the national pattern noted above, the population percentages were 56.9% Latin American (Latin America, Caribbean, Central America, South America), 29.8% Asian, 7.1% European, 3.7% African, 2.3% North American, and 0.1% from the Oceania region (Australia, New Zealand and Fiji). Concerning business ownership, and according to the U.S. Census Bureau 2015 Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs, there were a total of 370,000 businesses in Texas with 68,000 owned by foreign-born individuals. Specifically, in Austin, Texas, there were 35,000 businesses with 4,463 businesses owned by foreign-born individuals (American FactFinder – Results, 2017).

In a general sense, this population satisfies the study's demographics based on ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, defined as an individual who migrates to another country, has different cultural traditions from the main population, and owns a business. However, other criteria are also required to satisfy the purpose of the study. The next section of the study highlights the additional criteria used in the study to select study participants.

Sample Criteria

The Sample Criteria section discusses the parameters needed to qualify as a participant for the study. The researcher selected participants from the population who adhered to the following six criteria. To determine if the participants met the sample criteria, the researcher assessed each participant using a qualification questionnaire. Demographic questions were asked of each participant before the interview questions were posed. Eight such questions enabled the researcher to collect information relevant to the study inclusion criteria, ensuring they could answer the research questions and qualify to participate in the study. Participants from different nationalities were recruited, participating in the leadership functions within their small business in Austin, Texas. The sample criteria and how the researcher determined if the participant qualified for the study are discussed below. The process used to administer the Qualifying Questionnaire is documented in the Data collection section.

First, each participant must be considered to be an ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneur who is defined as someone who belongs to an ethnic group, has immigrated into a country where she or he is now part of the minority (different from the majority of the public) and owns a business (Azmat & Zutshi, 2012). Additionally, for this study, only small businesses were included. The Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy defines a small business as one with fewer than 500 employees (Small Business Administration, n.d.). Therefore, to be considered for the study, each business must employ less than 500 employees. Based on the sample participants' responses, the small businesses within the study averaged 13.5 employees, ranging from 1 to 60.

Second, each participant must also have experienced a business crisis and engaged in crisis leadership. A business crisis is "any issue, problem or disruption which triggers adverse stakeholder reactions that can impact the organization's reputation, business, and financial strength" (ICM Crisis Management Firm, 2017, p.1). Additionally, crisis leadership is defined as the capability to lead a business under extreme pressure. As previously mentioned, the study's purpose is to phenomenologically explore the lived experiences of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs as they strived to employ crisis leadership when making strategic decisions to allocate resources during and after the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis (i.e., business crisis). As a result, each participant must have led their business through the 2017

Hurricane Harvey crisis. The participant also must be responsible for allocating resources (i.e., physical, human, and organizational assets used by a firm to develop, manufacture, and deliver products or services to its customers) within the company during the business crisis.

All seven participants indicated via the Qualifying Questionnaire (Question 6 of the Qualifying Questionnaire) that they were responsible for deciding how company resources were used during Hurricane Harvey. Each participant also indicated that they held leadership positions within the business as owners and general managers (Question 5 of the Qualifying Questionnaire). Lastly, all participants were responsible for their businesses' day-to-day operations.

Third, they must speak English as a first language or must be able to communicate fluently using English if it is not their first language. The participants' ability to communicate fluently using English was assessed using a Qualification Questionnaire for the study. This criterion allowed for adequate communication during the recruitment, interview, and data verification processes.

Language challenges. As with any research using a foreign-born sample, challenges related to language were present. Language could affect the trustworthiness of a qualitative study; researchers must address issues related to language and communication (Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2015; Hennink, 2008). Specifically, the study's trustworthiness can be affected by nuances in a language, leading to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the participant's experiences when conducting research using an international-based sample (Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2015) and when conducting transcendental phenomenology (Martirano, 2016).

To address the issues identified, the researcher established agreed-upon denotations for key terms in the study since specific words commonly used in the US could be interpreted differently in other linguistic and cultural contexts (Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2015). The researcher maintained open communication lines to negotiate meanings and modify definitions to fit the study's context. Specifically, the researcher asked for clarification during the interview if phrases or words were unclear during the interview process. After the interviews were transcribed, a copy of that interview transcription was delivered in person to each study participant. This way, any issues related to language could be addressed and clarified early in the transcription process to ensure the accuracy of the information collected.

Additionally, based on the Qualification Questionnaire, all seven participants indicated that they were all adequately able to communicate fluently using English. Additionally, two of the seven study participants spoke English as a first language. Fourth, study participants were not limited to a specific ethnic minority immigrant group or business industry. This criterion allowed for the diverse selection of study participants from the various ethnic minority immigrant groups and various industries present in Austin, Texas (Martirano, 2016).

Fifth, during the sampling process, the researcher selected participants from different industries to ensure that the business type does not influence the results. The procedure helped protect the study's trustworthiness and ensured the results were based on crisis leadership instead of the type of business. Specifically, the study's transferability was protected since thick descriptions were obtained during the interview process from ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs from various industries (See Data Collection section of the study). Additionally, the sample was selected primarily from specific industries and supply chains (i.e., the system of organizations, people, activities, information, and resources involved in moving a product or service from supplier to customer) that were significantly affected by Hurricane Harvey. According to reports, the trucking, oil, and energy, automotive, food, and retail industries were significantly impacted by Hurricane Harvey (Cohn, 2017; Henderson, 2017; Stein, 2017). As a result, the sample frame comprised of

participants from seven countries. Businesses included food, retail, automotive and transportation, oil, and gas.

In summary, the study required that each study participant must be an ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneur that experienced the Hurricane Harvey crisis and led their business through the crisis. They must also speak English as a first language or be able to communicate fluently using English. Participants were not limited to a specific ethnic minority immigrant group or business industry. All seven participants were assessed using the Qualifying Questionnaire. Additionally, the responses to the Qualifying Questionnaire. Based on the information provided above, the seven participants met the researcher-established study-inclusion criteria. The next section of the study sample size was used within the study.

Sample Size

The Sample size section provides a sample range for the study and discusses reasons, based on research, as to why the sample range was selected. Qualitative studies require smaller sample sizes, as do transcendental phenomenological studies (Martirano, 2016). When determining qualitative sample size, researchers must ensure the ability to gain the depth of data from a specific population that can provide insight into the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2005). Qualitative research, including transcendental phenomenology, often follows the concept of saturation when determining sample size. Saturation is met when collecting new data fails to provide additional insight into the issue under investigation (Martirano, 2016). However, the saturation point can be challenging to identify, and researchers must often provide an expected sample size before conducting the research (Mason, 2010).

Baker and Edwards (2012) recommended that five to 12 participants offer valuable and detailed insight into a particular phenomenon, specifically when the population under review is not readily available and when the research focuses on individuals. Polkinghorne (1989) concurred that transcendental phenomenological studies could be conducted anywhere from five to 25 people if saturation occurs (i.e., the point at which answers become redundant). He cautioned that the sample size should not be so large as to be overwhelming, compromising the quality of data and analysis (Martirano, 2016). Following these recommendations, a sample size of five to 12 participants was used, reflecting the expected availability of participants who fit the study criteria, the ability to recruit appropriate participants, and the capacity to achieve saturation.

Sampling Protocol

Appreciating that there are 4,463 businesses in Austin, Texas, owned by foreign-born individuals, the researcher used purposeful sampling for this study. Using the six selection criteria noted above, the researcher purposefully chose five to 12 small businesses through business contacts from four Chambers of Commerce who were asked to identify participants willing to participate in the study.

Purposeful sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell, 2011; Patton, 2002). Specifically, the criterion sampling strategy was used, since according to Creswell (2013), the strategy “works well when individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon” (p.155). Therefore, each business contact was instructed to identify two potential study participants based on the criteria established in the study's Sample Criteria section.

Instrumentation for Interviews

Data from participants was collected through in-depth, open-ended, 40 to 50-minute interviews that utilized prompt questions when necessary to elicit more in-depth descriptions. The interviews were recorded using a voice recorder. The researcher also took field notes during the interviews. The notes took the form of phrases, gestures, and non-verbal communication to describe their experiences and were utilized as reference points for any follow-up prompts (Moustakas, 1994).

Descriptive Information

Describe the physical setting.

Describe the participants and their roles in the setting.

Describe the meaning of what was observed from the perspectives of the participants.

Record exact quotes or close approximations of comments that relate directly to the purpose of the study.

Describe any impact you might have had on the situation you observed.

Reflective Information

Note ideas, impressions, thoughts, and/or any criticisms about what was observed.

Include any unanswered questions or concerns that have arisen from analyzing the observation data.

Clarify points and/or correct mistakes and misunderstandings in other parts of field notes.

Include insights about what you have observed and speculate as to why you believe a specific phenomenon occurred.

Record any thoughts that you may have regarding any future observations.

Moustakas (1994) explained that open-ended questions are the best approach when utilizing phenomenological interviews because this interviewing style allows the researcher to understand the lived experiences of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs fully and allows each participant to share their thoughts and ideas on their experiences. Open-ended questions are intended to encourage full, meaningful answers using the participant's knowledge, experience, and feelings. The questions follow the tenets of phenomenological inquiry, focusing on the 'essence of the experience.' To that end, most questions focus on noema, noesis, and noetic-noematic; that is, what was experienced, how in what context, and what meaning people assigned to the experience. Martirano (2016) clarified that "transcendental phenomenological research begins at the point of noesis. Noema is intentional but cannot be influenced by researchers" (p. 62). All inquiries in this study will be formulated and analyzed free from preconceptions and bias (Martirano, 2016).

The researcher facilitated the interviews as this allowed control over the interview process and the questions (Creswell, 2013). A two-part protocol was used. The first part entailed the selection interview. The second part contained the actual interview questions.

DATA COLLECTION

Trustworthiness: Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit that a research study's trustworthiness is essential to evaluate the value of the research. According to Veal (2011) and Bryman (2012), trustworthiness consists of four different components — credibility: the validity of the findings; transferability: the applicability of the findings in other contexts; dependability: reliability of the findings at another time; and confirmability: objectivity of the researcher while carrying out the research. As a result, the researcher used several steps to reinforce the trustworthiness of the study.

Credibility is determined by how believable the study is (Patton, 1999). To ensure the study's credibility, the data collected was tested with study participants who provided the

original information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this can be completed both formally and informally as chances for member checks may become available during observation and conversation. Within the current study, to ensure the findings' credibility, each participant's individual textual description was returned to each of the participants for member checking. In other words, the participants were able to check their opinions about whether the findings were in line with their experiences. Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit that this is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility. Additionally, Creswell and Miller (2000) state that "researchers may have participants view the raw data (e.g., transcriptions or observational field notes) and comment on their accuracy" (p.127).

Transferability is the quality of research that allows it to be applied in other areas and informs the research indicating the extent to which the findings from this study can be generalized or applied to other populations through thick descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe a thick description to achieve a type of external validity. By describing a phenomenon in sufficient detail, researchers can evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In the current study, thick descriptions were obtained during the study's data collection phase and are outlined Data Collection segment of the study.

Dependability looks at the data's consistency regarding another researcher being able to follow the decision trail regarding the theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the study and arrive at comparable, but not contradictory conclusions (Sandelowski, 1986). Additionally, confirmability lies with the researcher's own biases, experience, and training (Patton, 1999). Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe confirmability as the degree to which the study's findings are molded by the participants and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest.

As a result, dependability and confirmability were ensured through external auditing. In the external audit, a peer experienced in qualitative research was involved in reviewing and checking different aspects of the inquiry and identifying areas of bias (Polit & Beck, 2012). Specifically, the peer evaluator reviewed the documentation produced at each stage of the study's data analysis stage. Debriefing sessions were conducted after the interview transcription process and each step in the data analysis (i.e., listing and preliminary groupings, reduction and elimination, clustering and categorization, validation, etc.) segment of the study.

Data Triangulation. For clarification, member checking also ensures that data triangulation occurs within the study; therefore, validity (i.e., measured what was intended to be measured). (a) Participants' interviews were recorded and transcribed. (b) These transcripts were returned to each participant for verification (i.e., member checked for validation). (c) The researcher took notes during each interview, and these notes became part of the triangulated data set. Data triangulation minimizes subjectivity in a transcendental phenomenological study (Bloor, 1997) and can be achieved using two or more data sources (Denzin, 1978). Also, findings from the interviews and data analysis process were reviewed via peer debriefing to ensure the findings' trustworthiness and credibility. Using another researcher's experience and expertise in data verification is another form of triangulation used to verify data in the study (Shepherd & Nelson, 2012). The final form of triangulation that was employed was the use of thick descriptions. Creswell (2007) states that thick descriptions "create verisimilitude and produces for the readers the feeling that they experience (the readers), or perhaps could experience, the events described" (p. 194). The next section of the study discusses how the data for the study were analyzed.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in a transcendental phenomenological study requires the researcher to highlight significant statements, sentences, or quotes that explain how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Using a thematic analysis, these statements are arranged into clusters of meaning, which become themes (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2008) asserted that data analysis in phenomenology is an extended process beyond the understanding of information to answer the research questions. As a result, the following section provides the step-by-step process to analyze the transcripts from the interviews utilizing the four steps recommended by Moustakas (1994). These include Transcendental Phenomenology Design, Theoretical Aspects of Transcendental Phenomenology, and the Major Processes of Transcendental Phenomenology.

After member checking, the interview transcriptions were uploaded to NVIVO 12 for analysis. The researcher read each transcript multiple times under various circumstances (different times of the day, different moods, etc.). The process of analyzing phenomenological data resembles that of 'reading, sorting, analyzing' and then continuing this pattern until all coding is complete, critical statements are generated, clustering is accomplished, and themes have been identified. The transcendental phenomenology model requires the researcher to focus on the participants' experiences and remove the researcher's own biases to the best of their ability (Moustakas, 1994); that is, practice epoche.

In more detail, per Moustakas' (1994) suggestion, a systematic effort was used to set aside preconceptions about the phenomenon under investigation. Called epoche, the researcher set aside his views of the phenomenon, through bracketing, and focused on those views reported by the participants (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Specifically, before reading the transcripts, the researcher spent time putting aside all questions concerning the study participants' existence or non-existence and focused only on the transcripts' information. After the process of epoche, the researcher analyzed each participant's transcript free of preconceptions allowing for the capture of rich and in-depth information from and about the participant's reality, which moved the researcher closer toward the goal of identifying the meanings and essences of the experience. Specifically, the researcher used the modified Van Kaam method of analysis.

Modified Van Kaam method of analysis. The current study used the van Kaam (1966) and Manen (1990) method of data analysis as modified by Moustakas (1994). The method provided seven steps to use after completion of the interview transcripts, the seven steps in the transcendental phenomenology research process were used to analyze the data: horizontalization, reduction and elimination, clustering and categorization, validation, textural description, structural description, and composite description (Moustakas, 1994). Horizontalization. The first step in the modified Van Kaam (1966) method of analysis is horizontalization, an essential element in the phenomenological reduction process. It consists of placing equal value on all participants' individual experiences regarding the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher highlighted every expression (verbatim) relevant to the experience. Each statement represented non-repetitive, non-overlapping significant statements and comprised phrases and entire sentences. No attempt was made to a group or ordered the statements at this stage. Each statement in this roster was considered a horizon (i.e., a perspective) and had textural qualities because each participant experienced the phenomenon differently.

The criteria used to determine if a word or sentence was significant were based on identifying participants' interview responses that provided meaning relative to both the participant's experiences of crisis leadership as an ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneur and the strategic decision-making process resource allocation during a business crisis. As

previously mentioned, one of the objectives of the study is to discern the essence of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs' lived experiences with crisis leadership when making strategic decisions to allocate resources during the 2017 Hurricane Harvey in Austin, Texas. Each participant's expression was coded in NVivo 12. This step generated 23 invariant constituents and 317 references. The process was repeated multiple times, producing the same results.

Reduction and elimination. The second step in the process was reduction and elimination. To determine the statements representing the unique qualities of the experience that stand out from the other critical statements (i.e., invariant constituents), the researcher tested each critical expression in the list for two requirements (Moustakas, 1994): (a) Does it contain a moment of the experience that is necessary and sufficient for understanding it? (b) Is it possible to abstract and label it? If yes to both questions, it is a horizon of experience. Expressions not meeting these requirements were eliminated, along with overlapping and repetitive expressions, unless the expression could be presented in more exact descriptive terms. The horizons (statements) that remained were the invariant constituents of the experience. This process generated 19 invariant constituents and 247 references that were not overlapping or repetitive.

Clustering and categorization. The third step was clustering and categorization (Moustakas, 1994). The shorter list of invariant constituents (statements) of the experience related to themes or meaning units is clustered with a label. The clustered and labeled statements (i.e., invariant constituents) are the core themes of the experience. This step involved clustering the 19 invariant constituents to find core themes. The themes were labeled and coded in NVivo 12 as parent nodes. The supporting invariant constituents were coded to the parent nodes as child nodes. This process was done multiple times to improve accuracy. Six themes emerged from the 19 invariant constituents.

Validation. The fourth step, validation, involved checking the invariant constituents (statements) and their accompanying theme against the research participant's complete record (Moustakas, 1994). The following three questions guided this process: (a) Are they expressed explicitly in the complete transcription? (b) Are they compatible if not explicitly expressed? (c) If they are not explicit or compatible, they are not relevant to the co-researcher's experience and should be deleted. The researcher used the three questions to determine if the themes identified accurately described the study participants' lived experiences and the themes that emerged from the data. The process was repeated several times with the same result. Therefore, the process validated the six themes.

Descriptions: Individual textural-structural and composite textural-structural. According to Moustakas (1994), the modified Van Kaam method of analysis requires the researcher to create, using the validated invariant constituents and the themes, to construct an individual textual (what was experienced) and structural description (how it was experienced, in what context) of each participant's experience as well as composite textural-structural descriptions (the whole). Imaginative variation was used to develop individual structural descriptions of each participant's experiences as he strove to employ crisis leadership when making strategic decisions to allocate resources during the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. Imaginative variation entailed the researcher changing frames of reference and perspectives, shifting moods, or employing polarities and reversals (Moustakas, 1994). Specifically, the researcher reviewed the transcripts and the field notes for universal structures and shared meanings and contexts of the participants' lived experiences about the crisis.

Findings: Discovery of Themes

The researcher used five main interview questions to guide the data-collection process. Each question was supported by probing questions to help the participants tell their stories. The interview questions were designed to help elicit information-rich descriptions from participants about how they experienced crisis leadership when making strategic decisions to allocate resources during the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. As stated in the Data Analysis section of the study, an analysis of the interview data generated six themes. The following text introduces the actual themes identified, along with their invariant constituents. Additionally, Moustakas (1994) recommends using the participant's own words in the descriptions; a convention followed to report these findings. The verbatim quotes (i.e., the details) and the meanings and essences of the experience that support the themes and the invariant constituents are provided in the Individual Textural-Structural Descriptions of each study participant, the Composite Textural-Structural Descriptions.

Discussion: Interpretation of Findings

The semi-structured interview format allowed study participants to speak about their lived experiences as ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs while they strove to employ crisis leadership when making strategic decisions to allocate resources during and after the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. The findings' importance is discussed, organized by the six themes: strategic decision-making procedure to allocate resources, lack of preparation regarding the allocation of resources, community support, building trust through authenticity and influence, learning through past experiences, and use of information. The next section of the discussion section identifies the key finding for each theme and explores the importance of its meaning relative to previous research and the theoretical underpinnings of the study. Of note, the findings affirm the validity of each of the two theories: Schoenberg's (2004) crisis leader model and Vroom and Yetton's (1973) leadership model.

Theme 1: Strategic Decision-Making Procedure to Allocate Resources

All the participants commented on leading their business through the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis, a theme that was called 'strategic decision-making procedure to allocate resources.' This label reflected their concern that their strategic decision-making had a positive influence on their business. One participant said he handled one employee's need to be home with his family during the crisis. Another participant felt his decision to send all employees home for their safety was helpful, although they did not necessarily see it that way. He said he had to "make those tough decisions that sometimes are not the popular decisions."

To continue, for the business's sake, one crisis leader closed his business while another kept his open. Both felt their decision was valuable for the future of the company, but for different reasons. The former did it to give himself time to "think about what I need to do going forward," while the latter was focused on "strategic decisions I can make during this period to help boost sales [or] at least keep my head above water." Another participant felt that the effective thing to do was use his limited resources in the best way possible, which for him meant temporarily shutting down his website.

The strategic decision-making procedure to allocate resources theme is consistent with Vroom and Yetton's (1973) leadership model, which contains three leadership styles: autocratic, consultative, and collaborative (group-based), which produce five decision-making processes, types of procedures (autocratic I and II, consultative I and II, and collaborative G). Five participants engaged in a more autocratic style of strategic decision-

making. The autocratic strategic decision-making style allowed the ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs to make a strategic decision by themselves, then tell others what they decided, obtain information, and then decide for themselves. Both autocratic strategic decision-making styles incorporated any information available at the time (on hand or acquired) to make the best choice. In this study, the crisis leaders using the strategic decision-making style spoke in the first person, indicating they decided on their own: "I played many roles." "What strategic decisions can I make?" "That was one of the biggest decisions I was faced with." Two participants engaged in a more consultative strategic decision-making style.

The consultative strategic decision-making style allowed the ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs to make decisions independently, but first, gather opinions and input from relevant others. Their decision may or may not reflect this input. Those crisis leaders employing the consultative style used the second person, 'we.' "We have certain [disaster] protocols that are in place." "We have made a conscious decision [to stay open]." Participant #3, who was an Indian, stated, "we made sure that they were safe because employee safety is one of our biggest concerns," indicating a more consultative strategic decision-making style. According to Metcalf et al. (1996), who compared four subcategories of South Asian ethnic businesses, found that Indian entrepreneurs were keen to stress the importance of family cohesion.

The theme is supported by Vroom-Yetton (1973) elements and Gupta and Sangeeta (2013). Both researchers found that the number of elements within a situation influences the effectiveness of the decision procedure, which is based on the (a) significance of the decision quality and its acceptance, (b) volume of relevant information possessed by the leader and subordinates, (c) probability that followers will accept an autocratic decision or work together in trying to make an adequate decision if allowed to take part, and (d) amount of disagreement among subordinates concerning their preferred alternatives.

Concerning the significance of the decision quality and its acceptance, all the ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs' decisions were strategic. According to Iederan, Curseu, and Vermeulen (2009), entrepreneurial firms' success, in the general sense, is dependent mainly upon strategic decision-making practices, emphasizing the need for high-quality decisions and acceptance of the decisions. All the study participants engaged in or made strategic decisions during the Hurricane Harvey crisis to determine how resources would be allocated to help the business and stakeholders. Additionally, all study participants processed relevant information from numerous sources, and the information was used to allocate resources during Hurricane Harvey. Additionally, no evidence was provided by the study participants, based on their transcripts, which indicated followers did not accept an autocratic decision or work together in trying to make an adequate decision if allowed to take part.

Lastly, some disagreement among subordinates concerning their preferred alternatives was reported by a study participant. In that situation, the participant "found out that a lot of the employees were upset" because he "grounded them" and would not let them travel during Hurricane Harvey for safety reasons. Afterward, many of them expressed gratitude and "respected" him more "because they understood that he had there "safety at heart when making decisions," indicating that the disagreement ended with a positive outcome.

None of the ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs used the collaborative strategic decision-making style, which can be attributed to the size of the study's businesses. The group-based strategic decision-making style entails leaders discussing the issue or problematic situation with relevant others in a group setting. Together, they make a group-based decision (Vroom & Yetton, 1973). Kerrigan (2015) explained that all three strategic decision-making styles are essential at times, with the entrepreneurial study participants leaning toward autocratic decisions in crisis times. This involves using the information at

hand and unilaterally making the best decision possible, given the circumstances. The crisis leader then tells others what to do or what will happen and how.

Given that crises are situations or periods of time when things are very uncertain and challenging, yet decisions must be made, perhaps the autocratic strategic decision-making style makes sense for these entrepreneurs. It is at least fast and efficient if not sustainable and effective. Also, group-based, collaborative solutions may not have been realistic, given that most of the crisis leaders in this study did not have a disaster plan as an anchor for group deliberation and discussion. Murphy and Dunn (2012) confirmed that ineffective planning could lead to an ineffective response to the crisis. However, sometimes “this is not so much about pre-planning, although this can be important, but rather a lack of planning that adapts to the changing situation” (p.4).

The Vroom-Yetton model (1973) ties to resource allocation in that its ability to accommodate different situations where resources would have to be allocated. Those resource-allocation decisions would be contingent on the crisis. This aspect of the model supports the evidence provided in Chapter 4 of the study. Within the results of the current study, various resources were allocated based on a response to the Hurricane Harvey crisis. For example, during Hurricane Harvey, study participants determined how their human resources would be allocated. In some, instances some employees were given time off while others were selected to drive routes unaffected by Hurricane Harvey. Another example is the use of time, which was allocated to obtain information about Hurricane Harvey, which was used to inform the study participants' decision-making process.

Concerning crisis leadership, the findings are consistent with another previous research. Crisis leadership was essential to the successful management of each organization throughout the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. The crisis leaders indicated the specific organizational roles they had to fulfil to influence meaningful positive, strategic decision-making (see Bigley & Wiersema, 2002). Such strategic decisions, with attendant roles, included (a) how to boost sales while keeping their head above water, (b) whether to close or stay open, (c) whether to send employees home or have them come to work, (d) how to effectively use limited resources during the crisis, and (e) how to move forward after the crisis was over.

A business crisis is usually plagued by randomness, intensity, frequency, business costs, and enduring effects on an organization (Prewitt & Weil, 2014), making an effective crisis leader necessary. These characteristics plagued these ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneur crisis leaders. The randomness of when the hurricane would hit, when, how hard and for how long made it difficult to make strategic business decisions. Participant #4 said, given “the business challenges here, what decisions can I make?” The event was very intense, fraught with emotional turmoil for some and deep concern for the local community's welfare for others. Participant #6 said, “I can get pretty emotional about things, especially a natural disaster,” acknowledging the need to “to stay calm” so he could better “position my business” after the hurricane. Participant #3 wanted “to make sure that we were open in case any last-minute supplies were needed [by] the good citizens of Austin.”

To continue, the impact on business costs (Prewitt & Weil, 2014) was a common concern. Participant #4 pondered, “What strategic decisions can I make during this period to help boost sales?” Participant #7 took his website down because of “limited resources.” Several worried about the enduring effects of the crisis on their business (Prewitt & Weil, 2014), with Participant #7 saying he had to moderate his “expectations for sales.” On a more positive note, he concluded that “this experience will help me ... to know what to do ... going forward.” Participant #6 wondered if he would have to “go to a different area [or] look at something else?” He was worried about “what I need to do going forward.”

These challenges coincide with one of the critical elements of leadership: complexity, as previously discussed. Ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurial organizations operate in a complex, open systems environment (Bakker, Curseu, & Vermeulen, 2007). The level of complexity is determined by the number of interactions among the parts of an organization inside its boundary and additional ones in its operational (customers, suppliers, competitors, etc.) and extended environment (government at local, regional, and local levels, industry regulations, practices, and others) (Dervitsiotis, 2012).

For example, Participant #5 stated, “it was a big challenge logistically figuring out how we were going to get the products to the customer and keep everybody [drivers] safe.” Additionally, Participant #2 stated, “we underestimated the impact of the hurricane, and that really affected us, and that’s something that I still think about up till today,” highlighting the uncertainty that is present during times of crisis. These statements indicate that during Hurricane Harvey, there was an increase in the “unexpected, and non-routine events that create high levels of uncertainty and simultaneously present an organization with both opportunities for and threats to its high-priority goals” (Ulmer, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2010, p. 7) that are present within a crisis.

Theme 2: Lack of Preparation Regarding the Allocation of Resources

Virtually none of the participants had a plan in place for dealing with this crisis, or, if they did, they failed to execute it during the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis effectively. One participant believed that most small vendors do not have “long-term disaster planning [because they] operate on a day-to-day basis.” Two ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs said they did not have a plan because they were “at the mercy of many of our suppliers.” Small-scale entrepreneurs cannot provide a product to the public if the suppliers do not deliver. Entrepreneurs can “anticipate [the crisis], but it is hard to have a plan [when] you do not have any control.” Indeed, many of the participants indicated that ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs should have a plan for disasters but “unfortunately,” they do not.

The theme of crisis preparation or lack thereof is consistent with some aspects of the study's theoretical framework. According to Schoenberg (2004), an effective crisis leader will have training in dealing with media and internal and external stakeholders. Such training prepares potential crisis leaders for unexpected events and pushback from communications initiatives about how they are faring during the crisis. If available, crisis leaders can draw upon this previous knowledge in times of crisis. With preparation, a leader can predict a business crisis's impact, allowing for better preparation and quality leadership during a business crisis (Klann, 2003; Livingston, 2016). As a result, the lack of preparation contributed to the plan's failure to be properly executed. Researchers have identified three critical factors for ethnic minority entrepreneurs' ownership. These include having (a) the leadership of sufficiently skilled and capable entrepreneurs; (b) adequate financial investment to safeguard against losses, the achievement of economies of scale, and exploitation of business opportunities; and (c) awareness of and access to markets in which to successfully sell the firm's products (Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 2016).

The lack of long-term disaster planning or crisis leadership in this study suggests an associated lack of training for the ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs. Its absence is unfortunate because, with preparation, a leader can predict a business crisis's impact, allowing for better preparation and quality leadership during a business crisis. Moreover, leaders who possess the necessary leadership competencies can lead their workforce appropriately through difficult times. (Klann, 2003). As noted previously, several crisis leaders worried about moving forward after the crisis, intimating they may lack these competencies.

The theme also coincides with previous research, which acknowledged that in businesses where a primary consideration is efficiency, considerable importance is placed on the proper allocation of resources among competing organizational objectives and projects. Nevertheless, optimally allocating resources in business seeking to respond to a variety of needs had yet to be developed and utilized in large part because resource allocation decisions are usually made according to the experience and intuition of organizational leaders (Yoshimura et al., 2006). Some of the study participants' businesses were less than five years old, potentially accounting for the lack of experience regarding allocating resources highlighted in the study.

Additionally, the dimension of complexity again explains some of the challenges inadequately preparing for the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis with leadership. The complexity dimension represents the level of complexity embedded as part of the leader's international responsibilities (Mendenhall et al., 2012). In other words, the ethnic minority entrepreneurs must negotiate and understand more interrelated parts due to their participation in international business (. e.g., international supply chains, shipping across borders). As a result, ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurial organizations operate in a complex, open systems environment wherein the level of complexity is viewed in system theory terms as the number of elements in the system and the number of links between elements, representing the variety of the system (Bakker, Curseu, & Vermeulen, 2007).

The complexity allows uncertainty to manifest and contributes to inadequate planning and preparation among leaders/ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs. For example, Participant #2 stated: "I think that's the most disappointed thing for us is that we did have a plan in place, but we didn't execute the plan like the way we should." Participant #3 stated, "Participant #3 "we are at the mercy of many of our suppliers..... we're very small player in the game, and we really rely on suppliers to provide our gasoline." Furthermore, Portes et al. (2002) showed that the differences in individual entrepreneurs, their ethnic networks, and the broader social context affected transnational entrepreneurs' activities.

Theme 3: Community Support

All seven participants experienced community support during the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. This community support (Austin community) provided both information and emotional support that allowed ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs to navigate the crisis better. Nearly three quarters (71%) of the participants experienced support from fellow entrepreneurs, and close to two thirds (57%) experienced support from community members. One leader valued emotional support, and another experienced support from several organizations to which he belonged, something he valued because they enabled him to respond to the crisis from an "entrepreneurial perspective."

In more detail, one participant called his fellow food truck vendors of various ethnicities "a fraternity" that came together to discuss what they could do to help each other out during the hurricane crisis. A fraternity is an alliance of people with something in common and can include feelings of mutual support. Indeed, another new entrepreneurial leader viewed his more experienced peers (fellow business owners) as a community of support and reached out to them for ideas about what to do as he faced the crisis. Another crisis leader also commented on the benefits of being able to turn to the "support system of community that was understanding and came together... to help me get through Hurricane Harvey."

The importance of community support is embedded within the theoretical framework of the study and previous research. Regarding the former, Schoenberg (2004) stated that the crisis leader must have an external conscience (someone outside of the organization who can

act as a sounding board). Mainly, the individual would provide advice from a neutral position to help the crisis leader. For participants in this study, the community's concept included fellow entrepreneurs and organizations akin to trusted colleagues. One entrepreneur said that organizations to which he belonged helped him approach the crisis from an "entrepreneurial perspective."

The community support identified from the study participants' transcripts indicated that much of the community support stemmed from fellow entrepreneurs who were a part of the same industry as the study participants. Additionally, support also came from the public in the form of community members and from member organizations. Granovetter (1985) argued that social networks are critical determinants of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs' economic activity. Social embeddedness in such networks can affect entrepreneurial behaviors, making the community support a powerful influence on ethnic enterprises' future capabilities, especially during and after a crisis.

From a leadership perspective, the study conducted by Ortiz-Walters et al. (2015) linked collaboration in social networks with the entrepreneurial process of opportunity recognition, evident when business owners gain vital information and resources from informal social networks, professional conferences, and mentors. For example, Participant #4 stated, "the community support provided a platform because they were the foundation, they provided direction." Additionally, Participant #7 stated, "the community support, I think, really helped." Information flow between the immigrant entrepreneur and people in their markets (other actors) constitutes a core dimension of conceptualizing what it means to be an immigrant entrepreneur. These statements are supported by Waldinger (1996) concluded that ethnic networks in the areas of information, the supply of labor force, and resource mobilization were significant in the survival of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs.

Additionally, the theme is essential for ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs and their continued success. Olivas and Frankwick (2016) cited many reasons for ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs lagging behind other entrepreneurial businesses and cited the following as crucial training needs for ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs including; low, small, or inadequate levels of education, business networks, relationship building, management and leadership, and communication skills. The elements of business networks and relationship building are a vital part of community support. For example, Participant # stated, "we came together, and we discussed...[what] we could do [to] help each [other] and what we could do when the Hurricane was over." Therefore highlighting the importance of community support.

Theme 4: Building Trust through Authenticity and Influence

During the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis, the majority (71%) of participants appeared to use the pillars of authenticity and influence to earn the trust and support of people inside and outside the organization (i.e., stakeholders). Sassen (1991) concluded that ethnic minority entrepreneurs are essential for their active contribution to economic and urban regeneration, establishing ethnic minority entrepreneurs' role relevant to stakeholders. Additionally, Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) suggested that strong partnerships with stakeholders are projected to contribute to an ethnic firm's capability and flexibility.

Authenticity and influence helped the crisis leader lead their business through the crisis because, without trust and support, leaders cannot lead their organizations (Schoenberg, 2005a). Authenticity exists when the crisis leaders' actions are genuine, meaningful, and aligned with their words. Without influence, crisis leaders lose the ability to sway others to their cause because they cannot control the message or the outcome of a crisis if they cannot affect others' thinking or actions (Portugal & Yukl, 1994; Schoenberg, 2004). Although the

word “trust” was not mentioned by the study participants, the “trust” identified within the theme is based on “trust” as defined by Schoenberg’s (2004) in his crisis leadership model and based on the pillars of authenticity and influence.

Findings revealed that the participants associated each of empathy, service provision, and price reductions as a means of building trust and soliciting stakeholder support (see Table 7). For example, they allowed employees to stay home with their families (peace of mind) or not come to work at all (for their safety). They stayed open despite the storm to support people in their community, and they reduced prices for a couple of days to help people out. One participant tried to remain open-minded and understand why shipping companies were making the decisions they made during the crisis, impacting his business (e.g., empathy). These are examples of using authenticity (genuineness and realness) and influence (affecting others' decisions and actions) as strategies to move their business through and beyond the crisis.

Each of the statements identified above refers to a stakeholder. Stakeholders are critical to the survival of ethnic minority immigrant businesses and include employees, owners (shareholders), suppliers, industry organizations, and the community from which they draw their resources. Therefore the ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs needed to consider the stakeholders when making strategic decisions during the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. Within Schoenberg’s (2004) crisis leadership model, the pillars are authenticity and influence. These are crisis leader actions and behaviors in which authenticity is described as making sure that the crisis leader’s actions are aligned with their words and making sure the actions are meaningful. Influence is an attempt by the crisis leader to control messages to positively and evoke desired outcomes (Beronich, 2016; Schoenberg, 2004).

In addition to authentic actions (versus non-authentic or insincere actions), an element of influence is necessary for crisis leadership because influence during a business crisis is paramount to shaping outcomes (Portugal & Yukl, 1994). Influence involves leaders interacting with organizational stakeholders (including employees and fellow business owners) in the collective pursuit of a common goal (Klann, 2003; Livngston, 2016), in this case, to survive the hurricane relatively unscathed. In this study, the ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs interacted directly or indirectly with their employees to ensure their safety and peace of mind. They also exerted their influence in the community while minimizing any loss of profit and reputation through strategic decisions that ensured delivery times and service provision during the crisis. By ensuring the community that they were there to support them, some of these crisis leaders strived to positively influence the crisis's impact on their business (i.e., influence the outcome) (Portugal & Yukl, 1994).

Additionally, according to Schoenberg’s (2004), trust must be earned and sustained by the crisis leader to lead during a business crisis effectively. Schoenberg (2004) stated that the crisis leader’s ability to use the pillars of authenticity and influence adequately could be critical concerning earning stakeholders' trust in and outside the organization. Therefore, the concept of trust relevant to crisis leadership does not exist without pillars of authenticity and influence. Concerning leaders, leaders significantly impact their ability to effect significant positive change in organizations, justifying the theme of building trust through authenticity and influence. The next section of the study discusses the fifth theme identified in the study.

Theme 5: Learning Through Past Experiences

All study participants used their past experiences to navigate and guide their business through the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. This finding is consistent with previous research, which has found that past work and life experiences appear fundamental to business success, regardless of a crisis (Patel & Conklin, 2009; Solano, 2015; Terjesen & Elam, 2009).

Terjesen and Elam (2009) noted that life experience, according to travel and migration paths, is essential to creating immigrant entrepreneurs. These past experiences help immigrants to develop a more flexible worldview. It stands to reason that this life-engendered flexibility and adaptability would transfer to a crisis, which seems to be the case in this study.

Participants indicated that during the crisis, they drew on previous instances of navigating a crisis and general entrepreneurial experiences and those from their home country.

Some researchers explained that knowing what to expect during and after the crisis mitigated panic and fostered flexibility. The theme of learning through past experiences also reinforced the finds of previous research that focused on immigrant entrepreneurs' success. Mainly, the current study reinforced the role of past experiences in personal qualities in the entrepreneurial process, primarily education and prior work experience. In particular, extant research emphasized the positive influence of personal skills on entrepreneurial business practices (Carbonell, Hernandez, & Gracia, 2011; Chaganti & Greene, 2002; Froschauer, 2001; Halkias, 2015; Ley, 2006; Portes, Guarnizo, & Haller, 2002; Ram & Smallbone, 2003; Solano, 2015; Valdez, 2008).

Concerning one of the study's theoretical framework models, Schoenberg (2004), the experience is what the crisis leader brings to the organization concerning previous leadership experience and training in dealing with the crisis (Beronich, 2016; Schoenberg, 2004). Each participant identified past experiences that influenced their strategic decision-making and led their business during the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. Schoenberg (2004, 2005a) explained that experience refers to the crisis leaders' previous experience in similar situations where they took charge of things and took command during the chaos and disorientation associated with the crisis. He posited that such experience influences the person's ability to assume the crisis leadership role during chaotic times. Findings from this study align with this theoretical proposition. Some participants said they drew on common sense, having been through a similar situation. They said that past experiences helped them know what to expect, so they just duplicated what they did before to ensure a successful transition through and beyond the crisis. One participant noted that the longer one had been an entrepreneur, the more flexible and adaptable one can be in a time of crisis, bettering enabling one to "know what to do when the future is going forward."

Finally, the theme also aligns with Vroom-Yetton's (1973) model. As previously mentioned, the model, in part, is based on the volume of relevant information possessed by the leader and subordinate (Gupta and Sangeeta, 2013; Vroom-Yetton, 1973). Past experiences provide a wealth of relevant information used in the strategic decision making the procedure as indicated by the study participants. One participant credited his experiences as an entrepreneur concerning shaping his business decisions, stating, "I think really the experience as an entrepreneur really helped to shape the business decisions." and "As an immigrant or ethnic minority, it really doesn't matter when a hurricane comes or a natural disaster, it really doesn't matter what you are, but as an entrepreneur, it is very important."

Theme 6: Use of Information

Regardless of which industry they worked in (e.g., food, retail, oil, transportation), they knew the storm was coming because they were diligently watching the news. Two leaders (food and retail) said they used information from the news to make decisions about delivering their services during the storm to ensure timely product delivery and make sure they did not overproduce or set unrealistic sales expectations during the crisis. One leader who owned a trucking company eschewed the news per se and instead depended on his industry's trucking logistics.

This finding correlated with Schoenberg's (2004, 2005a) crisis leader model. He holds that by employing pertinent information, crisis leaders can move the business toward a more positive direction during the crisis (these entrepreneurs' seeming intent). Without such information, crisis leaders are powerless to make effective decisions. Information is needed to help them assess the crisis and make informed decisions that will benefit the organization and its stakeholders during and after the crisis. In this study, the ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs did strive to effectively use pertinent information, even if it was from only one fundamental source – the news. Other relevant information included their research or data about the crisis (Schoenberg, 2004), including Participant #3's reference to "our research" about the hurricane that confirmed it was a possibility for a couple of weeks before it made landfall. Participant #5's use of trucking logistics analysis equates to external data about the crisis.

Additionally, information is also vital within Schoenberg's (2004) crisis leadership and Vroom and Yetton's (1973) leadership model. Concerning information, Schoenberg (2004) stated that information relates to the leader having ongoing two-way access to information, such as data related to the business crisis and media stories. Vroom and Yetton's (1973) also highlight the need to determine if enough information is available to the leader (i.e., ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneur) to make an informed decision. The current study demonstrated that immigrant entrepreneurs use the knowledge obtained in their education (both formal and informal) and the information obtained to conduct their businesses more efficiently. Past studies have also concluded similar results. The experiences, training courses, and educational level help entrepreneurs effectively run their businesses and attain economic success (Carbonell, Hernandez, & Gracia, 2011; Chaganti & Greene, 2002; Froschauer, 2001; Halkias, 2015). As previously mentioned, the study participants used data related to the business crisis and media stories and used the information obtained to make strategic decisions during the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. The next section of the study explains the original contribution to scholarship.

Discussion, Suggestions for Future Research, and Conclusions

The current study provided exhaustive, advanced literature about the research topic and research question and addressed earlier research on the theories and concepts employed in the study, and current empirical advances of crisis leadership. It presented traditional views, recent advances, and the application of crisis leadership to immigrant entrepreneurs, and it recounted the limited research on strategic decision making and resource allocation. The study also provided a detailed overview of the two theories underpinning the study: Vroom and Yetton's leadership approach (1973) and Schoenberg's (2004) crisis leader model. The study also discussed the research method protocol used to obtain data to address this study's research question and purpose. Details on the qualitative, transcendental phenomenological research design: sample (including ethical considerations), preparation for data collection, data collection, and data analysis, were discussed using Moustakas' (1994) well-established research protocol.

Lastly, the study presented the findings of this qualitative, transcendental phenomenological research. From an individual perspective (what and how was experienced, in what context), six emergent themes (i.e., meaning units) were presented along with supporting data and quotes. Following this, again organized by the six themes, an amalgamated description of their lived experiences with the phenomenon was provided, incorporating all participants' data. This process provided the essence of their lived experiences with this phenomenon. Grounded in the tenets of transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994), the researcher exercised epoche (i.e., suspended judgment) to ensure that

the study accounted for the participants' authentic experiences with the phenomenon, "unfiltered through any lens of researcher suppositions or bias" (Martirano, 2016, p. 61).

Explanation of the Original Contribution to Scholarship

The current study (a) provides valuable information about the factors that support entrepreneurial success such as decision-making and resource allocation, (b) addresses the gap in research by exploring factors that shape ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs in terms of their crisis leadership, and (c) yields findings of a group within U.S society that has been understudied in previous decades. By exploring ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, this study has given other researchers insights into the essence of crisis leadership during a time of a business crisis, adding to the existing body of literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2005) and providing an understanding of factors and lived experiences that have during a business crisis.

Relevance of Findings to Existing Literature

No research existed relevant to a business crisis and immigrant entrepreneurs or business crises and ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs. The current study addresses this gap in the literature by understanding how ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs described their experience of leading through a crisis – the essence of their experience that can inform a framework for policy development and practice or guide future research. This work's focus is the understudied populace of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, people of a different ethnic or cultural origin than the indigenous population that undertake business activities in a particular area (De Vries, 2012; Masurel et al., 2004). The information and insights gathered from the study are crucial to minority entrepreneurships, immigration policy, and transnational businesses in creating programs to create entrepreneurships across the United States and the world. The findings are essential because of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs' role in the U.S society and economy.

The study found that the essence of the ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs' lived experiences can be described via the themes identified in the study. This is a new contribution to the literature about ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs. More valuable is that two prominent leadership theories validate these findings (themes): Schoenberg's (2004) crisis leader model and Vroom and Yetton's (1973) leadership model.

In the model, Schoenberg (2004) identified the characteristics required for a leader to be effective during a business crisis. The external influences include information, external conscience, preparation, and experience. The pillars are authenticity and influence. Finally, the model includes trust, which is based on pillars of authenticity and influence. The elements of the model emerged within the themes identified by the researcher. For example, information emerged within information; external conscience emerged within community support, preparation within lack of preparation regarding resource allocation, and experience emerged from learning through past experiences.

In the previous literature on ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, Anwar and Daniel (2016) explored how ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs draw on resources to market their businesses. Their results indicated the importance of emergent and flexible use of resources. Their research focused on ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs; they found a lack of focus on the behavioral and situational factors that support entrepreneurial activities. Two such factors are a business crisis (situational) and crisis leadership (behavioral). The current study adds to the literature by highlighting themes relevant to the lived experiences of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs as they navigated the Hurricane Harvey crisis.

The current study also reinforced the findings of prior research on resource allocation. Before the current study, no research existed on ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs and resource allocation, especially during a business crisis. However, according to researchers, resource allocation shapes immigrant businesses' opportunities (Heilbrunn & Kushnirovich, 2008; Light & Bonacich, 1988; Light & Rosenstein, 1995). Kloosterman and Rath's (2002) study highlighted the need for the proper resource allocation within an immigrant-owned business. As indicated in the study findings, many participants did not have a plan or were adequately prepared for the Hurricane Harvey crisis. As a result, the current study reinforces the findings of Kloosterman and Rath (2002).

Exploring entrepreneurship's challenges during a business crisis is significant because that exploration contributes to the knowledge on entrepreneurship by providing an in-depth understanding of the essence of entrepreneurial experiences and the many factors present in leading entrepreneurship (especially during a crisis). Understanding the individual textual (what was experienced) and individual structural (how it was experienced, in what context) descriptions of barriers and challenges during a business crisis helps entrepreneurs to prepare themselves for their entrepreneurial journey, which can contribute to higher levels and rates of success in creating new businesses and growing new start-ups.

Implications for Future Research

Limited research has been conducted relative to ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, with this study seeking to add to and expand on the literature. By approaching the study from a leadership perspective, specifically within the context of the strategic decision-making process for resource allocation, the study provides insights and understandings about how crisis leadership influences the strategic decision-making process of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs' relative resource allocation. Through the lived experiences of the ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, this phenomenological study explored mechanisms that could contribute to leadership and resource allocation issues faced by ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs in times of crisis.

The study ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs can be considered global leaders. Therefore, the findings of the current study apply to global leaders. The literature identified by the researcher also indicated that more research is needed on crisis leadership, specifically, how to discover and work with global leaders and, by extension, ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, in an organization before a business crisis and how to develop leaders who can deal with the crisis. Essentially, understanding and learning from the experiences of leaders who have led a business through a crisis (successfully or not) may help other firms and organizations better prepare for and react in times of uncertainty (Schoenberg, 2004). This research should be augmented with the notion of the essence of crisis leadership as described by those living it, necessitating additional studies grounded in the transcendental phenomenological approach.

Global leaders can benefit from the study participants' stories describing ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs' lived experiences as they strived to employ crisis leadership when making strategic decisions to allocate resources during and after the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. Reproducing the study with a larger sample of participants from varying countries, industries, and a crisis could provide an opportunity for generalization of the study findings. The study findings point to strategic decision-making style, preparation, experiences, trust (authenticity and influence), and information as critical elements in navigating crises. A future comparison study involving businesses from all continents would determine if crisis leadership of resource allocation's strategic decision-making process has a more significant role based on the individual's region.

Future studies could replicate the current study with other entrepreneurial type businesses (see Table 4 for a reference point). It would be worth noting if other ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurial leaders and other global leaders in other types of businesses had similar experiences employing crisis leadership. It would be interesting to explore how leaders in other types of business enterprises experience crisis leadership relevant to strategic decision making in various aspects of the business. This is the recommendation to focus on how the size of the business might affect the essence of crisis leadership as described by ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs. The examples provided earlier of an automotive business with 60 employees and a food truck with one employee suggest that size may be a mitigating factor in what is experienced during a crisis, despite that these individuals' experiences echo the composite essence profiled in this study.

Conclusions

In summary, this qualitative study used a transcendental phenomenological research method to explore ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs' lived experiences. They strived to employ crisis leadership when making strategic decisions to allocate resources during and after the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis in Austin, Texas. The intent was to discover and recount the essence of the lived experiences described by the participants. Their individual essence and the collective (composite) essence were profiled, using the six themes emergent from the analysis. The findings support the challenges inherent in crisis leadership when making strategic decisions to allocate resources within a small business during a crisis. The cruxes of the findings are the focus on the essence of the lived experiences along with the unique focus on ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs, an under-researched business population with growing economic influence in the US economy.

The study findings validate the assumptions and concepts of Schoenberg's (2004) model that focuses on leadership during a business crisis, and the Vroom-Yetton model (1973), which handles leadership in different situations or contingencies (in this study, crisis). Future researchers can feel confident grounding their studies in these models. Notably, the research generated, for the first time, six themes surrounding the phenomenon of employing crisis leadership when making strategic decisions to allocate resources during and after the 2017 Hurricane Harvey crisis. The essence of ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneurs' leadership during a crisis comprises a strategic decision-making procedure to allocate resources, lack of preparation regarding resource allocation, community support, building trust through authenticity and influence, learning through past experiences, and use of information.

In conclusion, this study's findings will help both current and future global leaders develop into successful leaders who can effectively lead their entrepreneurial business in times of crisis. Recommendations from this study will also assist those tasked with mentoring and training the next generation of global leaders with scholarly and theoretically-sound knowledge about how to develop effective ethnic minority immigrant entrepreneur crisis leaders capable of leading in both national and global settings. The new strategy is to appreciate the essence of their lived crisis leadership experiences and learn and lead from them.

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